Hollywood in the Pacific

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE SCREEN INDUSTRY IN THE PACIFIC

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to

Dad

Filoimalo Soagia

Taulesulu Malifa

Tuivai’ese Malifa

Teresia Teaiwa

People I greatly wish could have seen me graduate.

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I could not have completed this thesis without many things and people. My faith in God has given me strength, tenacity and discernment to persevere through this process.

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Abstract

Historically, the relationship between the global and Pacific screen industries has not been characterised by mutual benefit (Pendakur, 1990). This is despite a continued – and growing – interest in the Pacific as a film and television location. Between 2015 and 2020, a number of blockbuster Hollywood productions were shot in the Pacific (*Adrift*, 2018; *Jurassic World*, 2015; *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, 2018; *Jurassic World: Dominion*, 2022), and to this list, television projects that originate 'off Island' (such as the *Survivor* series) are becoming more commonplace. Yet this interest from the Global North – notably Hollywood – is not matched with resources, capacities and opportunities for Pacific Islanders, and benefits that feed directly into Pacific economies.

This thesis draws on the knowledge of practitioners and stakeholders of Pacific screen to interrogate the potential for a sustainable regional screen industry. This question is motivated by a strong desire to see Pacific stories and methods of storytelling represented in both local and global screen productions, but also to sustain a new economic sector that supports the livelihoods of new generations of Pacific Islanders.

This thesis makes three distinct contributions to ongoing debates and practices in the Pacific relating to the development of a screen industry. The first is an empirical contribution expanding current knowledge of whether, and how, a screen sector could economically and culturally contribute to sustainable development in the Pacific. Regional dialogue on creative and cultural policy has stalled with the last Regional Cultural Framework report published in 2018. Similarly, progress on the outcomes of the *Cinema Pasifika* report has not continued since the report was launched in 2016. The second is a conceptual contribution by developing an innovative and comprehensive conceptual framework by which I define, and assess, screen sustainability in the Pacific. I utilise the political economy of film as a key concept by which to unpack Pacific screen's current relationship with global practice. Within this conceptual framework, I also analyse the decolonisation of film, to show

how a decolonised screen industry might recalibrate the dominant (and domineering) influence of the global political economy for Pacific screen practitioners and industry. The third contribution is made as a screen producer and Pacific practitioner myself: I make a methodological contribution by bringing together a combination of research methods, including a critical auto-ethnographer approach.

While I find that currently, the Pacific screen industry is not sustainable, this thesis documents the relentless work of screen practitioners and stakeholders who are actively seeking regional connections, creating their own *ad hoc* capacity building opportunities, cultivating career longevity, and innovating channels for social and cultural legitimacy. On the basis of my research, I identify three specific avenues through which sustainability can be cultivated in the longer term. First, I consider that a sustainable screen industry requires a more formalised network of indigenous screen practitioners that can drive policy development and regulation in the industry, but also ensure that screen practices are Pacific centred. Second, the industry needs to work towards partnership models of funding generation, so that a more diverse slate of projects drive economic opportunities for Pacific Islanders both in front of, and behind, the camera. Finally, Pacific screen requires infrastructure that accepts ‘Pacific ways’ of working and embraces, rather than resists, the communities in which it operates.

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Scene One: *Amataga* - An Introduction

The Pacific and screen

Today, Pacific screen practitioners are a growing network based in transnational and island-specific communities. Simultaneously, the Pacific region is in demand for its stories and its landscapes. The Pacific is a place of rich storytelling, dancing, making and creating. While these forms of expression are central to Pacific identity, ways of knowing and culture, Pacific Island countries continue to rely overwhelmingly on overseas industries outside of the cultural and creative spaces to develop economically (Alivizatou, 2012; Hereniko, 2019; Pearson, 1999; Stupples et al., 2022; Teaiwa, 2007; Thomas, 2011; Throsby, 2015). The current state of screen activity in the Pacific presents a clear opportunity to develop a regional screen industry. The Pacific Community (SPC) has scoped the parameters of such an industry in the report *Cinema Pasifika: Developing Narrative Film and Television Sector in the Pacific* (SPC, 2016).

This thesis makes three distinct contributions to ongoing debates and practices in the Pacific relating to the development of the industry. The first is an empirical contribution to expanding current knowledge of whether, and how, a screen sector could economically and culturally contribute to sustainable development in the Pacific. The second is a conceptual contribution by developing an innovative and comprehensive conceptual framework by which I define and assess screen sustainability in the Pacific. I utilise the political economy of film as a key concept by which to unpack the Pacific screen's current relationship with global practice. Within this conceptual framework, I also analyse the decolonisation of film and show how a decolonised screen industry might recalibrate the dominant (and oppressive) influence of the global political economy for Pacific screen practitioners and industry. The third contribution is made as a screen producer and Pacific practitioner myself. I make a methodological contribution by bringing together a combination of research methods, including a critical auto-ethnographer approach.

Current global screen industry practices continuously take from the Pacific in a manner that is not mutually beneficial (Pendakur, 1990). Between 2015 and 2020, several blockbuster Hollywood productions were shot in the Pacific including *Adrift*

(Kormakur, 2018), *Jurassic World* (Trevorrow, 2015), *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (Bayona, 2018), and *Jurassic World: Dominion* (Trevorrow, 2022). Offshore television projects are becoming commonplace all over the region with the rapid growth and economic viability of reality television. However, except for Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia and Hawai‘i, there is insufficient local skilled crew to supplement these projects. For example, the Australian crew for shows such as *Bachelor in Paradise* (Fleiss, 2018-20) and *Australian Survivor* (Parsons, 2016-) occupy hotels in Fiji and Samoa for weeks or months of a year. Thus, a majority international-based crew will travel with the production. Outside of the temporary financial injection these projects make to national economies (Feagaimaali’i-Luamanu, 2017), these visitors have minimal opportunities to contribute to the local economy. Most Pacific nations do not have thriving retail or hospitality industries. Recent studies of retail selection trends in the Asia-Pacific target Australia and Aotearoa as representative of the region (Lu et al., 2018). These two developed economies arguably do not represent the nuanced and diverse Pacific experience. As the strongest industry throughout the regional Pacific, touristic activities present the most likely opportunity for economic expenditure on island. However, such activity is unlikely to occur within the strict timeframes of a film or television production schedule.

This thesis draws on the knowledge of practitioners and stakeholders of Pacific screen to envisage a new model of screen economy and infrastructure. This new model is important to rebalance current global screen structures and create mutual benefit to the Global North and South of screen (the Pacific being understood as belonging to the South). This research aims to make a fundamental contribution to scholarship around screen as a sector of the creative and cultural industries in the Pacific. Regional dialogue on creative and cultural policy has stalled with the last *Regional Cultural Framework* reporting published in 2018. Movement on the *Cinema Pasifika* report has not progressed since 2016, with the postponement of the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) 2021 Hawai‘i, at which official meetings of the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture (CPAC) would usually take place. This thesis seeks to reinvigorate and focus these conversations on an industry whose stakeholders are actively seeking regional connections, creating *ad hoc* capacity building opportunities, cultivating career longevity, and innovating channels for

cultural maintenance. Scene One will preface the story of my research and its journey to understanding the needs and possibilities of a sustainable Pacific screen industry. As such, Scene One has been titled using the Samoan word *'amataga',* meaning the start, or a starting point.

Screen industry potential

The Pacific is full of screen-based activity, and Pacific stories have entered the global mainstream. Two of Hollywood's highest-earning productions in 2018/19 – *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018) and *Fast & the Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw* (Leitch, 2019) – were centred around Pacific protagonists. In Hawai'i, production for multiple television serials – including *Lost* (Lieber et al., 2004-10)*, Hawai'i Five-0* (Freeman, 2010-20)*, Magnum P.I.* (Lenkov and Guggenheim, 2018-)*, NCIS Hawai'i* (Siiber et al., 2021-), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Duncan, 2021) – has filled, and continues to fill, the calendar year. Streaming services also commission projects shot in the island state. In addition to Hawai'i, other Pacific Island countries are establishing screen industries. Fiji is growing in popularity as a Hollywood location, resulting in the establishment of Film Fiji[1] in 2002. In 2008, the organisation's CEO commented that he would like to see Fiji become the Hollywood of the South Pacific, or 'Bulawood' (FBC News, 2008). Samoa also regularly hosts international offshore productions and projects from transnational Pacific practitioners. Anecdotal evidence demonstrates that the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Niue have all hosted offshore projects associated with National Geographic and the Discovery Channel. In contrast, Tahiti and Bora Bora have hosted the production of films from the United States (US) and France. Kuki Airani's (Cook Islands) colonial relationship with Aotearoa has resulted in projects being filmed there.

A high volume of Pacific projects travelled the 2018/19 film festival circuit. The New Zealand Film Commission's work, developing and funding Pacific projects in the years prior (New Zealand Film Commission, 2021) resulted in films from Pacific practitioners showing at A-list film festivals (Sundance, Berlin International Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, South by South West). These projects then travelled

[1] Established under the Fiji Islands Audio-Visual Commission Act, 2002.

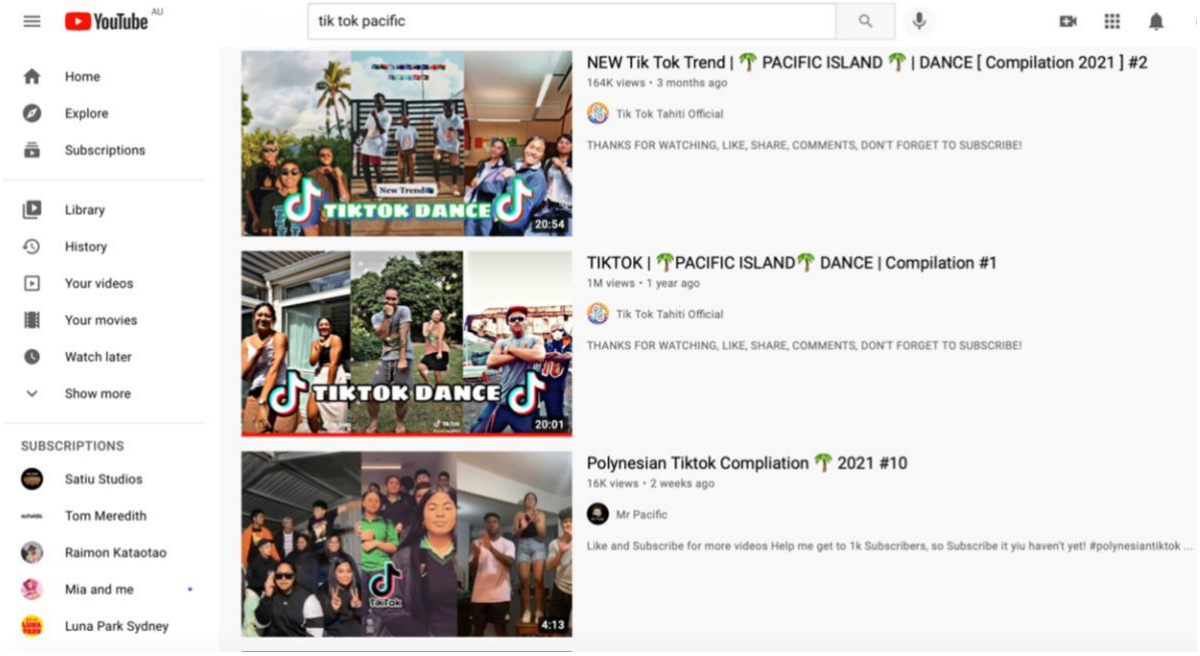
back to the Pacific, showing at film festivals in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Kuki Airani and Tahiti, as part of a broader strategy, partly led by these screen practitioners, to take their work back to the communities they were made with and for. The momentum and increased recognition of Pacific and Indigenous screen culminated in Māori writer/director Taika Waititi winning an academy award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Jojo Rabbit* in February, 2020.

There is substantial external interest in the Pacific as a resource for the global screen industry. There is also considerable interest in Pacific stories and storytelling. Despite this, the region is under-resourced to service this growing demand. The potential benefit of a screen industry to Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region is two-fold. Using developed Pacific screen industries in Hawai‘i, Australia and Aotearoa as examples, screen industry in the Pacific could affect sustained job creation and attract international importation of screen projects to the region. Job creation is especially significant for young people in the Pacific, where unemployment rates continue to be high (UNFPA, 2019).

While screen industry employment has never been exclusive to, or specifically targeted at, global youth populations, a Pacific screen industry could provide viable employment and career opportunities for young people in the region based on their technological savvy and existing interaction with screen-based platforms such as YouTube. This research adopts the broad age classification used by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), namely, ages 11 to 29 (UNFPA, 2019). An investigation of youth participation with screen-based platforms and content indicates high use levels. Studies produced by Screen Australia note that youth have consistently been the highest consumers of screen content in cinemas since 1974 (Screen Australia, 2020). This study also indicates that youth television viewing patterns are in the mid-range of audience viewing habits in Australia (Screen Australia, 2004). With this in mind, it is commonly understood that youth populations regularly interact with alternate screens, that is, phones and tablets (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021). Screen content on these mediums can include social media videos, advertising and 360 virtual reality. Australian studies show that those between 18 and 34 used an average of five social media apps in 2020. Older Australians used approximately three (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021, p. 7).

Similar patterns are evident globally. Video sharing app TikTok has demonstrated its algorithmic ability to identify what users like to watch to deliver this to them. TikTok facilitates one to one connection between content producers and their audiences. The same youthful audience that uses TikTok has mobilised political activist movements (Herman, 2020) through their videos, illustrating how youth use screen-based platforms and successfully navigate them to create new forms of storytelling. While these statistics are difficult to obtain in the Pacific, social media apps are well recognised in the region. Facebook and TikTok are particularly popular with young people (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2021).

Image 1. Pacific TikTok dance compilations on YouTube



Pacific youth encounter significant challenges in finding employment. The UNFPA's 2019 *State of the Pacific Youth* report notes that the number of young people entering the labour workforce each year grossly outweighs available jobs in Pacific nations (UNFPA, 2019, p. 95). Supplementary to this is the high number of youth not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) throughout the region (UNFPA, 2019, p. 97). Pacific youth are not currently accounted for in regional workforce participation data, making it difficult to accurately access the complete picture of youth unemployment in the region.

Despite this context, Pacific youth have creatively interacted with, understood, and produced screen content on social media for some years. This demonstrates an opportunity for regional governments to invest in screen as a sector that might specifically address this gap between youth activity and unemployment. Such an investment would be made to create jobs and build capacity for work to serve potential employees domestically and internationally. This thesis is motivated by this opportunity to support an industry that would address this very gap for youth populations in the region. Converting the screen industry in the Pacific from its current 'cottage industry' status (SPC, 2016, p. 39) to an organisation-based network of screen production and a platform of activity that would support the development of a more skilled workforce in the Pacific, particularly among its largely youthful population.

The research questions

The impetus for this study evolved out of my own observations, working in a developed screen industry and with Pacific screen communities in Aotearoa, Australia, the US, and the region. Until recently, most of this work had been undertaken as an Operations Manager and then co-Director of Pasifika Film Fest (PFF),[2] illuminating the distribution pathways that Pacific practitioners utilise to show their work and pockets of industry creating work throughout the region. Since 2018, this has also included freelance work as a producer of Pacific screen projects. In this time, I have completed production of short films, screen-based installation work, web series/online and a documentary. This work has provided me with hands-on experience in screen production processes, from creative freedom in early development to the structure of a shoot, and finally, the business of putting work in front of audiences. I have observed how standing screen structures favour or oppose Pacific practitioners at these junctures. Understanding these dynamics has prompted me to question how Pacific screen practitioners could build and work within a structure designed for their specific contexts.

[2] PFF is a regional Pacific film festival focused on providing a platform for Pacific screen practitioners to have their work presented to audiences, both mainstream and Pacific, on a big screen. Pasifika Film Fest also provides capacity building opportunities and operates all over the region and in transnational communities. See https://pasifikafilmfest.com

My research is informed by existing data and an analysis of the Pacific Community's scoping report *Cinema Pasifika* (SPC, 2016). That report aimed to outline how SPC could work with relevant stakeholders to support the development of a narrative film and television sector in the Pacific. *Cinema Pasifika* and its findings were discussed at the 2016 CPAC meeting at the 12th FestPAC, in Guåhan (Guam). The report found that:

> **Greatest asset:** The Pacific Island region is rich in unique stories. It also possesses much of the raw talent needed to transform these stories into commercially viable film and television products.
>
> **Biggest gap:** There is currently almost no awareness of the need to invest time and resources in creating commercially viable products that will appeal to a wider-paying audience at the national, regional, and international levels.
>
> **Greatest need:** To have any chance of developing a sustainable and vibrant narrative film and television sector in the Pacific, there is an urgent need to develop a regional body or association that can effectively represent the needs and goals of its collective membership (SPC, 2016, p. 2).

Bearing in mind the findings of the *Cinema Pasifika* report, my research is driven by the question: can a screen industry in the Pacific be sustainable? The overarching aim of my research is to understand the nuances of screen practice for all Pacific communities, analyse current trends, and conceptualise effective strategies to strengthen and sustain Pacific screen.

In addressing this question and meeting these objectives, I have developed a conceptual framework that acts as a directive for creating a sustainable regional screen industry. The framework will be briefly explained in this chapter and then more substantively demonstrated with empirical data in Scenes Four, Five and Six. The following supplementary questions further guide the research:

1. What are the key barriers facing Pacific screen practitioners when producing their projects?
2. What are the key enablers facilitating the production of Pacific screen projects?
3. What is needed to promote and sustain screen industry in the Pacific?

In answering these questions, I define the parameters in which Pacific screen industry could be structured and developed, both in individual countries and as a region. This research contributes to emerging global discussions around the creative economy and sustainable development (UNCTAD & UNDP, 2010) of screen cultures as a mechanism for economic growth and independence in the Pacific.

Defining the central question and other relevant elements

The primary research question of this thesis requires some definition of key terms, including 'screen industry', 'the Pacific', and 'sustainability'. These are expanded on below.

Screen industry

I am guided by Butsch (2019) in his definition of 'screen' as feature films, short films, television, feature length documentary, short form documentary, 360 virtual reality films, web series (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook Watch, and others), online streaming (e.g. Netflix, Disney+), short and long form animation, social media content (unstructured videos), social media series (e.g., TikTok series *Scattered*) and video-based advertisements.[3] In defining screen culture, Butsch (2019, p. 2) describes screen as including 'screens for film, television, video games, computers, and smart phones'. Butsch also describes screen as being concerned with images more than language. Thus, any media relying primarily on other senses (such as sound), is excluded. Butsch also posits that screen implies moving image, thus excluding live performance, photography, or visual art. Lastly, Butsch excludes screens used primarily for text, thus excluding email and webpages. Defining the word 'screen' for the Pacific through these broad boundaries posed by Butsch allows the pinpointing and inclusion of specific genres more restricted definitions might not include. As an initiative, Screen Australia funded interactive gaming until 2013 (Screen Australia, 2013). Video games are also included in Butsch's definition of screen. I have chosen to limit this definition to the formats I have observed as being predominantly produced by Pacific screen practitioners.

[3] Video-based advertisements are those which usually appear alongside other content forms on most applications and platforms.

I define ‘industry’ based on the fourth industrial revolution, as posited by Kemper (2014). Industry can be loosely defined as a branch of economic activity, generated through businesses related to their shared primary activity. Kemper centralises this definition as ‘the part of an economy that produces material goods which are highly mechanised and automised’ (Kemper, 2014, p. 239). Industry, as used in this thesis, fits into this definition where Kemper establishes ‘Industry 4.0’. The first and second revolutions of industry lead to widespread digitalisation or the fourth industrial revolution. Kemper argues that this digitalisation will lead to a complete shift in industry production processes and standards, thus labelled ‘Industry 4.0’. I have chosen to understand the screen industry within the guidelines of this definition, insofar as it is concerned with ‘internet technologies and future oriented technologies in the field of smart objects’ (Kemper, 2014, p. 239). Today, screen industry is synonymous with internet connection and smart technology, as exemplified in the list of formats that define ‘screen’. Screen content often requires internet connection to be viewed, that is, on social media apps, on YouTube, and on streaming services. Screen content is also widely consumed using smart technology. This is no longer restricted to smart phones, but also includes tablets and smart televisions, where digital applications can also be loaded with streamed content.

When looking holistically at the screen industry, those businesses that supplement the production of the above formats should be incorporated. This includes production companies, video editing companies, animation companies, sound design companies, visual effects companies, distribution companies, funding bodies, training providers, film crew providers, props and costume companies, location providers, equipment providers, casting agents, talent management and members of crew (often contractors). Ancillary sectors of this industry include catering companies, vehicle hire companies, animal handlers, home schooling teachers, and cleaning companies. Some sectors will be considered part of this industry in the Pacific, for the purposes of this research. Advertising companies regularly create screen content and do so successfully in the Pacific, with a similar level of business infrastructure. Globally, advertising and its incorporated formats usually sit separately to screen. However, the two converge in the business and revenue-generating end of the screen process. This thesis, therefore, includes advertising screen practices in the definition of screen industry for the Pacific.

For the purposes of this thesis, the word ‘screen’ refers to film, television, online, streaming and any other form of broadcast. Understanding ‘screen industry’ in these terms supports the investigation of business and structural components needed in the Pacific by which industry can grow and sustain itself. Furthermore, most projects in screen industry today are being made digitally.[4]

The Pacific

Providing a clear distinction of the Pacific for the purposes of this research is, interestingly, the most complex definition to clarify. The region’s colonial ties and exclusive economic zones greatly influence the many global definitions of ‘the Pacific’. This research, however, is guided by the membership of FestPAC in defining the region. FestPAC is the region’s chief arts and cultural event, and in this sense, is a key driver of Pacific cultural, arts and creative industries policy.

FestPAC membership includes all members of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, namely American Samoa, Australia, Kuki Airani, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guåhan, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Aotearoa, Niue, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, United States of America (for Hawai‘i), Vanuatu, and Uvea mo Futuna (Wallis and Futuna). Not all these member countries attend every FestPAC. Often, Pacific Island countries cannot attend, although invitations are always sent out to all members.

The following are also incorporated: Rapanui (Easter Island), Norfolk Island, France (for New Caledonia and French Polynesia) and the United Kingdom (through Pitcairn Island). Invited observers include the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), International Union on the Conservation of Nature, Pacific Islands Museum Association, Pacific Islands Arts Alliance (PIAA),

[4] In this thesis, I use specific terms to refer to products that relate to an individual sector. For example, the words ‘film’, ‘feature film’ or ‘short film’ are used interchangeably to denote the category of cinema. To refer to television, the words ‘show’ or ‘television’ or any other format of television is used. ‘Short’ or ‘long form documentary’ are used with respect to the documentary genre, and similarly ‘short’ or ‘long form animation’ describe animation. ‘Web series’, ‘streaming’ or ‘online’ are used in relation to online content.

and Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (SPC – PacFest webeit). In past festivals Taiwan has also been included in the FestPAC membership (Taiwan Ministry of Culture, 2019).

However, there are minor differences between the geographic definition of the Pacific, as defined in this research, and that of the FestPAC guidelines. Invited observer members to FestPAC are not included in the definition of the Pacific for the purposes of this thesis. In addition, the experiences of Indigenous Australian screen practitioners have not been included in this study. Geographically, only half of the Australian continent sits within the Pacific Ocean. The classification of Aboriginal nations in the central to western parts of Australia as part of the Pacific is problematic. However, it is important to note that Indigenous screen practices and practitioners have informed a substantial part of Scene Three, the auto-ethnographic component of this thesis.

Transnational communities are not officially incorporated into delegations, outside of the Aotearoa delegation to FestPAC which travels with a contingent of Pacific diaspora artists based in Aotearoa and smaller Pacific delegations whose membership sometimes consist of transnational performers representing their island homes. Despite this, they *are* a key component of this research, and thus included in the parameters of a 'wider Pacific'. For the purposes of this study, transnational communities are defined as 'migrant populations living in a country other than their country of origin but with ties to the country of origin' (Tsakiri, 2005). At the time of writing, transnational communities from Aotearoa, Australia and the US lead the way in production of Pacific screen projects. These works account for a large part of this conversation. Many Pacific screen practitioners in transnational communities are already contributing to skills and capacity building throughout the region and others will follow. Screen practitioners from transnational communities in Aotearoa, Australia and the US have been interviewed and surveyed as part of this research. The inclusion of other transnational Pacific communities is noted in parts of this study through auto-ethnography and document analysis.

Sustainability

A central component of the research question of this thesis is the concept of 'sustainability'. Ensuring any screen industry can grow and maintain itself both

socially and fiscally is paramount. One core aspect of sustainability can be defined as an industry's ability to be maintained continuously and at a certain standard. This study, however, also values and recognises the definitional framing developed by the United Nations in the 2010 *Creative Economy Report.* That report focuses on 'cultural industries', of which screen is a critical part. Here, cultural sustainability requires 'inter and intra-generational equity' (UNCTAD & UNDP, 2010, p. 26), meaning that an industry would ensure that cultural resources are not compromised for future generations. More specifically, equity is established across generations in an industry's 'production, participation and enjoyment, on a fair and non-discriminatory basis'. These factors guide the definition of sustainability for this thesis.

I also recognise the strength that screen industry in the Pacific can have through a regional approach (Hau'ofa, 1994). In this sense, the sustainability of the screen industry is not limited to a national focus but encompasses a regional approach to policy design, implementation, and funding. I draw on the work of Purvis, Mao & Robinson (2019) to illustrate this broader approach to sustainability as a regional endeavour.

Pacific film

It is pertinent to note that to date, 'Pacific film' itself has not yet been defined in academic literature. My research intentionally considers Pacific screen projects developed by Pacific practitioners. This distinction is a key component of defining parameters around screen industry in the Pacific, and the decolonisation of the Pacific's involvement with film practice. This thesis, however, does not undertake to define what might qualify as a Pacific film. I do, however, recognise and support Pacific ownership of screen and story sovereignty, especially where economic independence is concerned.

Creative industries

This research is grounded in the possibility of a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. As a sector of the creative industries, screen has been a successful economic contributor to gross domestic product worldwide when an investment has

been made. China, South Korea, the US, and India are significant examples. Throsby's (2015) influential work presents a clear articulation of how cultural industries should and could be cultivated in the Pacific to contribute to sustainability in the regional economy. Throsby prominently advocates for the development of 'cultural' industries in the Pacific.

I agree with this premise and aim to progress development discussions forward by proposing viable options in one sector of the creative industries through the research outlined in this thesis. There is ongoing regional discourse concerning the development of the cultural and creative (Teaiwa, 2007). At an organisational level, this discourse has resulted in the creation of the *Regional Cultural Strategy* (SPC, 2018), and ongoing discussion about intangible cultural heritage (SPC, 2016; UNESCO, 2020). New projects introduced at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) are aimed at 'increasing capacity and sustainability of cultural and creative industry initiatives in national economies' (SPC, 2021). With the exception of *Cinema Pasifika,* this work looks at the cultural and creative with specific emphasis on cultural artefacts and the production of traditional handicrafts to offset economic sustainability.

This study sees the potential for screen as an autonomous economic cultural output for the region. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that cultural performance relies on external markets when manifested as a commodity in the tourist economy. The same can be said for traditional handicrafts, which has been the focus, to some degree, of SPC's *Regional Cultural Strategy* (SPC, 2018). The development of screen industry in the Pacific presents an opportunity for a sector of the creative industries that can be autonomous within the region, with Pacific Island economies divesting money back into these industries to enable sustainability.

Although this research applies its findings directly to screen and not the wider 'creative industries', I acknowledge that the latter is a subset of the former. Thus, the discussion of creative and cultural industries in the Pacific will inform the consideration of sustainability within this thesis.

Indigenous/Indigeneity

Throughout this study, the word Indigenous will be used when referring to Pacific screen practice and Pacific screen stories. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) defines Indigenous people as such: 'commonly known as the descendants – according to common definition – of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means' (UNPFII, 2022). This study adopts this definition broadly to encompass both island-based Pacific people and Pacific people living in transnational communities. When referring to Indigenous Pacific people and Indigenous Pacific screen practice, this study is principally concerned with Pacific ownership of intellectual property and Pacific screen products. It is understood that the definition of Indigenous provided by the UNPFII is more accurately applicable to Pacific people living in their island homes, especially where these island homes have been settled by other ethnic communities who have become the majority.

There are also Pacific communities living outside of the island Pacific, on lands they are not native or Indigenous to, namely in Aotearoa, Australia and the United States. This study extends the definition of Pacific to abstractly include the Pacific experience of these communities under the banner of Indigenous Pacific, in order to acknowledge their ownership of these screen products and their intellectual property, within a Pacific screen industry. This study regards any potential complications of this widening of definition as necessary to fully understand the complex nature of screen practice in the Pacific. Decolonisation (Banivanua Mar, 2016) is a subset of this discussion, which will be unpacked as a concept in this thesis. Decolonisation, as understood here, pertains to the deconstruction of colonial influences on knowledge, society and culture, rather than drawing on indigenous knowledge society and culture.

Conceptual framework

My conceptual framework is modelled on a film production schedule and presented in Figure 1 (below). The production schedule's 'project title' is the central research

question of the thesis: Can a screen industry in the Pacific be sustainable? The framework clearly depicts the interdependence between three fundamental, constitutive elements of a sustainable screen industry: namely that it is Pacific centred; economically viable; and socially and culturally legitimate. Ordinarily, a production schedule arranges production lines and required actions along a chronological timeline. Similarly, I have framed these core elements of sustainability to show how the industry itself works as a microcosm of a film shoot.

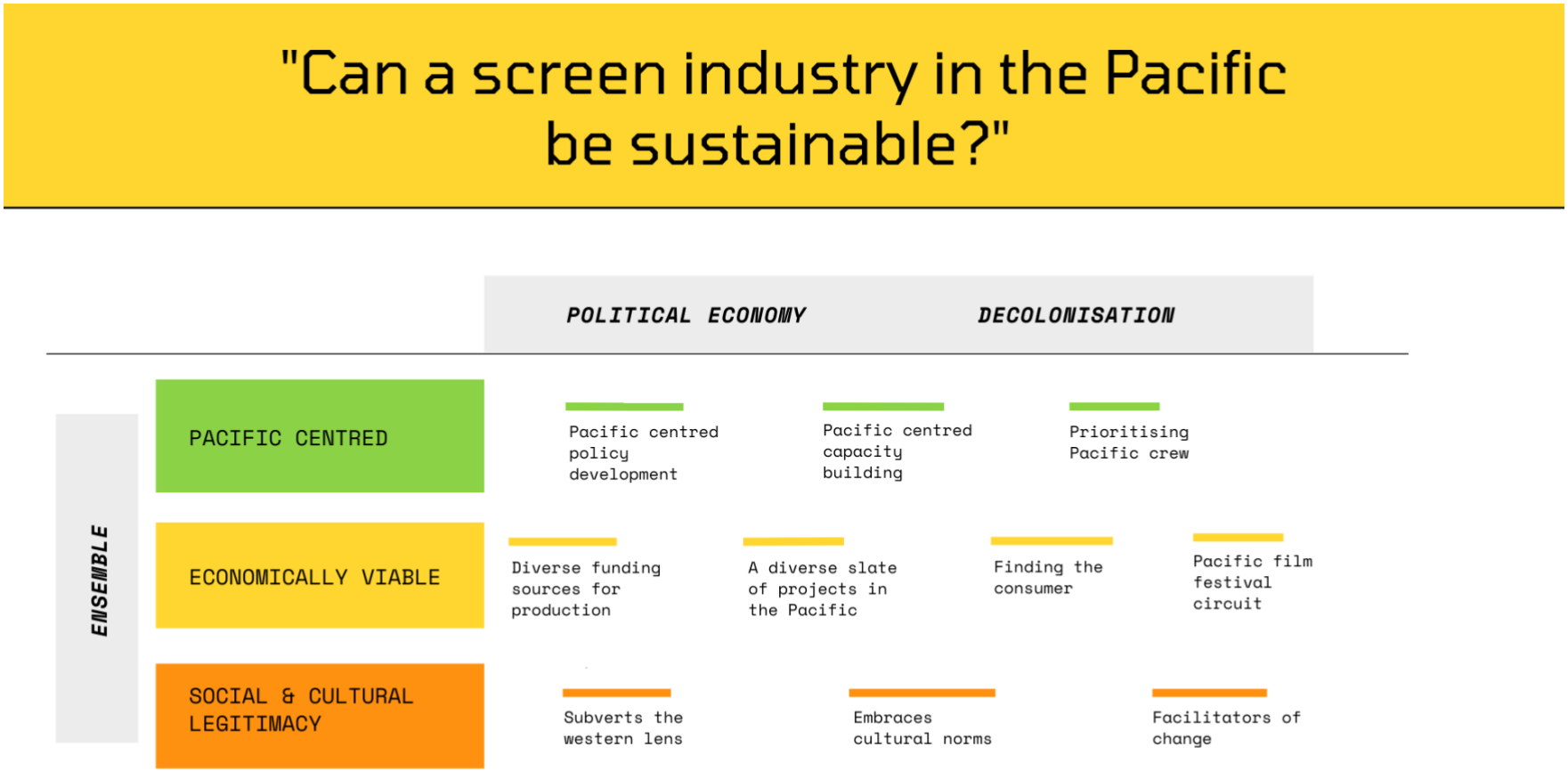
Figure 1 presents an overview of my approach in this thesis. The three sustainability elements, shown on the left side, are colour coded in the same way that various production departments would be. These core elements are the drivers of sustainability in the same way that production units drive a film shoot. The concepts of political economy and decolonisation sit on the top of the timeline, where the weeks of a production schedule would usually sit. In this way, political economy and decolonisation act as the conceptual lenses through which I identify change towards sustainability.

A key difference with a production schedule is that these lenses are not time centred. This is deliberate as I consider that to recalibrate the global screen industry's current economic dynamics, a Pacific regional screen industry will inherently occupy a decolonised space. To understand the current state of the global screen industry and the need to recalibrate global economic dynamics it is important to start with a critical analysis of the political economy of film and to end with a discussion on the decolonisation of screen and screen practices in the Pacific region.

The conceptual framework outlines the required process for a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. The outcomes of these processes will be presented with the findings of this research in Scene Seven. In the following section, I clarify the elements of sustainability used in this research. I worked with Papua New Guinean tattoo artist and documentary maker Julia Mage'au Gray (Melanesian Marks) to create visual representations of these core elements. The art of tattooing has endured in parts of the region and is being revitalised in other parts. Mage'au Gray is a critical player in this movement in PNG, as documented in *Tep Tok, Reading Between Our Lines* (Mage'au Gray, 2015) and *Tep Tok, Our Lines Connect Us* (Mage'au Gray, 2020). I have specifically chosen to use Pacific motifs created by a tattooist to symbolise the three elements of Pacific screen for aesthetic reasons.

Aside from being a region wide practice, the geometric patterns of Pacific tattooing efficiently present these elements as systems while placing them in the context of a Pacific cultural history and tradition.

Figure 1. Hollywood in the Pacific – Conceptual Framework



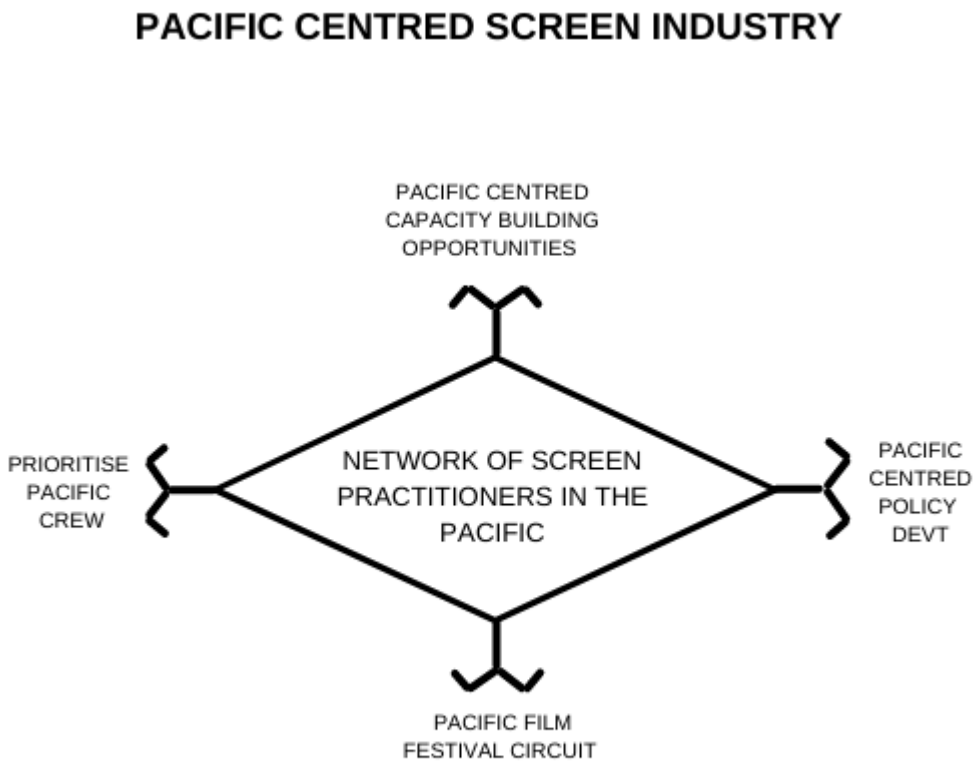
Pacific centred

Considering the opportunities and drivers of a sustainable screen industry is a critical first step towards developing the necessary regional structures and capacities of such an industry. I consider that a primary pre-requisite for these regional structures is that they be constructed with Pacific centred building blocks. I define a Pacific centred regional screen industry as one in which Pacific governments develop policy and regulations around screen industry, local training and mentoring opportunities are nurtured, and where local and international screen projects prioritise the employment of local crew.

To illustrate a Pacific centred screen industry, Julia Mage'au Gray and I utilised the *malu* (pictured in Image 2). *Malu* can mean shelter or protection in Pacific languages. I use the *malu* allegorically: the four corners of the diamond represent separate pillars upholding a figurative structure. Each pillar represents a requisite cornerstone of a Pacific centred industry. Each pillar 'protects' the centre of a Pacific centred screen industry, which I suggest is a network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners. Together, each of these different aspects of the *malu* emphasise the importance of screen productions being Pacific led. This idea builds on screen industry practices in 'Fourth World Film' which suggests that creating educational opportunities, guided by sound policy and practice, unique to the Pacific and owned by the Pacific will give agency to the region. It will also provide economic opportunity for those participating in the sector.

A Pacific centred screen industry would be locally minded and allow for the region to grow local and regional revenue streams. As more Pacific Island creatives take up the mantle of screen production, more regional networks and island-based projects can be established. By developing a sustainable Pacific screen industry and subsequent screen practices, collective and systematic screen sovereignty could be achieved as demonstrated in other Indigenous communities (Coe, 2000). Decolonisation of screen in the Pacific gives the region the opportunity to challenge stereotypes and place for itself at the centre of a narrative that has historically merely used the Pacific as a backdrop.

Image 2. *Le Malu* – A Pacific Centred Screen Industry



A political economy lens supports an exploration of the distribution of resources and revenue in the screen industry to the Global North (Wasko, 2004). This occurs globally, but an important, and documented, example of this dynamic exists in Canada. Pendakur (1990) approaches the analysis of Canadian film's dependence on the US through what he calls, 'radical political economy'. Specifically, Pendakur looks at how Hollywood's utilising of tax-free thresholds in Canada has monopolised its screen industry and skilled crew for Hollywood films at most locations. Others also expand on this practice (see, for example, Elmer & Gasher, 2005). Canada's screen industry, while well developed, is smaller than that of Hollywood – both in terms of box office revenue and global reach. More films made in Canada are described as 'independent'. This, in effect, has created a space where the Canadian industry prioritises Hollywood productions for locations and crew.

The exploitation of resources in the screen industry continues globally at varying levels. The key difference between Canada and the Pacific is the screen industry of the Pacific remains under-developed. The film, television and documentary projects that have been shot in the Pacific over the last 130 years have influenced only small pockets of industry in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Guåhan, French Polynesia and Kuki Airani. Cottage industries exist in Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Kiribati. Hawai'i has a relatively active screen industry through its position as a state of the US enabling an economical and sustainable platform for Pacific screen practitioners.

Political economy allows a particular lens through which to see the continuing challenges of the Pacific screen industry. I use political economy to understand and explore the current dynamics of global screen industry and its relationship to the Pacific. I consider the extent to which altering and decolonising these screen practices in the region, to be Pacific centred and encourage story sovereignty (Stephens, 2021) would boost sustainability in Pacific screen. The importance of story sovereignty has been demonstrated in the decolonisation discourse surrounding 'fourth world film' and 'fourth cinema' (Barclay, 2003(a)(b); Columpar, 2010).

> ... Indigenous film moving away from any 'indebtedness' to national film, reclaiming its history and land, creating its own conventions and techniques of filmmaking, and finally an autonomous identity, separate from any national or western influence (Herrington, 2011, p. 2).

'Fourth world film' is a vital part of understanding the purpose of sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. Developing structures that empower aspiring Pacific practitioners to tell their own stories on screen moves it away from any 'indebtedness' to outside influence. Developing these structures to create policy and thus 'conventions' and 'techniques' unique to the Pacific will provide economic freedom and reframe paradigms that Pacific communities have lived within for some time. Such structures are fundamental to Pacific people who know their own stories and have been watching less informed versions told by external people for decades. I am also interested in understanding how structures can be created that centre the Pacific in screen because of the need for locally minded structures and policies to

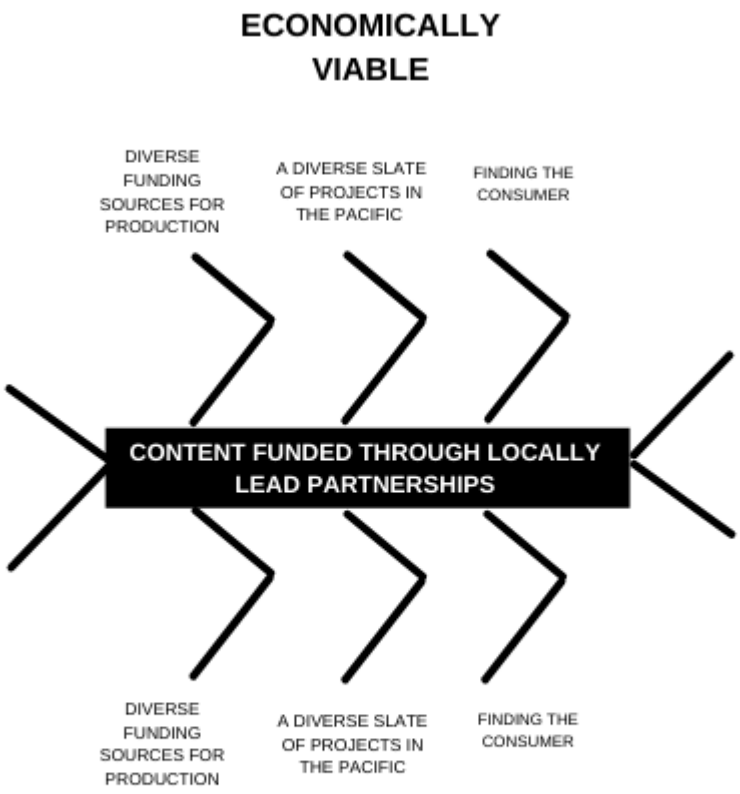
ensure the region can grow local and regional revenue streams for sustainably distribution back to the region.

Economically viable

Screen based projects are inherently economic activities. They require capital to be initiated and diversified marketing and budget strategies to make a return on investment. As with any macroeconomy, the screen industry is a montage of small businesses, large-scale companies, sole traders and so forth. In investigating the possible development and sustainability of screen industry in the Pacific, this research will critically analyse the social and economic structures of the global industry. I am interested in the extent to which Pacific screen could be sustained through greater availability and diversification of local funding, incoming and ongoing local and offshore screen projects, and a growing demand for content/a bigger audience in the Pacific. Using political economy analysis, this research assesses the constructed binary of 'Global South' and 'Global North' in the international screen industry, and how this affects the overall sustainability of screen industry in the Pacific for the Pacific

Continuing with the graphic representations collaboratively produced with PNG tattoo artist and documentary maker Julia Mage'au Gray, I portray economic viability as a centipede. The centipede, or *atualoa* in Samoan, is an insect that is present all over the region. It also commonly strikes fear all over the island Pacific, for the pain that its bites cause. This motif symbolises the more aggressive aspects of sustainable industry development, with the three 'legs' of economic viability evident along the centipede's body. The centipede also reminds Pacific islanders of small dangers, keeping us accountable and ensuring that we are always walking with our eyes open. I consider that economic viability would ultimately be evident in a canon of Pacific content that has been funded and produced through locally led partnerships. Therefore, this key indicator of economic viability is represented as the body of the centipede.

Image 3. *Le Atualoa* – An Economically Viable Pacific Screen Industry



Political economy analysis is again used to uncover the economic difficulties confronting the development of a screen industry in the Pacific region. On a domestic level, many Pacific economies operate on a 'MIRAB' model: migration, remittances, aid and public bureaucracy (Bertram & Watters, 1985). These elements are mostly reliant on external activity. Financial injections often come from aid organisations, and money being sent home from transnational communities (Lowy Institute, 2020). These financial returns supplement the lives of families living in the islands.

Geographically, many parts of the Pacific are remote. They are remote from international metropoles - and perhaps more pertinently - remote from each other. Colonial ties and exclusive economic zones in the Pacific prevent Samoans or Tongans from travelling directly to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, or Guam. The size of islands prevents Yap or Chuuk peoples in the FSM from being

able to fly directly from anywhere outside of Micronesia or the Marianas (this is the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guåhan); and Tokelau from being accessed by anything but a weekly ferry from Samoa. In the case of Tokelau, it is also the small nature of the atoll island nation that prevents the construction of a runway to receive flights. These elements demonstrate what is needed to achieve this research's economic sub-pillars. Pacific nations' lack of economic wealth affects the hope of distribution of local funding to screen cultures outside of advertising. As I discuss in Scene Two, until recently, screen has existed as an offshore activity, transplanted into the region, using the Pacific's natural resources, or observing the Pacific way of life and culture. Local screen projects have been largely non-existent. As a result, it has been hard to convince Pacific governments to make a financial investment in basic screen infrastructure when there has been no demonstrable ongoing regional economic benefit.

The question of where screen industry occurs is also relevant. Presently, offshore and local projects are commonplace for Hawai'i and are growing in other parts of the Pacific. I am interested in where island communities are both extremely familiar, and unfamiliar, with screen practice. These questions particularly help to illustrate the economic viability of screen industry in the region expressed as a measure of regular collective interaction among screen practitioners across the Pacific, or screen practitioner collaboration following local government consultation, planning and endorsement.

With growing local and offshore screen practice, a growth in audience and demand for screen-based work should occur, both in the Pacific and with international audiences. An example of global screen industry that has steadily increased its audience and demand is Bollywood. German market and consumer data company Statista, listed Bollywood as the third highest grossing global film industry in 2019, behind Hollywood and Cinema of China (Statista, 2021). Bollywood surpassed both in sale of cinema tickets, and generating audience demand, passing Cinema of China's box office takings by 200 million (United States) dollars and Hollywood by 800 million (United States) dollars. With screen practice and screen culture virtually non-existent in the wider Pacific, there is much to do in audience development. My own observations as a film festival director and screen practitioner are that transnational Pacific communities do not attend film festivals or independent cinema.

They will, however, attend commercial cinemas and consume mainstream and commercial screen projects. Marketing strategies of the PFF have always been targeted at Pacific audiences in Australia and Aotearoa, working with notable members of the community to drive Pacific audiences to the festival. Sessions with targeted marketing strategies have sold out, whereas audiences for sessions with less marketing usually only occupy 20 to 50 per cent of the cinema.

The team organising the Aotearoa premiere of Tongan documentary *For My Father's Kingdom* (Mafile'o & Tauamiti, 2019) hired coaches to travel to areas of Auckland with large Tongan/Pacific communities, and transport them to the premiere in Auckland city free of charge. These strategies have been used over the last ten years to encourage Pacific audiences to view a more diverse slate of screen projects, especially from Pacific practitioners. Pacific practitioners statistically do not make big budget or commercial screen projects. Tusi Tamasese has made work critically acclaimed by his peers – including *O le Tufale: The Orator* and *One Thousand Ropes* – usually on small independent budgets. Auto ethnographic evidence showed that directors Diane Anton (PNG) and Mark Eby (Australia) worked on a micro-budget to make the independent debut feature *Aliko and Ambai* (2017). These examples do not record the scale of budget involved because of their independent nature.

By comparison, the works produced through Samoan actor Dwayne Johnson's production company Seven Bucks Productions are well financed and well reported. *Fast & the Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw* (Leitch, 2019) was co-produced through Seven Bucks for an estimated 200 million (United States) dollars (IMDB, no date), and went on to gross almost 760 million (United States) dollars at the global box office. In television, Seven Bucks co-produced *Young Rock* (Khan & Chiang, 2021-), a biographical television show based around Johnson's life. Exact budget numbers for this show are not available, although Screen Australia data provides a useful proxy: approximately 59 per cent of Australian television series or serials cost between one and six million (Australian) dollars (Screen Australia, 2021). This comparison demonstrates how accessible Pacific screen projects currently are to Pacific transnational audiences.

In many parts of the region, audience development is non-existent. Nauru does not have a cinema. Tokelau, Tuvalu, parts of the Marianas and FSM, Tonga, Niue, Kiribati and Vanuatu also lack cinemas. Broadcasters in the Pacific are not accustomed to commissioning narrative content, thus the majority of locally acquired and created television content is news or talk show related. The current online streaming revolution allows Pacific screen practitioners to reach audiences in the region through alternatives to cinema and television, such as phone or tablet. Gillard (2000, p. 117) describes audience development as 'an applied form of audience analysis which reveals to an organisation the nature of its different audiences'. Gillard goes on to analyse the changes in this analysis given the rise in new and digital media. Anecdotally, Pacific practitioners have initiated work to analyse and develop audience viewing patterns in Pacific communities. This research and analysis has not been undertaken at a larger scale. The NZFC has, however, made connections with Pacific business to work with transnational Pacific communities in Aotearoa.

Social and Cultural Legitimacy

Creating a screen industry in the Pacific that has social and cultural legitimacy is essential for a Pacific centred industry. Social and cultural legitimacy presumes the development of frameworks in which Pacific practitioners can legitimately run their projects in an industry that embraces the cultural norms of Pacific communities (both transnational and island based); employ local facilitators and producers; and actively subverts a 'Western' lens.

In Image 4, social and cultural legitimacy is visualised as a frigate bird. The frigate, or the *atafa* in Samoan, is found mostly in tropical climates; thus, it is a familiar staple of the Pacific. It also has deep cultural significance. The frigate's feet and wings carry these key elements of screen legitimacy in the Pacific. On its back, the frigate carries the ultimate manifestation of social and cultural legitimacy: locally minded infrastructure. This is the metaphorical scaffolding of a screen industry that understands the nuances of the Pacific, the developing nature of screen culture, and the facilitation of screen production within these parameters.

Image 4. *Le Atafa* – A Socially and Culturally Legitimate Pacific Screen Industry

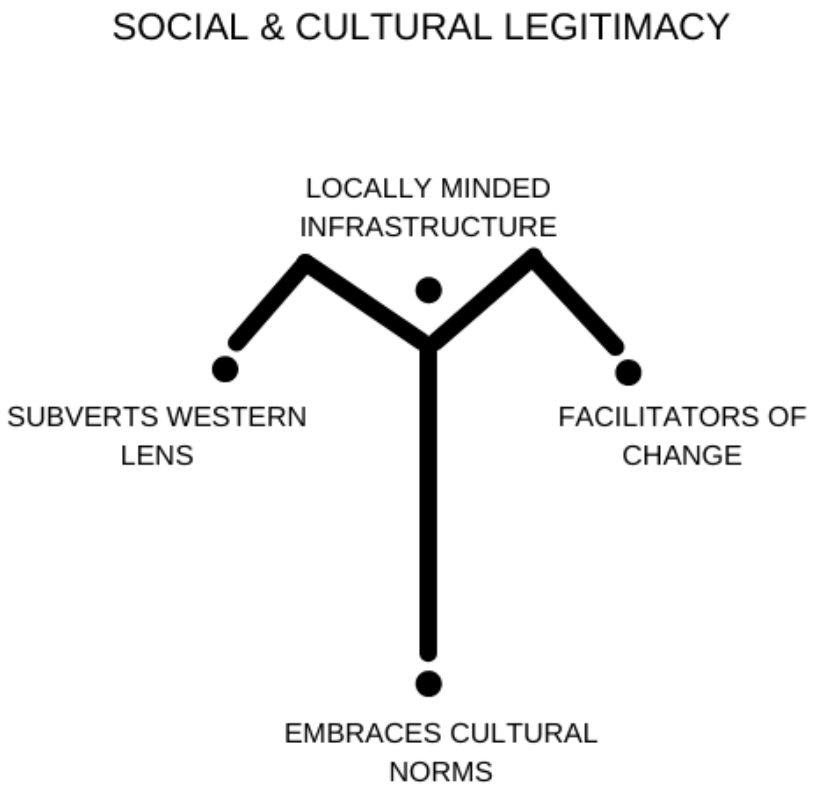


Image 4 illustrates the creation of structures that decolonise representation of the Pacific on screen, thus creating independence and sovereignty (Banivanua Mar, 2016) over stories told about the Pacific. Understanding 'Fourth World Film' (Barclay (a)(b), 2003; Herrington, 2011) as a concept however is key to the removal of any sense of 'indebtedness' among Pacific screen communities to western influence(s), and thus focal to achieving social and cultural legitimacy.

A key example of a structure built using 'Fourth World Film' principles is the Indigenous film festival circuit. ImagineNATIVE Media and Arts Festival (iN) is the biggest Indigenous film and arts festival in the world. In its 28 years, the festival has developed parameters to define Indigenous film. Their eligibility criteria for the festival is as follows:

FILM + VIDEO:

- The Director must be Indigenous;

- Joint creative positions, co-Director, co-Writer, co-Producer, may be considered, with additional requirements clarifying the creative and decision-making processes, by the iN Artistic Director.

DIGITAL + INTERACTIVE: (e.g. Videogames, VR, 360)

- The lead Designer (Director) is Indigenous;
- If the lead Designer is not Indigenous, then both the narrative Designer (Writer) and lead Programmer (Producer) must be Indigenous;
- Joint creative positions, co-lead Designer, co-narrative Designer, co-lead Programmer, may be considered, with additional requirements clarifying the creative and decision-making processes, by the iN Artistic Director (ImagineNative, 2022).

iN's criteria ensure that the lead creative team on all projects submitted are from Indigenous communities. iN thus defines Indigenous film and media by its ownership in key creative roles. It does not prescribe which roles between the writer, director and producer need to be held by Indigenous practitioners, just that at least two of them are. As mentioned, this research does not seek to define 'Pacific film' or 'Pacific screen' in the same way. iN's framework is proposed as a 'best practice' model to achieve a Pacific screen industry's social and cultural legitimacy. This thesis encourages the criteria of having Pacific key creatives on-screen projects. In doing so, a regional screen industry would be actively seeking to employ local facilitators and producers.

As an organisation, iN demonstrates a structure that facilitates the distribution of Indigenous screen, and the sustainability of this practice. By conducting research and analysis influenced by this framework, this thesis demonstrates – through a political economy and decolonisation lens – the parameters in which screen industry could achieve sustainability in the Pacific. I am interested in how this dynamic operates in the Pacific and whether iN's structure can be transferred to the Pacific screen industry and practices alongside policy developed by other organisations, such as Screen Australia and the New Zealand Film Commission.

Thesis outline

Scene One has outlined the motivation and rationale for this research. I have detailed and defined the research question and relevant points in the Pacific screen literature that drive these questions. This Scene also introduces and explores the complex interdependency of the core elements that define my conceptual framework: being Pacific centred, economically viable, and socially and culturally legitimate.

Scene Two justifies the importance of screen industry sustainability in the Pacific by analysing and reflecting on representation, economy and culture in specific examples of Pacific screen, and related literature from the discipline of cultural studies. Scene Two analyses these concepts and global screen practices, and how they have been experienced in the Pacific. Scene Two details my argument that a sustainable screen industry is important for three reasons. First, because representation matters and only a sustainable screen industry will allow Pacific experiences and Pacific stories to be shared authentically by Pacific Islanders. Second, a screen industry must be sustainable to support Pacific economic development, job creation and skills development. Finally, a screen industry must not extract or misrepresent Pacific stories and experience.

In Scene Three I outline my methodology as a Pacific-appropriate multipronged and mixed method approach that identifies the extent to which a sustainable screen industry could be developed in the Pacific. This method also incorporates my own knowledge of, and work experience in, the sector. I combine the qualitative methods of *talanoa*-style interviews, participant observation and Pacific auto-ethnography – all undertaken at eight film festivals presenting Pacific screen projects that I attended during the 2019/20 film festival season – with a quantitative survey of screen practitioners from all over the region. This survey gathers and presents data on training and mentoring, screen production networks, places to purchase/rent equipment, peak bodies and funding available. This will be illustrated as an infrastructure map, which has been made in two formats, static and interactive.

Scene Four is focused on the first of the components of sustainable Pacific screen industry, namely that it must be ***Pacific centred.*** Scene Four uses empirical data collected through interviews, Pacific auto-ethnography, and a quantitative survey of

the region. I analyse this data to understand how the availability of capacity building activities and educational institutions for Pacific screen practitioners currently services Pacific screen industry, what policy development there is for screen production in Pacific nations, why there is a need to prioritise the employment of Pacific crew, and how the Pacific can usefully develop its nascent Pacific film festival circuit. In analysing these elements of Pacific focus, I suggest that a clear manifestation would be a visible and active network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners across the region. Scene Four provides the foundation for a sustainable Pacific screen industry, setting the parameters in which the other components of economic viability and social and cultural legitimacy intersect.

Scene Five unpacks the second component of Pacific screen industry sustainability, namely, ***economic viability***. I again utilise and analyse empirical data gathered in *talanoa*-style interviews, Pacific auto-ethnography, and the quantitative survey to understand what funding is available for screen production in the Pacific, and how these streams currently serve the work of Pacific screen practitioners. I also analyse the importance of diversified funding streams for the Pacific screen industry, namely the prevalence of offshore and locally created workforce opportunities. I consider the importance of a demand for content and the development of a bigger audience, not only to substantiate the need for Pacific screen industry, but also as a contribution to the diversity of funding streams. I suggest that to achieve economic viability, Pacific screen requires content that is funded through locally led and created funding streams.

Scene Six presents the findings related to Pacific screen industry's ***social and cultural legitimacy.*** Here, I interrogate the empirical data to understand how screen practice currently embraces cultural norms in the Pacific, and the importance of local facilitators and producers in establishing and maintaining industry legitimacy. I also analyse how Pacific screen can subvert a Western lens established through the global screen industry, to achieve social and cultural legitimacy. I suggest that this legitimacy would be evident through the building of locally minded infrastructure.

Scene Seven presents the thesis conclusions. Scene Seven also discusses the data presented in this thesis as a unique contribution to the literature on Pacific film and

screen practice, by aligning the findings with my conceptual framework and within the body of academic literature.

Scene Two: *Gafataulima* – The Importance of Sustainable Screen Industry

Introduction

Scene Two situates the idea of sustainability in the broader discussion of screen industry in the Pacific. Through an elaboration of specific examples of Pacific screen, and related debates in the literature, Scene Two grounds the meaning of a 'sustainable' regional screen industry and in doing so, defends its importance. While the projects and literature referred to in this chapter are not exhaustive, they have been selected to illustrate three core aspects of screen sustainability: an industry that **represents** the Pacific experience, supports the development of Pacific **economies**; and preserves and supports Pacific **culture**. Scene Two has been titled *Gafataulima,* which is the Samoan word for preserve or preserved, sitting in line with the purpose of this scene to demarcate the poles of a sustainable Pacific screen industry. The word *gafataulima* has been previously used in theological scholarship (Wulf, 2016) to explore the discrepancy between a 'perfect portrait' of the world, as conceptualised in the Bible (Genesis 1: 1-2: 4a) and the current state of the world's natural disasters. Wulf applies *gafataulima* as a tripartite perspective to understand whether the world was in fact created 'good' (2016: ii). In a similar way, I use the term to establish whether the Pacific screen industry can be 'preserved' sustainably.

These aspects are closely mirrored in my conceptual framework. This framework supports an original approach to the study of Pacific screen. In part, this is because I approach the research from the perspective of a Pacific screen practitioner, highlighting the importance of a Pacific perspective in a space that non-Pacific voices have dominated. My vision for a future industry – which underpins this chapter – is based in my experience as a Pacific Islander, and as a member of the Pacific screen community.

Representation

With the evolution of screen practice, the importance of representation has become more and more significant. The invention of film birthed cinema, television, giving rise to today's multitude of digital viewing and streaming opportunities. While

storytelling in the visual medium has traditionally been dominated by practitioners in the Global North, by the early 21st century, screen storytelling had become available *en masse* to international populations. Pearson notes the significant role cinema has played in the 'historical and contemporary depictions of the Pacific' (2010, p. 105). Pearson also remarks on the universal disdain for these depictions in Pacific academic and screen communities for their 'gross' misrepresentation of the region. In this literature, Pearson uses the documentary *Act of War: The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation* (Puhipau, 1993) as a reflective tool to understand how this work made by Pacific practitioners, replicates the practices of the structures that it seeks to dismantle.

Streaming services, social media, digital downloads and television have revolutionised consumption (Currah, 2003), reaching even remote parts of the Pacific, through smartphones and internet connection (Cave, 2012). This reach equates to new global demographics. Yet these demographics have not realised equal benefits of representation in perspective from the global screen industry (Erigha, 2015). In a report focused on television drama, Screen Australia noted that the cultural diversity of the Australian community is not reflected in its television productions (2016, p. 3). Pacific transnational communities in Australia suffer from a lack of representation in mainstream media. Screen Australia's report was executed to provide benchmarks for exploring diversity in Australian media. The report also investigates the institutional barriers that have limited change until now. By studying the nuances of representation in global screen sectors, this section emphasises how a sustainable regional screen industry could uplift the representation of Pacific experiences and Pacific people, both in the region and internationally.

Scene One of this thesis touched on the complexities of the Pacific's relationship with film and now screen. Pacific communities are not accustomed to having their stories or perspectives accurately represented. Despite this, cameras have been documenting the Pacific for over a century. It is important to reiterate that the Pacific has existed on screen for as long as film has existed and many physical manifestations have endured (Fineman, 2022). Within this dynamic, the Pacific has been starved of its own perspective, obstructed from the front of its own narrative. In *Hollywood's Hawai'i: Race, Nation, and War*, Konzett (2017) discusses this dynamic

of representation in the context of Hawai‘i’s annexation and eventual American statehood:

> This reversal of cause and effect in which cinematic reality would appear to have preceded reality also applies to the perception of modern Hawai‘i, which can be roughly dated to the end of its monarchy and the rise of cinema. The perception of this remote and newly acquired territory by a wider mass audience on the mainland occurred predominantly through the illusion of cinema. Not surprisingly, the earliest existing film footage of Hawai‘i dates to its annexation in 1898 and was shot by James H. White and W. Bleckyrden of the Edison Manufacturing Company on their trip to the Philippines, which entailed a stopover in the harbor of Honolulu (2017, p. 10).

Similar instances occur around the Pacific region. Academics at the Centre of Pacific Island Studies (CPIS), University of Hawai‘i, have collated the ethnographic documentaries of non-Pacific screen practitioners made in the early 20th century (Aoki & Douglas, 1994). Around the time of production for Robert Flaherty’s (1926) *Moana*, considered the world’s first docufiction film, a stream of ethnographic content was made, including in Aotearoa (*Hinemoa* [Tarr, 1914]), Australia (specifically in the Torres Strait Islands), FSM and PNG (*Jungle Woman* [Hurley, 2016]).

In the decades following, the Pacific served as a backdrop for ‘new beginning’ dramas, inspired by travel writing and a sense of adventure after World War One (*Sadie Thomson,* [Walsh, 1928]). The Pacific became the backdrop of some now iconic cinematic tropes, such as the ‘beachcomber’ (Konzett, 2017, p.21). Key depictions of Pacific history have lacked in representation of a Pacific perspective. A prime example is the story of the mutiny on the HMS Bounty. This story has been retold on screen numerous times (Longford, 1916; Lloyd, 1935; Milestone & Brandon, 1962; Donaldson, 1984). These iterations of the real-life story of the HMS Bounty follow the perspective of the mutineers and the ship's crew members. Though these films have represented the associated Pacific people, who travelled with the ship and eventually settled on Pitcairn Island with the mutineers, all of these representations have been from the perspective of non-Pacific characters. That is, there is no real effort to unpack or research the intentions of the Pacific people who were a part of this event in Pacific history.

Today, geopolitical and colonial ties affect the strength of screen production networks in the Pacific. They create barriers for the distribution of screen projects across the region, especially for those produced by independent Pacific practitioners. This creates a deficiency in Pacific screen practice and affects the visibility of Pacific storytelling on screen, thus hampering the successful representation of Pacific life and Pacific experience internationally and Pacific communities in the region. Pacific communities may benefit culturally and socially from this interaction or gain inspiration from the work.

In *Militarized Currents,* Shigematsu and Camacho (2010) discuss how Japanese and US militarisation in the Pacific has strengthened connections in specific parts of the Pacific, calling them 'political geographies'. These connections are strong in Guåhan's links to Hawai'i, both as territories of the United States (US) with a history of Japanese presence. Both island nations experienced the heavy militarisation of the US and Japanese forces during World War Two (2010, p. xix). Guåhan continues to serve as a defence force base for the US. CHamoru students in Guåhan, have a pipeline to study at the University of Hawai'i. Economically, both territories use the US dollar. These commonalities have created a mutual awareness between Guåhan and Hawai'i.

At FestPAC 2016, held in Guåhan, critical discourse circulated amongst CHamoru artists about the Guåhan government's use of the festival as political resource, when the purpose of FestPAC is to cultivate and mobilise Pacific culture (Na'puti & Frain, 2017). Working with CHamoru artists during the festival, I participated in discussions that criticised Guam Tourism's use of the phrase 'Håfa Adai Spirit' in tourism campaigns surrounding the festival. The idiom, commonly used in Hawai'i, replaced the maoli greeting 'Aloha' with the CHamoru 'Håfa Adai'. This move was criticised for borrowing Hawaiian cultural idioms, and for a lack of originality in developing Guåhan's own cultural identity. Conversations such as this reinforce the 'political geography' and connection that both island nations have to each other. With this in mind, it is also important to discuss the physical distance of the two territories. Guåhan and Hawai'i, sit on opposite sides of the Pacific. Guåhan is closer to Papua New Guinea than it is to Hawai'i and sits in the same time zone as Port Moresby. Despite this Guåhan does not seemingly hold cultural, social or political ties with its neighbour, which is a key illustration of the ways in which geopolitics and colonialism

are currently affecting the success of Pacific screen practice, its distribution and its representation.

These examples illustrate the misrepresentation or lack of representation of the Pacific experience and Pacific people on screen. The Pacific continues to be depicted by non-Pacific screen practitioners in documentary and narrative screen projects (Landman & Ballard, 2010). As audiences become globally connected through streaming services (Netflix, Hulu, Apple+), they demonstrate a desire to see diverse representation in mainstream programming. The key takeaway from UCLA's *Hollywood Diversity Report* (Hunt & Ramón, 2021), was that audiences watched more diverse projects, both in theatres and online. It also noted higher numbers of representation in all 'key categories' behind the camera (writers, directors, producers). Unfortunately, equity in budgets across this scale of representation had not yet been achieved. These trends emphasise the delayed response of the screen industry to the importance of diverse representation. The creation of positions at Screen Australia, such as the recently appointed Diversity Inclusion Manager in 2021, demonstrates an intention of peak bodies to start or continue conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This role, currently filled by Fijian-Australian administrator Jackie Leewai, investigates and develops strategy around capacity building in diverse screen communities, and audience development.

Similar to the technique foregrounded by Pearson (2010), this section will use recent examples of Pacific screen to illustrate how sustainable screen industry will uplift and contribute to accurate representations of the Pacific and its communities. This section will demonstrate that this representation is holistic, and not restricted to the visual. Selected screen projects, have been nominated based on concurrence with this research, and demonstration of a broad scope of screen practice (that is, film, television, documentary, online, social media based). This section establishes discussions about the influence that a sustainable Pacific screen industry could have by analysing these projects and their journey of Pacific representation.

In monitoring the diversity of television in the Netherlands, Koeman and colleagues (2007) quote Berger & Luckmann (1966) acknowledges that discursive practices are vehicles for socially constructed knowledge and power. The media not only reflect or represent social entities but also construct and constitute them:

> … media products are not only reflections of reality but they also help construct it. Prejudices are shaped subtly or clearly, and research is far from univocal here, according to the ways in which members of a group, e.g. ethnic minorities, are represented and framed in media messages (Koeman et al., 2007, p. 98).

A key case study of Pacific representation is the presence of Pacific communities in mainstream television and film in Aotearoa. The Pacific community is arguably not well represented on screen in Aotearoa, despite being an active part of the country's national identity (Naepi & Manuela, 2019; Pearson, 1999). Pamatatau (2012) categorises representations of Pacific communities in mainstream Aotearoa media in three streams. The first is in 'festivals', the catch-all notion of Pacific islanders as a decorative news item. Second is in 'famine', which encompasses all that is negative about the Pacific population in the New Zealand news cycle, such as obesity, diabetes, low home ownership and wages. Between these two is a space that Pamatatau calls 'the silence' (2012, p. 189). A vision-less, voice-less gap in the broadcast journalism landscape is located between the jovial and hyper-negative representations of Aotearoa-Pacific identity.

Pacific led shows such as *Tagata Pasifika* (Stehlin, 1987-)*, Pacific Beat St* (Wolfgramm, 2004-09) and *Fresh TV* (McGillis, 2011-) demonstrate nuance in the Pacific community, predicated on the creative direction of Pacific writers and producers. While representation of the Pacific condition in Aotearoa was found in these projects, the Pacific ownership of these shows emphasised the possibility of the industry's representation and participation in it. Anecdotal evidence proves that these projects pointedly trained and employed emerging Pacific creatives to technical crew positions on these projects. These measures ensured that the inspiration these projects provided to Pacific practitioners was eventually converted into practicing members of screen industry from the Pacific community.

Disney's **Moana**

Perhaps one of the biggest and most well-known of recent Pacific stories on screen, is Disney's *Moana* (Musker & Clements, 2016). Disney's global reach, pushed the Pacific to the forefront of mainstream popular culture through this blockbuster movie. This section will discuss the importance of *Moana* in relation to representation of the Pacific. I will do this by unpacking Disney's engagement with the Pacific community

in *Moana's* early creative process, the push back of transnational academics and activists, and the eventual reception of the project by the Pacific community.

It is important to note that *Moana's* key creative team could not be considered 'Pacific' in the sense of the project being Pacific owned or led. Disney's *Moana* was written and directed by non-Pacific practitioners. Hollywood's push for diverse representation in casting and creative teams, and Disney's own fraught history with representation (Daniel & Custalow, 2007) – notably with the experience of films *Pocahontas* (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995), *Mulan* (Bancroft & Crook, 1998), and the fictional friends, *Lilo & Stitch* (Sanders & DeBlois, 2002), also set in the Pacific – prompted Musker and Clement to engage Pacific professionals, academics and screen creatives as consultants on *Moana* (Tamaira & Fonoti, 2018). Once formed, the group was called the Oceanic Story Trust (Hereniko, 2019).

In early stages of development, Māori writer/director Taika Waititi wrote the first draft of the *Moana* script (Hunt, 2017), though he is not credited as such in the final film. The Trust also included seafaring expert Nainoa Thomson and Samoan musicologist Igelese Ete. The strategy behind the Oceanic Trust was to ensure that *Moana's* story, which was Pacific-centred, maintained authenticity and quality in its representation of Pacific stories and culture. However, while the Oceanic Trust served as a repository of knowledge for the *Moana* writing team, the crew ultimately became entirely non-Pacific.

Consultants Vilsoni Hereniko and Dionne Fonoti have both reflected on their experiences as part of the Oceanic Story Trust, interrogating the consultative process, Disney's intentions behind its creation, and the authenticity of representation. In exploring the notion of 'authenticity' in Disney's *Moana*, Hereniko (2019, p. 148) reflects on his own role in the project's creative development, acknowledging that 'complete authentic representation' in such a blockbuster movie was highly unlikely. Despite this, Hereniko appreciates Disney's attempt to create an environment of authenticity on *Moana,* and suggests that there are instances of this in the final product.

Tamaira and Fonoti consider the way in which the Oceanic Story Trust encouraged and enabled the Disney 'conglomerate' to move beyond a 'fixation on paradise' (2018, p. 298) toward a perspective that was more inclusive of Pacific viewpoints.

These authors recognise Disney's past work in the Pacific, usually set in Hawai'i. They compare the short film *Hawaiian Holiday* (Sharpsteen, 1938) to Disney's *The Parent Trap: Hawaiian Honeymoon* (Miller, 1989) which was produced 51 years later and yet continued the same stereotypes of the Pacific as a paradise full of 'hackneyed cultural motifs and performances that are saturated with debasing racist overtones' (p. 310). Tamaira and Fonoti acknowledge Disney's genuine attempts to address this history in the Pacific, especially where stories drawn directly from Indigenous Pacific ideology are used, which is the case with *Moana.* The creation of the Oceanic Story Trust marked the first time that a Disney Story Trust did not consist predominantly of what Tamaira and Fonoti call 'Disney insiders' (2018, p. 312). This Disney tradition was defied in the name of authentic representation in *Moana*. Tamaira and Fonoti also note that Fonoti accepted the invitation to join the Trust with the knowledge that this was the first time in history that Pacific people had been invited to be a part of the development process. They conclude that *Moana's* consultative process and the establishment of the Oceanic Story Trust presents 'a prototype for a new era in respectful and collaborative storytelling' (2018, p. 318). Thus, both Hereniko (2019) and Tamaira and Fonoti (2018) consider that the film making process attempted to – and, at times, succeeded in – authentically representing the region.

The search for the voice of *Moana* was considered fundamental to the success of the story, and was sought chiefly from the Pacific community. Auditions were taken from performers in Hawai'i, Aotearoa, Australia and the continental US. Young women posted their auditions on social media. Casting director Rachel Sutton eventually found the voice of 'Moana' in Maoli actor Auli'i Cravalho. Arguably the most famous Pacific Islander in the world, Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson (Samoan) was cast in the role of 'Māui'. Well known Māori actors Temuera Morrison and Rachel House were cast as Moana's father 'Chief Tui' and grandmother, 'Gramma Tala'. International pop star Nicole Scherzinger, also of Maoli descent voiced 'Sina', Moana's mother. The concerted effort to work with known Pacific performers on *Moana* demonstrated an effort from Disney to attract Pacific audiences and legitimise the project and its authenticity with a multilayered approach to community engagement.

Moana's soundtrack comprised another layer of Pacific commitment. Well-known Pacific band Te Vaka were enlisted to work alongside writer/director Lin-Manuel Miranda and Disney composer Mark Mancina, to contribute music to the *Moana* soundtrack. Composer and choir director Igelese Ete also worked on the soundtrack, leading choral group Pasifika Voices from the University of the South Pacific (Tamaira and Fonoti, 2018, p. 311). Ete is described as having self-funded his travel to Hollywood, to arrive and leave a message with Disney's studios about the fundamental importance of having Pacific voices on *Moana.* What resulted on the soundtrack was a mix of traditional Disney composition: Lin-Manuel Miranda's contemporary pop culture appeal coupled with the choral stylings of Te Vaka and the Pasifika Voices choir.

Disney's compromise in the making of *Moana* was to engage the Pacific community to attempt an authentic depiction of the Pacific that still followed a Disney formula for success (Lauer, 2017). The resulting soundtrack was reflective of that process. The influence of Te Vaka and the Pasifika Voices choir can be heard clearly in the opening and closing stanzas of the film. These bookends include the songs 'We Know the Way' (Foa'i & Miranda, 2016) and 'An Innocent Warrior' (Mahina et al., 2016). In the second act, Disney trademarks appear in story and music. Dwayne Johnson's 'You're Welcome', which has arguably no Pacific influence, appears in the second act. As does the quirky 'Shiny', performed by Jermaine Clement as 'Tamatoa'. As a Pacific Islander myself, authentic representation of culture is fundamental to my enjoyment of *Moana*. Thus, the second act is my least enjoyable section. Mainstream reviews of *Moana* and its soundtrack differ in opinion:

> Though the film's evocation of paradise is gorgeous, its first act is a snooze; it's only when Moana finds 'Maui' that the movie kicks into gear (Kois, 2016).

Moana's soundtrack was well received by the mainstream industry. Some critics went so far to say '*Moana* has some of Disney's best music ever' (Stewart, 2016). Five years after *Moana's* theatrical release, the movie's soundtrack was still selling in high quantities, topping the US Billboard chart for the fifty second time in August 2021 (Reimann, 2021). In a *Spinoff* interview with Te Vaka's lead singer Opetaia Foa'i, Samoan/Tuvaluan journalist Madeleine Chapman (2017) rates the

Moana soundtrack the best since *The Lion King*. In the interview, Foa'i notes the difference between the songs he worked on for *Moana*, and those he did not, rests in an understanding of culture:

> 'How Far I'll Go' was written by Lin, that's Lin's song. I'm more interested in our language – when that came in, I went 'mmm you have that one'. I'm only interested in ones that promote our culture. I can write in English but for this movie, to get the final product as I wanted it, my job was to put as much Pacific in it (Chapman, 2017).

Moana's soundtrack perpetuates the argument that the work of The Oceanic Story Trust created numerous authentic representations throughout the film. In the case of the soundtrack, this representation sits in the music closely associated with Te Vaka and Pasifika Voices. *Moana* also includes songs that resemble Disney music hallmarks, which are trusted to attract audiences and generate ticket sales and soundtrack purchases.

Disney's history with authentic representation of diverse communities (Benhamou, 2014) prepared Pacific commentators with an arsenal of reasons to be wary of *Moana*. Community consumption and criticism of almost every step in the *Moana* production process was palpable. Tamaira and Fonoti documented the criticism as 'attacks' (2018, p. 317) often occurring on social media, and to some degree unwarranted, as the film was still a relatively unknown quantity. *Moana* had not yet been released in any form. Fonoti refers to Merata Mita when reflecting on the conflict she encountered, citing *Moana* as a 'catalyst of change' (Mita, 1996), for which she felt a responsibility to insert Pacific voices, especially where the project would go ahead regardless of community indignation. The opposing side of this discussion, which included Pacific academics did not see how Disney could add any value to the representation of Pacific culture. They describe the two sides as follows:

> … we must remain attentive to the fact that, while some Indigenous stakeholders choose to adopt separatist strategies, others form strategic alliances with powerful actors to ensure a degree of control over how culture is represented… (Tamaira & Fonoti, 2018).

Yet despite Disney's own experiences with the consequence of inauthentic film production (Chief Roy Crazy Horse, 2017; Ho'omanawanui, 2008, p. 9) there was conflict in relation to *Moana's* creative development. This is clearly apparent in

relation to Disney's depiction of demigod Māui, whose physical appearance differed significantly from traditional understanding. In contrast to the title character, the legend of Māui exists in Pacific folklore, famous throughout the eastern and central Pacific for bringing fire to the islands, fishing the islands out of the sea and slowing the sun with his hook, among other feats of strength, power and agility. In most legends, Māui was born the runt of his family. His size at birth resulted in him being lean as a young adult.

Thus, when Disney presented its version of Māui, it was condemned – by both Pacific academics and Pacific leaders – for having relied on derogatory stereotypes of large or overweight and brutish Pacific men (Mila, 2016). One of the founders of the Polynesian Panther Party (Anae et al., 2006), Will 'Ilolahia, who at the time worked for the Pacific Islands Media Association, called-out Disney's Māui as 'typical American stereotyping' (Pacific Media Watch, 2016). A meme surfaced on social media (see Image 5) comparing two characters played by Dwayne Johnson side by side. On the left, Johnson appears as Greek demigod Hercules, while on the right, Disney's version of the demigod Māui is presented. Māui, voiced by Johnson, bears no resemblance to him, despite Johnson being a Pacific Islander. Similarly, a photo of Māui on Facebook dubbing the character 'half pig, half hippo' went viral, including reaction from Tongan MP (in Aotearoa) Jenny Salesa.

Image 5. Eliota Fuimaono Sapolu social media comment on Disney's 'Maui'

Fuimaono-Sapolu, the driver of the social media commentary relating to *Moana's* Māui, was particularly critical of what he called 'white people telling Polynesian stories'. This is clearly not a new problem for Disney, or Hollywood. Hollywood writers' rooms have not, historically, been characterised as diverse. The *Hollywood Diversity Report* shows that, on average, only 2.6 out of 10 film writers in Hollywood are people of colour in 2021 (Hunt & Ramón, 2021). While the figure is low, it also represents an improvement over the last ten years.

As a member of the Oceanic Story Trust, Hereniko addresses the Māui controversy and proposes ways it could have been avoided. Hereniko notes that 'when a major film studio becomes aware that its reasons for disregarding native advice is more to do with a possible diminishing of profits from ticket sales, it should stop and seriously consider finding an appropriate solution' (2018, para 6). Here, the solution given is

simple: change Māui's name. Hereniko reflects on Disney's insistence on using the folk hero's name and persona to achieve authenticity and combine it with Dwayne Johnson's palpable global star power to increase ticket sales and box office success.

Academic debate surrounding Disney's Māui extended throughout 2016, particularly as the film was slated for release in December that year. In October, Disney launched the Māui Halloween costume as part of their merchandising strategy. The costume was a full body suit of tan colouring, with Māui's tattoos covering it. Pacific communities considered the suit 'brownfacing',[5] and a 'commodification of Pacific identity' (Tamaira and Fonoti, 2018). The suit was also criticised internationally (Roshanian, 2016) and eventually pulled from distribution. While it is not clear whether the Oceanic Story Trust had any input into the suit's development, its production is an example of commercialism triumphing over authentic Pacific representation.

As part of my work presenting Pacific screen projects for PFF, I contributed to the event management of a *Moana* community screening in Sydney. The screening took place prior to the Australian release of the film in December 2016 and was free to the Pacific community on a 'first come, first served' basis. Through targeted marketing, and on the back of Disney's years long build-up for *Moana*, the community screening sold out a cinema of 350 seats in days. The Pacific transnational community in Sydney was keen to see Disney's *Moana* after all they had heard (positive and negative). In the region, *Moana's* release created excitement and developed audiences. While the major premiere was held in Hollywood, a Pacific premiere took place in Suva (Hill, 2016), to positive reviews. In 2019, Samoa's only cinema, the 'Apollo' advised that *Moana* was still the highest grossing film ever at their box office.[6] *Moana* was a box office success, quadrupling its 150 million (United States) dollar production budget (The Numbers, 2016). The movie did not have the same commercial success as Disney's *Frozen*, but did perform exceptionally well by industry standards.

In the Pacific community, the eagerly anticipated film release simultaneously facilitated dialogue about its themes, and also ended ongoing critical debates. The Pacific academic community in particular had a positive response to the final

[5] Dark makeup worn to mimic the appearance of a Black person and especially to mock or ridicule Black people.
[6] Personal communication, Westerlund, 30 January 2020.

product. Having watched *Moana* in the US, Thomsen (2016) asked whether the film could actually 'be good for us'. While Thomsen had originally been a vocal critic of the Disney and the film's production, he came to see the film as a 'subversion' of the traditional 'Disney princess'.

Moana travels with a lead male who is not her love interest, but her family. Her journey takes place in an effort to save her village, who she is in line to lead as high chief. Thomsen admits that the project 'is a product of corporate interests' produced by non-Pacific islanders. The navigation of this reality when authentic representation has also become a priority (Hereniko, 2018) is clear in *Moana's* storyline and its differing reception. *Moana* illustrates the importance of Pacific representation, highlighting what it looks like when the importance of representation clashes with or is incorporated into the corporate interests of screen business.

Interrogating the developmental and cinematic journey of Disney's *Moana* highlights the defensive relationship of the Pacific to its screen representation. This section has analysed the cinematic environment in which the film derives, and explored why the global corporation made conscious choices to ensure authentic representation of the region. This section has not critiqued whether the chosen strategies were effective. Rather, I have shown the fundamental importance of accurate and authentic representation of the Pacific region on screen. As an emerging screen network, the Pacific is not equipped to produce a project of *Moana's* size. Pacific screen is in its infancy, and needs to develop structures to ensure sustainability. Sustainability of Pacific screen will allow Indigenous practitioners to represent themselves authentically in screen production, both in front and behind the camera.

Tanna

Tanna (Butler & Dean, 2015) is a project about, and in conjunction with, the Yakel tribe on the island of Tanna in Vanuatu. It was written and directed by Australian practitioners Martin Butler and Bentley Dean. Tanna is one of the most remote islands of Vanuatu. The tribes on island are internationally known for their deliberate choice to live traditionally, or by Ni-Vanuatu *kastom* (Alivizatou, 2012). They operate a mostly cashless society, and although culture continues to evolve on Tanna, the tribes of the island endeavour to remove western influence from their day-to-day living.

In the making of *Tanna,* Butler and Dean shot with a skeleton crew: one sound recorder (Butler), a cinematographer (Dean) and production manager (Dean's wife, Janita), who doubled as a make-up artist. The cast were all from the Yakel tribe, and were chosen for roles by community consensus, or on the advice of village chiefs. The island does not have any electricity, so the production team brought with them solar panels to charge their equipment batteries and used natural light hours to shoot. Dean specifically shifted his whole family to the island, home schooling his children for seven months while he and his wife worked with the Yakel locals to make the project. The *Tanna* story was itself derived from a local village song, about an aspiring couple in the 1980s who were forbidden from being together. Both had intertribal marriages arranged for them. The two eventually committed suicide, and as was explained to Butler and Dean, were followed by other dual suicides of couples who desired to marry for love (Wong, 2017). Off camera, the tribes on Tanna eventually allowed love marriages. These matches now make up approximately half of all marriages on island.

After its release in 2015, *Tanna* travelled the international film festival circuit, receiving high praise and awards at A-list festivals, including Best Cinematography at Venice Film Festival, the Special Jury Prize at the London Film Festival, and a long list of Australian industry awards. Eventually *Tanna* received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. Though the project was not a box office success, or particularly well known in the Pacific community, it is a representation of Pacific stories and culture, particularly those of Tanna, Vanuatu that received great critical acclaim when shown internationally.

Tanna's critical acclaim is directly attributable to the perceived authentic representation of Pacific stories and culture. Numerous reviewers called *Tanna* the 'Romeo and Juliet of the South Pacific' (Hoad, 2017). In a review published by *Metro* (2016), Dunk praises *Tanna* as 'representative of a continued, albeit gradual, swerve towards authenticity in the cinematic portrayal of Indigenous peoples' also calling the film 'as much an ethnographic exercise as it is a powerful piece of storytelling'.

Academic conversations pertaining to *Tanna* further unpack the historical dynamics and lack of representation of the Pacific on screen. Cheer & Herrschner's (2018) account of these dynamics influence the academic reading of *Tanna* as being a

class above other screen representations of the Pacific. This reading is based on Bentley and Dean's 'sensitive treatment of people and place, and the elevation of Indigenous people and culture beyond the oversimplified and hackneyed conceptualisations of them as people from a primordial past' (Cheer & Herrschner, 2018, p. 192).

While critics were impressed with this perceived authenticity, power imbalances remained in the production of *Tanna* and more specifically, in the absence of representation of Pacific Islanders among the crew. The format under which *Tanna* was made was inspired by ethnographic screen production practices that have occurred in the Pacific for decades. Ethnographic projects have exploited Pacific communities for the purposes of anthropology (Landman & Ballard, 2010). This has resulted in the misrepresentation of the Pacific, with blanket depictions, such as primitive, uncivilised, sexually free, and promiscuous. Over time, this form of screen production, where outsiders transplant themselves in the Pacific for the purposes of making screen work, has shifted to documentaries on social issues. In these contemporary examples, Pacific and non-Pacific screen practitioners can produce documentaries they feel a pertinent need to explore. Although the making of *Tanna* did follow a procedure that has in the past resulted in misrepresentations of the region, Butler and Dean represented Ni-Vanuatu culture on a basis that was approved by the documented village. Dunk (2016) and Cheer & Herrschner (2018) praised this element of the creative development process, particularly the involvement of the Yakel tribe in identifying a story they wanted to tell. Butler and Dean approached through the Vanuatu Cultural Authority to arrive at a point where the tribe invited the screen practitioners into their village. In collaboration with the Yakel tribe, Bentley and Dean created *Tanna* in language, and gave the tribe some creative control over the story, providing authentic insight into a very specific time on Tanna.

By analysing the creation of this project, this section has raised questions about how and why a sustainable Pacific screen industry is of concern to the accurate representation of Pacific people and their experiences. In the creation of *Tanna*, Bentley and Dean created an environment, working in collaboration with the community they intended to document. The relationship has mostly been reported as collaborative and reciprocal between the screen practitioners and the Yakel tribe.

There is however a balance of power within this project, where the widely understood ownership of *Tanna's* intellectual property lies. Although the tribe agreed to host Bentley, Dean and their families, they did not request the project to be made. The Australian screen practitioners travelled to Tanna in search of a story, which was supplied to them in consultation with the local community. With this in mind, Bentley and Dean made a concerted effort to ensure the Yakel tribe were comfortable with the shooting process, and that they were represented by the cast at all major festivals they attended. The final product however, is written, directed and produced by Bentley and Dean.

In established screen industries, intellectual property of projects legally sits with the producer (Jewell, no date). Fundamentally, the story as represented in *Tanna* now belongs to Bentley, Dean and Carolyn Johnson (also listed as a producer), and not the Yakel tribe, although they were paid for their collaboration on the project. After the creative team's initial travel to Vanuatu in search of stories, the writing and development process happened entirely in consultation with the tribe holding the cultural knowledge, which was acknowledged in the final credits. In developed screen industries, writing and story development could happen in a series of creative writing rooms, allowing collaborative reflection on a story to develop at its start, turning points, and resolution.

Image 6. Writers in 'Kev & Keli Can't Go Home' Writers' Room, December 2018 (story planning in the background)

In media coverage of *Tanna,* the story was presented as being told directly by the custodians of the knowledge, the Yakel tribe. Any non-Pacific crew involved, are thus depicted as a vehicle for the production of the story. Pacific representation in *Tanna,* could thus be perceived as more authentic than that of *Moana.* The example of *Tanna* not only explores how sustainable screen industry is focal for holistic representation of Pacific agendas and Pacific stories, it also does the reverse. *Tanna* exemplifies the importance of representation in crew and key creative roles for the ongoing sustainment of screen industry. This is not a deep analysis of screen industry capabilities in the Pacific. It is however, an illustration of how representation can potentially be uplifted and enhanced by the development of a Pacific screen industry; and how representation behind the camera can cycle the same sustainability back into a regional screen industry.

Vai

Vai is a product of the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) working in collaboration with the Pacific. *Vai* is the second instalment in a trilogy of feature films, produced by Kerry Warkia (PNG) and Kiel McNaughton's (Aotearoa Māori) 'Brown Sugar Apple Grunt' (BSAG) Productions. This trilogy follows a portmanteau format, using eight vignettes, written and directed by Pacific women, to form a ninety-minute feature film. In the development stages of this project, BSAG put a call out for female Pacific writers to produce a short script. Eventually the following writer/directors were enlisted to contribute eight ten-minute vignettes in the corresponding locations: Amberley Aumua (Aotearoa, Aotearoa born Samoan), Becs Arahanga (Aotearoa, Aotearoa Māori), Dianna Fuemana (Niue), Marina McCartney (Samoa), Matasila Freshwater (Solomon Islands), Miria George (Kuki Airani Māori), Nicole and Sharon Whippy (Fiji), Ofa Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil Likiliki (Tonga).

All the women were required to write their short scripts according to parameters set by the producers. The parameters were that the lead character be female and named 'Vai' (meaning water in many Pacific languages), or the iteration of that name in their Pacific nation. 'Vai' was required to have a brother or male counterpart, named Elvis. Each story was required to involve the water or ocean in some way. The resulting combination of all eight scripts followed a woman's journey from her childhood in Fiji and Tonga, to adolescence in the Solomon Islands and Auckland (Aotearoa born Samoan), adulthood in Kuki Airani and Samoa; and older age in Niue and Aotearoa (Aotearoa Māori). This pan Pacific story then travelled the film festival circuit all over Europe, the US and parts of the region, premiering internationally at Berlinale (2019).

Vai was largely well received and celebrated for its placing of 'Pacific Womanhood' at the centre of cinema screens (Harvey, 2019). I witnessed the journey of *Vai* through parts of the international film festival circuit, observing its reception by European and American audiences, as well as island based and transnational Pacific audiences. At the world premiere, I attended (as an advisor) the Berlinale Native section in Berlin. With the importance of representation at the front of my mind, I experienced a theatre of approximately five hundred Europeans, watching a

Pacific story on screen, tens of thousands of kilometres away from where these stories originated.

Image 7. *Vai* writer/directors answering questions after the world premiere at Berlinale, February 2019

Closer to home, the Pacific community had its own responses to *Vai.* Apollo Cinema in Samoa advised that *Vai* did not perform well at the Samoan box office.[7] Auto-ethnographic evidence suggests that this could be due to film distribution processes that were applied to the release of *Vai* in Samoa and Fiji, and did not serve the promotion of the film well in these communities. This distribution style also did not allow the rectification of this inequity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that ensued. In Aotearoa, transnational communities that were represented in the project responded to accuracy or lack of accuracy of culture in their corresponding vignettes. In theatre screenings that I attended in Tonga, Kuki Airani and the Solomon Islands, all screenings were well received and sold out. Similarly, Fiji's community screening was completely full.

[7] Personal communication, Westerlund, 30 January 2020.

Image 8. Audience at *Vai* premiere in Fiji (courtesy 'Vai' Facebook page)

Vai highlights the ways in which sustainable Pacific screen industry, and authentic representation of the Pacific are interrelated. *Vai* demonstrates an attempt from Pacific producers to create Pacific work with a non-western story structure and non-western development model. The ownership of the story is with Pacific practitioners, through BSAG Productions, however the distribution of the project has followed mainstream screen industry models and structures. The production of *Vai* broadens the scope of this investigation, putting into practice the idea of an offshore project that travels to the Pacific and works directly with talent and professionals on island. Unlike commercial television and Hollywood films that travel to the Pacific with full crews, *Vai* engaged local acting talent and used local skilled crew where possible on their sets. For the short period of production, this created jobs, paid workers and built capacity in those crew roles.

Secondary to the decolonisation of traditional storytelling and industry practices, *Vai* facilitates similar spaces for feminist representation, both in front of and behind the camera. In global screen conversations, the Pacific woman has been virtually non-existent. As imagined by artists who accompanied Cook on his expeditions through the Pacific, the visualisation of the exotic has been re-imaged and challenged by Pacific artists and academics (Tamaira, 2010). This version of Pacific women, originally depicted by European men, is one of few other globally received representations until Disney's *Moana.*

In Australia alone, Pacific women, in comparison to their elite-athlete brothers and cousins, are virtually non-existent. In the mainstream example of prime-time soap opera *Home & Away* (Bateman, 1988-), the Parata family were introduced to the show's 'Summer Bay' in early 2020. The Aotearoa Māori family originally consisted of brothers Ariki and Tane, their nephew Nikau and his mother Gemma. The character of Gemma did not return to the show in 2021. While no clear reason has been given for this omission, this small representation of Pacific women in Australia now no longer exists. In Aotearoa, female Pacific perspectives have been prevalent for decades, however the same cannot be said in many other places. Statistics on the participation of Pacific women in behind camera roles broadly align with international data (Stupples et al., 2022) The position of *Vai* as a project that has created a pipeline of work for Pacific women and their stories, exceedingly progresses the agenda of feminist Pacific representation forward, both in visual representation and story sovereignty.

The Indigenous ownership and representation in all facets of *Vai* also influenced its touring and release in the Pacific. It has been noted in this section, that the commercial reception of *Vai* in parts of the Pacific was below average, and isolated Pacific screenings with targeted marketing strategies had high audience numbers. My observation of these screenings demonstrated that audience development strategies in the Pacific need cultivating, to ensure the monetisation and sustainability of these products. In the case of screen, individual projects are considered small businesses in their own right. In this sense, screen projects need to identify their audience, or customer, and build engagement strategies around this audience (Gillard, 2000). The purpose of these strategies is to earn a return on investment. This part of the screen production process has historically been

dominated by the global north. Observing *Vai's* roll out highlights how the involvement of Pacific practitioners at this stage of production could supremely benefit the progression of representation.

Audience development strategies do not need to follow western or mainstream patterns. Rather, it is my position that they can and should be structured based on Pacific audiences' viewing and consumption patterns. For example, smartphones are potentially the most accessible screen for Pacific populations. Cinemas and televisions do not occur in every regional Pacific household, although Ogden (1993) argues the pervasiveness of foreign television broadcast in Micronesia as an example of television's general influence in the Pacific. Smartphones can more commonly be found throughout the Pacific, emphasised in the high subscription levels to Facebook and TikTok (Nayahamui Rooney, 2012).

Another example of targeted audience development is the Tongan documentary *For My Father's Kingdom* (Mafile'o & Tauamiti, 2019), which premiered at Berlinale the same year as *Vai.* Buses were hired to transport the Tongan community from South Auckland to Central Auckland for its Aotearoa premiere. Director Vea Mafile'o saw this as an opportunity to have her community see themselves on screen and as a strategy to develop the Tongan community's awareness of the wide scope of cinema they have available to engage with.[8]

The success of audience development is a significant obstacle in the path to representation for minority communities on screen. Audience development is also a substantial portion of any screen project's business model as it identifies the customer, and creates marketing and distribution activities once the project is being made. As a substantial portion of a project's business plan, audience development is also sometimes viewed as a key barrier to the procurement of funding by Pacific screen practitioners. This will be interrogated in Scene Five.

Representation is a complex discussion in the screen industry. It starts at representation in acting roles, and extends to writers, directors, producers, production designers, costume and even makeup and hair. Distribution and development of audience is also a focal part of the representation discussion. The importance of representation is not only for the aspirational benefit of the viewer but

[8] Personal communication, Malife'o, 10 February 2019.

also for accuracy and authenticity (Husband, 2021). Below, a statement taken from the Instagram profile of Māori writer/director Taika Waititi positions the representation conversation and how far it has come, as a movement that does not aspire to become mainstream. Rather it aspires to follow its own path and work to create authentic and diverse representation of marginalised communities.

Image 9. Statement of Intent – *Our Flag Means Death* (Taika Waititi Instagram)

A sustainable screen industry is of focal importance to representation of Pacific communities both socially and economically because it can represent the Pacific experience. In this section, I have used examples of Pacific screen to illustrate how a holistic representation of the Pacific is important.

Economy

The economic outputs of the screen industry are well known. Global cinema is a multi-billion-dollar industry worldwide. In March 2020, the (US) Motion Picture Association released a report showing that the global box office and home entertainment market reached USD 101 billion in 2019. While screen is an expensive industry, returns on investment have been made, not only in the US but also in newer, developing economies such as in India (Bollywood), Korea, and Nigeria (Nollywood), as well as in China (Cinema of China). The Pacific is a region containing fairly fragile economies. Throsby (2015) says that despite being full of cultural and creative resources, the Pacific continues to rely heavily on other industries for economic stability. He also sees the abundance of traditional Pacific knowledge as an opportunity, especially with the emergence of 'new forms of cultural expression based on new media technologies' (Throsby, 2015, p. 377). This section uses examples of Pacific screen to substantiate the potential economic value of a sustainable screen industry. In doing so, I will investigate how, and why the sustainability of Pacific screen will positively contribute to economic development, both nationally and regionally.

Sustainable screen economics

Mapping the money that is injected into Pacific economies through screen-based activity is extremely difficult. While some island nations have and are developing policy around the presence of large-scale international productions, domestic or regional policy is not urgent on the agenda. Pacific communities however, continue to interact with the global screen industry. Currently, this interaction is not mutually beneficial between the Pacific and the global north. While Hawai'i enjoys economic benefit from its screen industry as a state of the US, this value add has not been possible for other parts of the Pacific.

Cinema of China is an example of the amount of economic opportunity in screen practice. The early relationship of screen with China is similar to the Pacific. A year after the Lumiére Brothers premiered the world's first short film in Paris in 1895, films were being shown in Shanghai. Unlike the Pacific, the evolution of film and screen in China has resulted in a multi-billion-dollar industry (Brzeski, 2020). Zhu and Nakajima divide this evolution into five distinct periods which developed after the first receipt of imported films from Europe. This advanced to a commercially viable but inward facing industry that regulated the number of imported films it received and established its own 'socialist-style centralised film management system' (Zhu & Nakajima, 2010, p. 23) occurred between the 1950s and 1980s.

From the 1980s onwards, China began to investigate the 'parameters and possibilities of Chinese cinema as both an economically viable and a culturally motivated institution' (p. 25). Decentralising this structure, involved film reform, starting with distribution and then a restructure of corresponding state departments. By the 1990s these reforms had extended further to allow the return of film imports to China, with 10 Hollywood blockbusters allowed into the country in 1995. With this return, cinema-going audiences also returned to theatres. Audiences also however noticed and appreciated domestic screen projects, thus growing the economy of China's screen industry as audiences grew, for both international and local projects. In 2020, Cinema of China surpassed Hollywood as the world's biggest box office, with movie ticket sales in China reaching 1.988 billion yuan (Brzeski, 2020). By 2016, the film and television industry in China had reached 254 billion yuan, or 0.34 per cent of the economy and directly supported 1.1 million jobs (Oxford Economics, 2015, p. 4).

The above illustrates the economic benefit of film as an individual screen output. The economic possibilities of Chinese television, online and streaming are also crucial to understanding the wider economic sustainability of screen industry. In the same report, Oxford Economics noted that 88 per cent of the industry's contribution to the national economy was actually generated through Chinese television; only 12 per cent (or thirty billion yuan) was generated through box office sales and production. This included free to air television, cable, physical home entertainment and other television services. China is an example of an individual country that was able to stem the flow of foreign screen practitioners producing screen projects that made

minimal (or no) financial contribution to the Chinese economy. China also banned the distribution of international film imports to China between 1950 and 1980. This effectively limited the possibility of external economic benefit through Chinese market distribution. Today, China remains a highly desirable and somewhat untapped market for production and distribution companies worldwide. Cinema of China and Chinese television have found a middle ground for an industry that secures national economic benefit and positively navigates the global market.

Screen economy in the Pacific

The Pacific continues to lack any sustainable economic benefit where screen practice is concerned. The region has been used continuously for stories and as backdrops to international screen projects, however the economic return is not balanced, and in many instances, not ongoing. This section will draw on the examples of *Fast and the Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* (*Hobbs and Shaw*) and the Aotearoa based production company M2S1 Films to argue that a sustainable screen industry is essential to national and regional Pacific economies. Through these examples, economic sustainability is evident in the importance of Pacific filming locations and the Pacific audience's power. *Hobbs and Shaw* is an example of a runaway production (Elmer & Gasher, 2005) that simultaneously takes economy and jobs from Hollywood and the Pacific.

By interrogating *Hobbs and Shaw*, I will analyse how filming on location in the Pacific can generate local income. An overview of M2S1 Productions' recent slate of work emphasises how focal the Pacific audience is to achieving economic sustainability in Pacific screen. Having the infrastructure to reach intended audiences for Pacific work allows the generation of sales, profit and eventual business development for these Pacific practitioners and their businesses. M2S1 Productions is a case study of a Pacific screen production company that identified a market development strategy for the region, and used this strategy to develop the company's business profile over multiple productions and years. These projects are used to examine ways that the Pacific has been used negatively in the political economy of film, and can develop ways to use these dynamics to the region's advantage.

Fast and the Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw

Hobbs and Shaw (Leitch, 2019) is fundamentally a commercial and mainstream screen project centred on a Pacific protagonist, with a story that journeys back to the Pacific. *Hobbs and Shaw* is part of the *Fast and Furious* franchise. The first film in the series, *The Fast and the Furious* (Lin, 2009) centred around an adopted family of street racers. Eventually, it expanded to have the same family involved in international organised crime, heists and spy activity. In 2019, one of the franchises newer cast members, Samoan actor Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson headlined a spinoff chapter centred around Johnson's character, Luke Hobbs. Hobbs is generally characterised as an adversary of the *Fast* family, but essentially a 'good guy' bounty hunter for the US government. Hobbs is characterised as being of Samoan descent, revealed in *Fast and Furious 6* (Lin, 2013), in a scene where a phone call from Hobbs appears on a screen with the caller ID 'Samoan Thor'. In *Hobbs and Shaw,* which was a co-production of Johnson's Seven Bucks Productions, Hobbs teams up with Jason Statham, reprising his role as Deckard Shaw. Together, they battle a mechanically enhanced opponent, whose intention is to infect the world with a deadly virus. The battle takes Hobbs, Shaw and Shaw's sister Hattie, all over the world, ending in the Pacific.

There are economic elements to scrutinise with regard to *Hobbs and Shaw* and its placement in the Pacific. The first is its use of Hawai'i as a location depicting Samoa. The reason for this choice at a production level has not been investigated as part of this research. Despite this, a basic understanding of screen infrastructure between the two island nations would show that Hawai'i is in a sound position to facilitate the needs of a *Fast and the Furious* instalment, in the manner posited by Elmer and Gasher (2005) as 'runaway productions'. These are productions that take the jobs of big budget Hollywood productions and has them literally 'runaway' to foreign locations for tax purposes, creating jobs in the new location as a result. The 'runaway production' applies twofold in the example of *Hobbs & Shaw*. Firstly, in the taking of jobs away from Hollywood, as the term was originally applied; and secondly in the taking of these jobs away from Samoa and placing them directly back with the US, by choosing to shoot in Hawai'i, instead of Samoa where the story was set. Since *Fast and the Furious 6,* each *Fast and the Furious* instalment has been produced on a budget of close to 200 million (United States) dollars (Statista, 2021).

A comparison of the screen infrastructure available in the two island nations favours Hawai‘i, which has a long history of servicing the production of Hollywood blockbuster, television and streaming projects. In the last five years, this has included the production of blockbuster feature films such as *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (Bayona, 2018), *Jurassic World: Dominion* (Trevorrow, 2022), *Triple Frontier* (Chandor, 2019), *Midway* (Emmerich, 2019), and *Jungle Cruise* (Collet-Serra, 2021). In television and streaming, the following productions have recently been shot in Hawai‘i: *The Wrong Missy* (Spindel, 2020), *Finding ’Ohana* (Weng, 2021), *Doogie Kamealoha* (Kang, 2021-), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (Duncan, 2021-), *The White Lotus* (White, 2021-)*, Hawai‘i Five-0* (Freeman, 2010-2020), *Magnum P.I.* (Bellisario & Larson, 2018-), *NCIS Hawai‘i* (Siiber et al., 2021-).

The above list is not exhaustive. It is, however, indicative of robust screen production and practice in Hawai‘i. A developed range of ancillary industries has arisen which are fully aware of the needs of screen practice. The screen industry in Hawai‘i has grown over the last two decades so that Hawai‘i now possesses not only crew and locations, but also studios, catering, cleaning, animal handlers, child minders, home school teachers, vehicle hireage, stunt people and so forth for film projects (Mizuo, 2017). Crew roles are able to be filled by skilled practitioners, some of whom received tuition on island at the University of Hawai‘i’s Academy of Creative Media (ACM). These practitioners build their skill working on local and smaller projects, then move on to bigger Hollywood jobs. The aforementioned ancillary industries have had the opportunity to thrive from the work they receive on long running US television serials such as *Hawai‘i Five-0.*

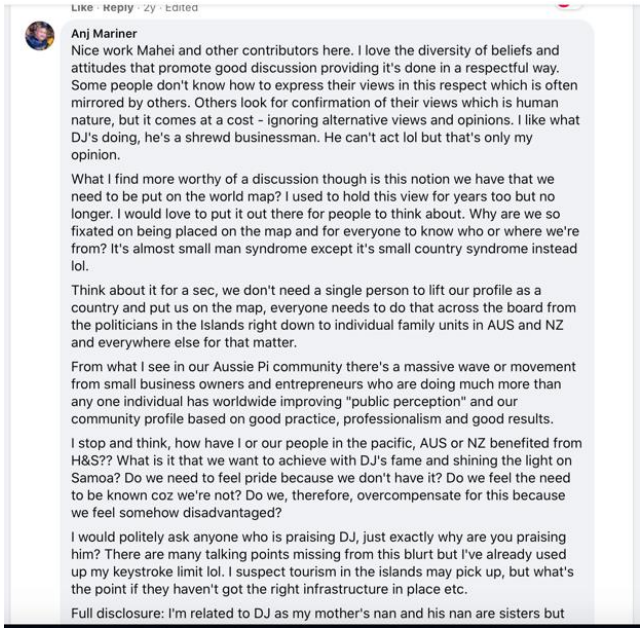
Samoa, however, does not have this infrastructure. While feature films have been shot in Samoa, these are often independent projects, made on shoe string budgets, with small crews. Overseas television productions also have a presence in Samoa, usually tourism based, magazine style or reality television. These projects are sporadic and do not look to Samoa as a long-term location. To emphasise this point, in the past big budget television shows in the market to shoot in the Pacific, have opted out of working in Samoa, in favour of Fiji (Feagaimaali’i-Luamanu, 2017). These productions often travel with full crew, and work with local facilitators on the

ground prior to arrival, and during production. Local crew, however will often not have any other attachment to these productions.

While there is no structured screen industry in Samoa, a cottage industry does exist, comprised of skilled practitioners who have often been educated elsewhere. Well-known Samoan online content creators, Twayne and Darryl Laumua, owners of production company ‘Sleeping Giant Films’ were trained in Christchurch, Aotearoa. Cinematographer Khosrowe Siisiilaafia was trained on island by Taku Morrison, a Kuki Airani cinematographer who was also trained in Aotearoa and now lives in Samoa. Producer Dionne Fonoti, now living and working in Samoa, received her training in the US, at San Francisco State University. The work that these practitioners undertake, consists of local work, alongside contracts from overseas screen projects and corporate jobs such as tourism and advertisements. Although I acknowledge the possibility of many other factors in the decision to shoot ‘Samoa’ in ‘Hawai‘i’ for *Hobbs and Shaw,* Samoa is fundamentally not equipped to accommodate the needs of a production such as this.

Alongside the acknowledgement of Hawai‘i’s structural positionality to take on a project such as *Hobbs & Shaw,* was the community discourse surrounding the film in the leadup to its premiere and after it almost quadrupled its production budget in box office profit. Members of the Pacific Business, Sports and Entrepreneur (PBSE) Facebook group based in Sydney, uplifted Dwayne Johnson’s work in representing Samoa on such a big stage as the *Fast* franchise.

Image 10. PBSE Facebook discussion of *Hobbs & Shaw* being set in Samoa



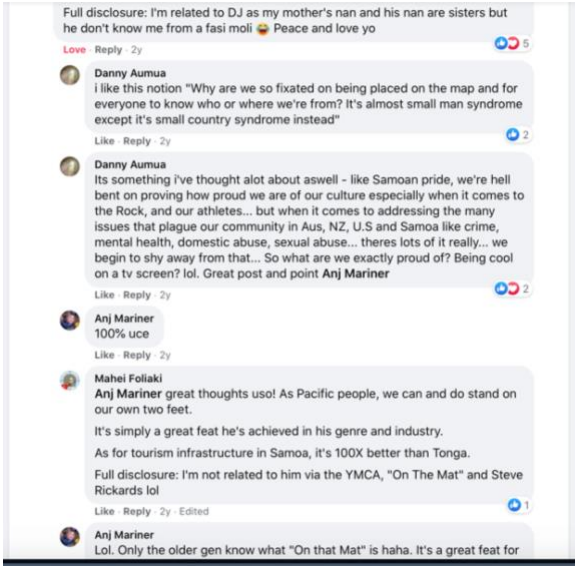


Image 10 highlights a discussion within Sydney's Pacific community that positions Johnson as an international icon of Samoan (and Pacific) representation. The discussion in the comments section of user 'Mahei Foliaki's' post goes so far as to suggest that Johnson has 'put Samoa on the map' through his decision to represent Samoa in the *Hobbs & Shaw* story. The 'map' in question is figurative, assuming that any lack of knowledge of Samoa around the globe was to an extent, quashed with the release of *Hobbs & Shaw.* What is interesting about this notion is that the Samoa of *Hobbs & Shaw* is actually located over 4000km northeast of Samoa on the island of Kauai. When relating this post to the notion of economic sustainability in the Pacific, *Hobbs and Shaw's* use of Hawai'i means that all major location fees, any job creation, and any generation of local economic activity with the arrival of cast and crew on island, was funnelled back to the US. Had this shoot taken place in Samoa, the benefit to the nation's smaller economy would have been exponential, not only with the financial injection of location fees, but in the creation of jobs and contributions to local economy through cast and crew.

This section has listed other projects that have shot on location in Hawai'i recently. The full slate of projects currently moving through Hawai'i demonstrates what sustainable screen industry could look like in individual Pacific countries. While the discussion in the comment thread of Mahei Foliaki's post took a more socially conscious tone, the conversation points out the economic importance of *Hobbs and*

Shaw for Hawai'i, and how Samoa is precluded from this, despite being an actual subject of the film.

Hobbs & Shaw is a reminder of the economic opportunities and potential of different screen projects, that can be seized in the Pacific. In the 2018 calendar year, when *Hobbs and Shaw* was shot, Hawai'i's film and television industry spent 419.4 million (United States) dollars on production expenditure, and generated 707 million (United States) dollars (plus a further 43.7 million [United States] dollars in estimated tax revenue). In the process, over 3,303 jobs were created (State of Hawai'i. Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, 2020, pg. ii). Hawai'i's own screen industry and its participation in the global screen industry ensures its sustainability. This thesis acknowledges the supporting factors that allow Hawai'i to operate at such an advanced level of industry in a fairly remote part of the world. This thesis also recognises the potential economic benefit to the region, should these productions be spread throughout the Pacific. In Scene Five, I will investigate what structures could be employed in the Pacific to engender such an economic benefit to the wider region.

M2S1 Films

In the same year that *Hobbs & Shaw* released internationally, the independently produced *Take Home Pay* was set and shot in Samoa. *Take Home Pay* (2019) was a production of the Aotearoa based company M2S1. M2S1 is owned and run by Samoan writer/director Stallone Vaiaoga-Ioasa and producer Abba-Rose Vaiaoga-Ioasa. Since 2015 the two have consistently produced and funded their own projects, starting from the completely self-funded *Three Wise Cousins* (Vaiaoga-Ioasa, 2016). *Three Wise Cousins* centres on Samoan protagonist Adam, who travels to Samoa from Auckland to learn how to be a 'real island guy', that is, a traditional island man. On his quest, Adam enlists the help of his cousins in Samoa to teach him what this means.

The project was written and funded by Vaiaoga-Ioasa, who financed the project completely independently, in an effort to avoid the bureaucracy of state funding bodies and production companies (Stevanon, 2016). The majority of the project was shot in Samoa, using Vaiaoga-Ioasa's networks as cast and crew. In order to shoot in Samoa, the production obtained an on island shooting pass from the Samoan

government and navigated permissions to shoot in specific locations by negotiating with village councils and local bodies.

As post-production on *Three Wise Cousins* commenced, the team released a teaser of the project online, immediately catching the attention of the Pacific community. This triggered a viral reaction and started the development of an audience for the final product. By the time the Three Wise Cousins final cut was finalised, M2S1 had investigated possible distribution channels. Through independent research, the team decided to self-distribute the project, proposing it to cinema spaces. While some cinemas did not initially take *Three Wise Cousins*, M2S1 were able to find cinema space in South Auckland, and sold out sessions for a whole week. As the popularity of the project spread through Aotearoa, it travelled to Australia using the same method: purchase individual cinema sessions, and use the profits from ticket sales to purchase more cinema time. Eventually *Three Wise Cousins* travelled to the continental US and all over the Pacific, making over one million (New Zealand) dollars.

Anecdotally, *Three Wise Cousins* is one of the only Pacific screen projects I have been able to have conversations about universally throughout the Pacific. It showed and performed well in Australia, Aotearoa, and the continental US, it also travelled to Samoa, Fiji, Kuki Airani, Hawai‘i, Guåhan and Papua New Guinea. The popularity of *Three Wise Cousins* illustrates the power of audience in the screen economy. Wasko (2003) and Pendakur (1990) both acknowledge the need to look at ‘motion pictures as commodities produced and distributed within a capitalist industrial structure’. This theory has been affirmed in ongoing scholarship and reports on screen industries internationally. It is also affirmed in the continued operation of global screen industry, which view individual projects as singular business entities within the international web of screen business. By acknowledging individual screen productions as products or commodities, the importance of audience is implied. This thesis posits that the development of Pacific screen will encourage economic activity and growth and further influence the development and cultivation of Pacific audiences.

As opposed to *Hobbs and Shaw*, *Take Home Pay* was an action feature set and shot in Samoa. It eventually made close to 700,000 (United States) dollars at the international box office (The Numbers, 2016). *Take Home Pay* was a much smaller

action project than *Hobbs & Shaw.* Nevertheless, it could still capture action sequences and quality cinematography and writing on the much smaller budget. The project paid Pacific screen practitioners for their roles as actors and crew in the process. As an individual business example, *Take Home Pay* highlights how jobs and economic activity can be generated through singular screen projects and how economic levers can be pulled to achieve sustainability in Pacific screen.

Having proven a capacity to deliver projects to deadline and on budget, M2S1 received funding from the NZFC to distribute *Take Home Pay* (New Zealand Film Commission, 2020). Thus, the 700,000 (United States) dollars the film made at the box office was directed back to M2S1, ensuring a financial return on the company's investment. The commercial success of M2S1 Films demonstrates an emerging understanding of the wider elements of screen practice in the Pacific screen community. *Three Wise Cousins* is evidence of a Pacific audience to view and consume screen products and business development focused around Pacific screen that grows over time. Global screen culture continues to take from both the manpower and locations in localised industries. Analysis of Aotearoa's relationship with global industry is emblematic of this. Ferrer-Roca (2020) illuminates the complexities of navigating global screen economy from a Pacific nation, using Aotearoa as an example. Like Hawai'i, Aotearoa is well known for its ability to support the production of high budget Hollywood blockbusters. However, little is known about its bottom tier films or local cinema made with domestic audiences in mind. These projects experience difficulty securing funding and ensuring sustainability of domestic industry, as higher budget offshore screen productions enter Aotearoa and are given the flexibility on the ground to absorb local crew and production resources. Similar sentiments are reflected in the conversations had by respondents to this research.

The example of M2S1 exhibits the ways in which having a sustainable screen industry encourages active engagement in economic activity. This engagement will contribute to the wider Pacific economy. As was the case with representation, this example also emphasises the reciprocal nature of this benefit, with the economic success of these projects influencing the sustainability of an individual business. M2S1's emerging success validates part of the theory that screen industry holds a

position in island economies, as the wider Pacific community actively engages with its stories.

Culture

Here, I will illustrate how screen industry provides new technological tools to maintain the culture of storytelling in the Pacific. To this end, I will emphasise the ways in which sustainable screen industry will contribute to the communication of Pacific culture locally and globally, and to the dynamism of culture in the region. As with the previous sections, the relationship between culture and sustainable screen industry will also work in reverse. Pacific culture is key to the development of a sustainable screen industry. As was identified in *Cinema Pasifika* (SPC, 2016, p. 2) the region's greatest asset when assessing the possibility of sustainable screen practice is that the Pacific is rich in unique stories. It also possesses much of the raw talent required to convert these stories into commercially viable products. Thus, Pacific culture and way of life ensures a pool of diverse stories, folklore, traditions and experience that could supplement the productivity needs of sustainable screen industry. Furthermore, screen industry projects that are led from within the Pacific community ensure that Pacific stories are not extracted from the region. Rather, by creating regional practice and practices, screen allows an alternate way to preserve, build on and share, local knowledge, customs and practices.

At the Los Angeles Asia Pacific Film Festival 2021, Pacific practitioners discussed the importance of screen practice in preserving their culture and stories (LA Asia Pacific Film Festival 2021 – C3 Pasifika Power in Media). Screen practitioners Neil Tinkham (CHamoru), Mariquita Micki Davis (CHamoru) and Katia Kalei Barricklow (Maoli) participated in a panel discussing the role of screen practice in cultural preservation and the protocols used to achieve Pacific projects. Pacific writer Kiki Rivera moderated the panel. In one of her interventions, Micki Davis noted:

> …these stories need to be shared and thought through, because we're not isolated, and that's what I think all the old powers make you think. You know, that you're obsolete, or that you're something of the past, and really we're here… (in Rivera et al., 2013).

Micki Davis is emphasising the need for Pacific stories to be shared in order to perpetuate the cultures they represent. This idea resonates with global discourse on culture, its preservation, and the role of digital technologies' in that preservation. Culture, in a Pacific context, is described as:

> our identity; one that comprises spiritual faith and customary beliefs and practices. We have a unique variety of languages and art including storytelling, chants, poetry, songs, dances, attires and handicrafts that highlight the diversity of culture in each country, province and village (Rina, 2020).

In this section, I analyse two examples of Pacific screen to understand the ways in which culture can be cultivated through a sustainable regional screen industry, and how culture will also contribute back to the sustainability of Pacific screen. This section will be influenced by the phases of 'robust digital preservation, promotion and growth' of Indigenous culture and tradition as directed by Robbins (2010). Robbins proposes these three phases as: straightforward documentation of Indigenous traditions; translation of Indigenous traditions into emerging technology and contemporary cultural modes of expression; and applying principles of Indigenous traditions to develop new technologies (Robbins 2010 p. 116). Robbins' findings are especially pertinent to this research as they co-exist with the Pacific. Robbins uses Nauru's cultural tradition, 'Nauru String Figures' (p. 116), to demonstrate this process.

Harris and Wasilewski (2004) reflect on a collaboration between the Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO) to articulate the core values that Indigenous communities in the US intend to communicate their Indigeneity to broader global audiences. These are 'the four R's' (p. 492). Relationship, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Redistribution. Relationship is a kinship obligation. Responsibility denotes community obligation. Reciprocity is cyclical obligation, in which Indigenous communities see others within their direct community as being 'kin' and thus always connected in cyclical reciprocity. Redistribution is the obligation of sharing, its purpose to 'balance and rebalance relationships.

This section takes learnings from these texts, particularly the 'cyclical reciprocity' posited by Harris and Wasilewski and the 'translation of Indigenous traditions to emerging technology and contemporary cultural modes of expression', as

emphasised by Robbins. Combining these understandings with analysis of existent Pacific screen projects, this section will understand the significance of sustainable screen industry in maintaining and progressing Pacific culture.

Existing policy

As a region with a largely diverse set of colonial histories and futures, culture is evolutionary, and has required innovation and adaptation to endure, and retain Indigenous agency. Tolkach and Pratt (2019) argue an urgent need for 'effort in preserving culture in the long term', in the face of competing global influences on the region. In wider international discourse, UNESCO announced its findings about safeguarding cultural diversity in the digital era (UNESCO, 2020). Digital technologies - including photographic media, satellite imagery – are identified as having a 'significant role to play in safeguarding cultural heritage' particularly as they are wide-ranging, and facilitate the sharing of data. The benefit of screen practice is considered under this UNESCO policy in the 'documenting, transmitting and revitalising of intangible cultural heritage':

> As intangible cultural heritage cannot be seen or held in physical form, documentation particularly through media production projects, allows us to understand the evolutionary trends of a certain element of intangible cultural heritage… (UNESCO, 2020).

UNESCO policy acknowledges that while digital technologies and processes are crucial to the protection of cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage around the globe, these technologies also reconfigure the 'value chain' associated with culture, affecting the shaping of domestic policies. As a preserver and proponent of Pacific culture, screen offers a forum to discuss, explore, and display Pacific culture both domestically and internationally. This discussion is key to the understanding of screen culture in the Pacific.

To further contextualise the policy challenges associated with conceiving screen industry in the Pacific, it should be noted that until the *Cinema Pasifika* report, there was little research into creative or cultural industries that were not vested in traditional forms of culture in the Pacific (SPC, 2016). Much of the policy discussion with regard to a creative or cultural industry in the region focused on the promulgation of traditional cultural activities to the level of commerciality. A SWOT

analysis of said industry noted the strengths and opportunities in the Pacific were the abundance of untapped products ready to be cultivated. The weaknesses and threats identified were associated with implementation, especially where intellectual and cultural property breaches were concerned (SPC, 2016 p. 2).

Creative and cultural industries in the Pacific

The scoping of cultural industries in the region, has historically targeted the building of economic stability using cultural artefacts and traditional practices as product (Teaiwa, 2007). By doing so, the premise of the cultural industry relies on consumption from outsiders to be commercially successful, as these products are already freely available to Pacific Islanders as custodians. The economic sustainability of a cultural industry that relies on tourism is questionable, especially with the recent effects of COVID-19 on travel in the region. Investment in Pacific culture as an industry would also require significant decision and policy making around intellectual property. This discussion has been continuously initiated in the region, without any realized outcome, noting that there has not been an update of the Regional Cultural Strategy since 2018. The last update introduced Phase 2 (2017– 2020).

This thesis posits that investing in a screen industry that inherently creates contemporary interpretations of culture and does not rely on the development of tenuous policy around cultural tourism, will present more efficient and reliable opportunities for creative development in the Pacific. This section demonstrates holistically how screen industry advocates for and contributes to the preservation of culture in the Pacific, adding purpose and principle to Pacific screen industry and underwriting its sustainability. This section will look at the examples of *The Coconet TV* in Aotearoa and *Nihi! Kids* in Guåhan, both online channels, mostly active on YouTube.

Butsch (2019) describes ‘screen culture’ holistically, saying that it is ‘about images more than language, a modern form of visual culture’. This thesis also looks at screen culture holistically in order to conceive the possibility of industry development around the format. This section will understand the possibility of extending Pacific culture through screen, using this definition. Comparing *The Coconet TV* and *Nihi!*

Kids will apply this definition to online content produced by transnational and island based communities. By viewing these case studies in this vein, this section will interrogate how sustainable screen industry can contribute to cultural maintenance and how culture is key to sustaining and maintaining viable screen industry in the region.

The Coconet TV

Aotearoa based Tikilounge Productions' portal entitled *The Coconet TV* is vital in understanding screen-based, online Pacific storytelling. *The Coconet TV,* or *The Coconet* as it is commonly known, is a website and online platform created solely to disseminate content for the Pacific community, by the Pacific community. The website's logline appears on its home page:

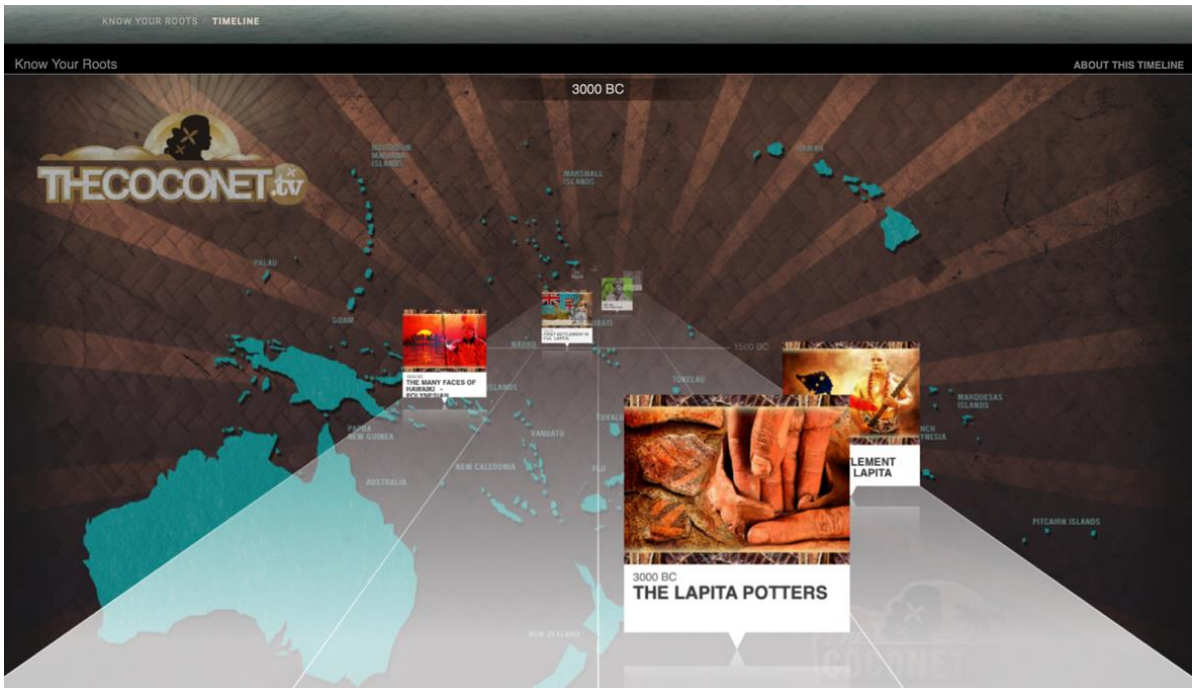
> … A virtual island homeland to engage with our global Pacific Village. Share, chat and upload your own experiences of living the Pacific way, no matter where you stay #KeepitCoco (Taouma, 2014-).

As a Pacific run organisation, the producers at Tikilounge understand the dynamics of the Pacific community. Being transnational, the idea of capturing the Pacific viewing audience is complex, and has resulted in movement to the online space. This movement has presented an opportunity to broadcast Pacific stories to a whole online community, starved for Pacific content in their residential countries. *The Coconet TV* is a result of this movement, created as an online platform to capture the Pacific market. On *The Coconet TV* website, coverage of Pacific culture and Pacific ways of living in island and transnational communities are distributed.

Image 11. The Coconet TV homepage

The Coconet's landing page is a literal map of the 'virtual island home' it describes. It directs users between locations on island, to find different expressions of Pacific culture and experience. Users can learn Pacific languages through song in the' Songbook' section. The songs themselves are led by known Pacific performers. Examples include Tongan songs 'Finealafia' and 'Loka Siliva', taught and performed by Tongan music artists; and featuring Charlie Pome'e of band 'Three Houses Down', and artist General Fiyah, respectively. The 'Know Your Roots' section contains a range of content on Pacific history and traditional knowledge. The first item is the 'Know Your Roots Timeline'. Effectively this timeline dates back to ancient periods, mapping settlement of the Pacific by the Lapita people, the colonial history within the region and finally, the focal points of Pacific modern history.

Image 12. ‘Know Your Roots’ timeline



As a platform, *The Coconet TV* addresses the dynamism of culture, evoking discussions around identity through it’s ‘Multinesians’ series. This section of the platform discusses ‘mixed race identity’ with Pacific Islanders of mixed heritage. *The Coconet TV* is effectively a library of Pacific knowledge, made free and available online, targeted at Pacific transnational communities to access, and build their own knowledge of the Pacific. In doing so, users build a sense of identity through these records of culture and Pacific living, while also making connections across the different parts of the region that they have never connected to before.

The Coconet TV traces its genealogy through a pioneering Pacific television history in Aotearoa. Here, the Pacific transnational community has occupied a place in representation on television for decades, referred to by Pamatatau (2012) and Pearson (1999). Pacific news serial *Tagata Pasifika* (Stehlin, 1987-), is a stalwart of this movement, and has been in circulation since 1987. *Tagata Pasifika* has sustained and launched the careers of many Pacific journalists and storytellers. *The Coconet TV* founder Lisa Taouma, is one of these alumni, previously a reporter and once a director on the show. While Pacific owned production company, Sunpix continues to produce the show. Its legacy has prevailed in the many iterations of work created by Pacific practitioners who have passed through its doors. *Tagata*

Pasifika's community led style of production has had a visible influence on much of the screen work produced by its alumni. In 2011, Taouma's Tikilounge Productions launched youth magazine show *Fresh,* producing Pacific content targeted at a Pacific youth audience. *Fresh* received funding from New Zealand On Air (NZOA).

Ross (2016) lists *The Coconet* as a Pacific journalism/media organisation in her examination of how Pacific audiences evaluate ethnic media. Ross identifies patterns of news viewership in Aotearoa Pacific communities using quantitative data. Ross posits that Pacific communities are likely to seek out alternative news to the mainstream, because of a feeling of disconnection and a strong sense of 'alienation'. These communities 'described various practices of searching for alternative sources of news in which Pacific peoples were visible, that was connected to their daily lives and communities' (Ross, 2016, p. 1566). While Pacific news outlets provide key channels of access to information, respondents to Ross' study gave that these outlets could be difficult to access. This was especially in comparison to Aotearoa's Indigenous channel Māori TV, which despite language barriers appealed to Pacific communities through a common 'perspective' which Ross describes as 'cultural framing' (Ross, 2016, p. 1566).

Ross' study of Pacific engagement with ethnic media characterises the needs of Pacific communities that are satisfied in online screen platforms such as *The Coconet*. These needs are specific to news media, the representation of Pacific communities and its languages. The desire that respondents in this transnational community have to see themselves and their world-view embodied in mainstream news emphasises the importance of perpetuating Pacific stories and culture. This is vital in both island and transnational communities.

At present *Fresh* is one of the last shows of its kind, for any youth demographic, on Aotearoa television. *The Coconet TV* is an extension of *Fresh.* Both are produced by the same company, with a similar target demographic, editing styles and recurrent cast. Between the two projects, similar themes and issues are addressed. To contextualise *The Coconet TV's* reach, its YouTube page has over 146,000 subscribers and averages 20,000 views on individual videos. *The Coconet TV's* Instagram page has almost 56,000 followers and the Facebook page, over 302,000 followers. The ubiquity of *The Coconet TV* came at a time when Pacific Islanders did

not have other platforms to access their stories on screen. As such, *The Coconet* occupied a space of representation and information sharing in the Pacific community, virtually monopolising this gap in the absence of any other players. This absence is not an admission of a lack of audience, rather a demonstration of a lack of regional resources to facilitate more platforms and effectively service the Pacific. At present, there is a lack of fiscal support available in the wider region to support another venture similar to *The Coconet TV*. Creating another platform in line with *The Coconet* would not add competition to the market, but purposefully remove some of the burden from this platform, to create more sustainable practice models in Pacific screen. The purpose of *The Coconet* is to disseminate Pacific culture and its expressions to screens all over the Pacific community. In doing so, the platform highlights the importance of culture to those seeking validation of identity, while providing pathways for those in the islands to connect on a platform that produces familiar content and stories.

Nihi! Kids

CHamoru culture has been discussed as a dynamic phenomenon in past academic discourse. Flores (2002) observed the cultural renaissance in the CHamoru community that took place with the development and growth of the Festival of Pacific Arts, now FestPAC. Na'puti and Frain (2019) dissect Indigenous activist movements on Guåhan as they appeared at the 2016 FestPAC. Ogden (1993) examines television's social and cultural significance in Micronesia broadly, with some focus on Guåhan. This section will present the work of *Nihi! Kids* (Flores, 2013-) otherwise known as *Nihi!* as a benefit to Guåhan and Chamoru cultural education.

Nihi! is a YouTube channel established by CHamoru director Cara Flores. It is an online children's show targeted at primary school aged children in Guåhan, with the key purpose of increasing engagement of CHamoru children with their language and culture. In season one of *Nihi!,* the channel produced educational programming for kids in the style of *Sesame Street* (Cooney & Morrissett, 1969-) and *Play School* (Whitby, 1966-). Basic language, taught through song alongside educational packages, focus on elements of CHamoru culture. Episode 1, season 1, teaches viewers about farming, linking its importance to CHamoru livelihood and standards of health. The episode teaches its lessons in English language, with the Indigenous

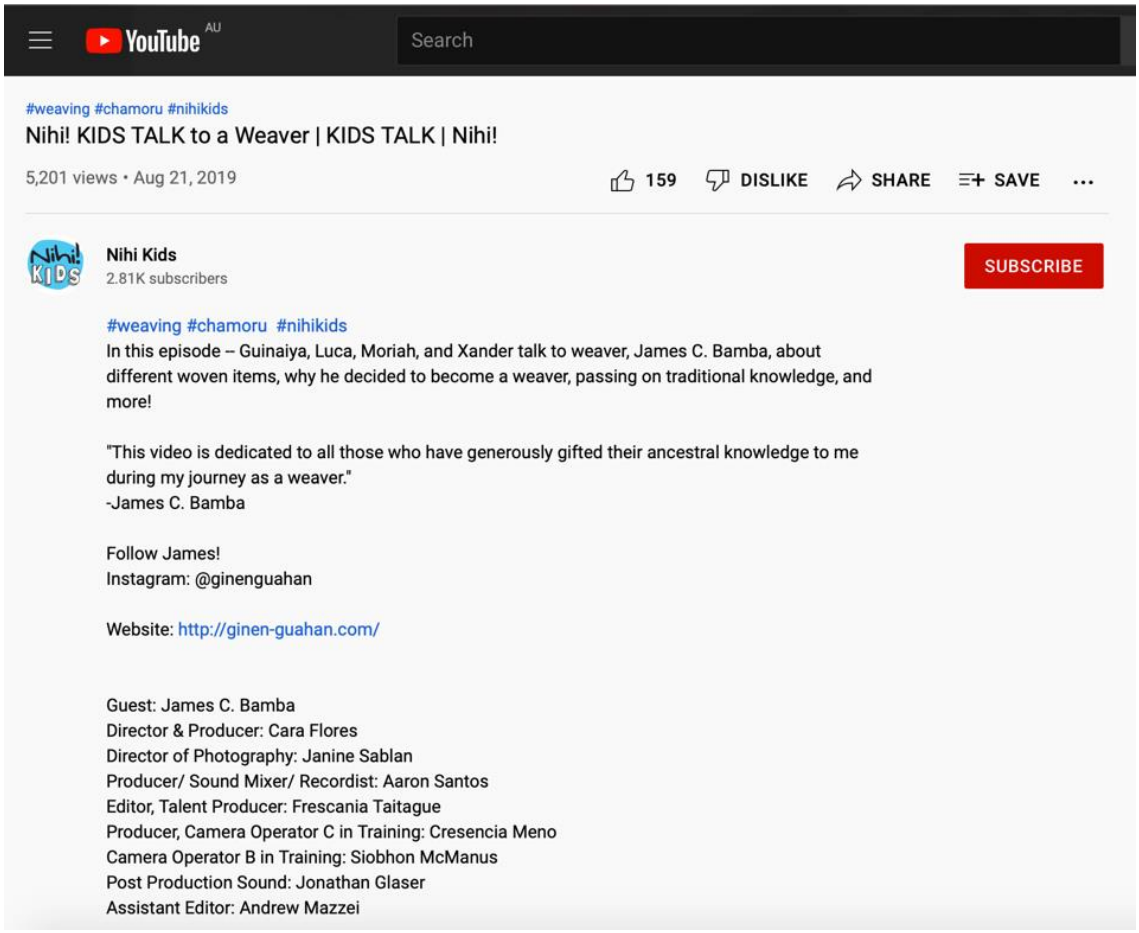
presenters translating every second line into CHamoru, with captions to reinforce native words. The video segments incorporate the viewpoints of actual CHamoru children, including a set of twins tasked with raising the family's chickens. The brothers explain their tasks in English and CHamoru, describing the importance of their work to their family's livelihood. In another segment of the episode, presenters Cara and Will discuss two different fruits, the soursop and the strawberry. In doing so, the two navigate the wider global discourse around food systems and food security in the Pacific. Cara mockingly describes Will's soursop as 'alien fruit', and her own strawberries as 'normal food'. In reply, Will notes that his fruit was native to Guåhan and found in his own backyard, thus it was ripe for eating. On the other hand, Cara's strawberries had most probably been sprayed with chemicals and harvested at a young age to endure the long journey from its point of origin. This segment is also presented in both English and Chamoru.

In subsequent *Nihi!* seasons, the show's format has changed to include a 'Kids Talk' segment. Using a more simplified set, CHamoru children speak with elders about different elements of cultural practice. The children ask questions of their elders, partly to demystify particular cultural practices for younger generations and promote these practices for young people to participate. The August 21, 2019 episode of *Nihi! KIDS TALK* focused on weaving. Children spoke with CHamoru weaver James C. Bamba. In the segment, the children are asked what they know about weaving. Bamba also asks questions of the children, while explaining the process of weaving to them.

Image 13. James C. Bamba with children discussing weaving (*Nihi! Kids* YouTube channel)

This session is also in both CHamoru and English, with the children conversing with Bamba in language at different parts of the episode. Bamba also tells stories about how he came to practice the art of weaving and why he thinks it is an important part of Chamoru culture to pass on. In the caption for this episode on YouTube, Bamba dedicates it to all that have ‘generously gifted their ancestral knowledge to me during my journey as a weaver.’

Image 14. Episode caption (*Nihi! Kids* YouTube channel)



Nihi! Kids is a screen project whose sole purpose is to preserve culture on Guåhan for and through future generations. Though *Nihi!'s* distribution coverage is concentrated on Guåhan, its themes and formats are key illustrations of the preservation of cultural heritage through screen practice, as highlighted by the UNESCO (2020) findings around safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. *Nihi!'s* Youtube page has approximately two thousand seven hundred and forty followers when looking at viewership. Its instagram page has approximately 2,740 followers. This is small by comparison to government mandated Indigenous broadcasters in the region, and even *The Coconet TV*.

In Aotearoa and Hawai'i, 'Māori Television' and 'O'iwi TV' both operate to service their Indigenous communities. 'O'iwi TV's' mission states that its purpose is to 'leverage the power of media to create meaningful impact and experiences for Hawaiians, Hawai'i and the rest of the world' (Anthony et al., 2020-). Both channels sit within the World Indigenous Television Broadcasters Network (WITBN), as does

Australia's 'National Indigenous Television' or NITV. Despite this significant difference in size, *Nihi! Kids* is a key demonstration of the preservation of culture on screen in the Pacific. *Nihi!* speaks directly to younger CHamoru generations, with the goal of uplifting indigenous voices and preserving culture.

Work that Pacific screen practitioners are currently producing is steeped in a desire to preserve and perpetuate tangible and intangible culture. The above examples demonstrate screen projects that attempt to educate younger Pacific generations of their culture, as a strategy to ensure its continuation. The documentation and incorporation of culture into the wider scope of Pacific screen and its stories highlights a large pool of opportunity for content that needs to be produced in the Pacific. In *Cinema Pasifika,* SPC identifies 'a plethora of stories' (2016, p. 2) as an active opportunity to develop the film and television industry in the Pacific. This research identifies the opportunity for sustainment of Pacific culture through the sea of stories to be explored and documented by Pacific screen; and the creation of business, the development of screen economy and chances for employment in the region.

Conclusion

Pacific screen must be sustainable to ensure Pacific representation, economy and culture in the region. A sustainable Pacific screen industry prioritises all aspects of representation of the Pacific experience regionally and globally. An economically sustainable screen industry demonstrates alternative fiscal contributions to national and regional Pacific economies. It also contributes to the development of a new job market, especially for younger age demographics. A look at current online content creators suggests that screen industry actively contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in the Pacific; whether in demonstrative content or in what is considered 'narrative storytelling'.

While this chapter has found that sustainable screen industry will be of fundamental benefit to the region, I have also identified the interrelationships between representation, economy and culture. These relationships occur in the presentation and production of cultural stories and content, which create jobs, economic independence, and authentic representation and story sovereignty. Having

interrogated the importance of sustainability in this study's investigation of a regional screen industry, Scene Three will explain the methodological approach of this research.

Scene Three: *Falelalaga* – Methodology

Introduction

I am interested in assessing the potential for a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. In Scene Three, I present the methodology used to investigate the question of Pacific screen industry sustainability. Specifically, I explain my positionality and approach to the research, as well as my mixed method research design, including a reflective audit of the Pacific screen industry using Pacific auto-ethnography, *talanoa*-style interviews (Vaioleti, 2006) with 46 industry stakeholders of Pacific Islander descent, and a survey of screen production infrastructure across the region. I also detail my own assumptions leading into this research and during data collection, and the limitations of my research. As well, I provide a detailed account of the practical methods I used to collect, analyse and present empirical data. Keeping in mind, my decision to employ a mixed method approach for data gathering, incorporated with my own methodological contribution as a practitioner in this sector, Scene Three has been named *Falelalaga,* the Samoan word for weaving house, or more abstractly, a master weaver, to reflect the weaving of methods employed in this thesis. I have consciously chosen to weave together new methods intricately and seamlessly to establish an innovative analytical lens on the Pacific screen industry.

This thesis has consistently noted the importance of the SPC 2016 report, *Cinema Pasifika,* as a foundational text. This importance extends to how the Commonwealth Foundation undertook its study, namely qualitative interviews with screen practitioners in seven Pacific Island nations, identifying existent local industries, local business models, and recommendations for developing a narrative film and television sector in the Pacific. While the Commonwealth's methods were informative, I have approached both the concept and study of a regional screen industry differently. As a practitioner within this network, I have identified a lack of sustainability in the specific development of a narrative film and television sector in the Pacific. As a result, rather than focusing on narrative screen outputs, I consider 'screen' holistically, inclusive of several screen-based practices, as defined in Scene One. I do so to encourage more pathways in which the Pacific screen industry can build and grow. Indeed, a key contribution of this thesis is the much broader scope

applied to the Pacific region. In contrast to other Pacific screen academics and practitioners, I have documented screen culture practices in most Pacific communities. This attempt at inclusivity is driven by the need to gather previously unrecorded empirical data, facilitate a space for discussion about the nuances and peculiarities of the Pacific region, and assess the feasibility of a sustainable Pacific screen industry within the region.

Approach

I approached the collection of this data as an active practitioner, working as a Pacific film festival producer, a producer of Pacific screen content, and an advocate for diversity in Australian mainstream media. In addition, my proximity to my research participants as a peer allowed an element of inclusivity to my research approach. I encountered obstacles in the labelling of my approach in order to provide context. As an active member of the Pacific screen community, both in transnational and island-based communities, I was able to draw on my own experiences and knowledge of the nuances, difficulties and benefits of screen practice and screen culture in the Pacific. This is a unique and rare position from which to study the Pacific (or any other) film industry.

Critical friendship

In order to contextualise the approach I took in collecting this data, I have analysed a combination of 'critical friendship' approaches employed in both the education and gender studies disciplines of academia. Costa and Kallick's (1993) idea of the 'critical friend' is a methodological approach that has been applied in both, with specific alterations tailored to the nuances of each area of research.

Taking on the literal meaning of a 'critical friend', I could consider myself a trusted person who asks questions with a view to providing a critique of a 'friend's' work but ultimately 'advocating for the success of that work' (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 50). Costa and Kallick's application of this approach to the study of education assumes an interpersonal method of one-to-one interviewing, feedback and reflection. In this sense, those involved in the process are both the 'learner' and the 'critical friend'. Both are willing and knowing participants to this specific format of data gathering. Although the critical friend technically holds the data, the learner is in control of the

feedback that will be received by setting the outcomes of the enquiry. In more recent conceptualisations of the 'critical friend', issues have arisen from the process whereby participants approach the dialogue with assumptions that influence their answers and feedback, highlighting certain epistemological gaps (Schuck & Russell, 2005).

One key challenge between the original definition of the 'critical friend' and the parameters of this study is that my research does not interact with individual screen practitioners or provide feedback on individual screen works. Rather this study uses my positionality as a Pacific screen practitioner to discuss with my peers the ways in which current screen industry dynamics could serve the emergence of a sustainable Pacific screen industry in the region.

Feminist Critical Friendship (FCF) (Chappell & Mackay, 2015) has become an iteration of the 'critical friend' that looks more broadly at institutional structures, resisting those which have not historically served the pursuit of gender (and other forms of) equality.

> … our approach is committed to making contextual judgements about 'small wins' … and 'small acts' … against the gendered, institutional and political odds. The approach is both mindful of the precarious nature and marginal position of actors, norms and rules that aim to challenge the gendered status quo from within, and committed to an ethos of offering constructive responses to the challenges, contradictions and failures faced by gender justice insiders that can arise in seeking to shift gendered power relations … (Chappell & Mackay, 2015, p. 2).

Similarly, this thesis looks broadly at current global screen industry structures from the perspective of a Pacific screen practitioner and analyses how they serve or do not serve the success of Pacific screen practice. In approaching this research, I have understood how my position in this research is comparable to that of a feminist critical friend, 'challenging the status quo from within' and offering constructive responses to the challenges, contradictions and failures' in current Pacific screen practice. I have, however, chosen to enlarge this definition to be engaged and critical (Chappell & Mackay, 2015 p. 2), 'seeking to shift power relations', but also providing a clear direction forward for the discussion of sustainable screen industry in the region.

Inclusive, Pacific research methodology

As recently as 2019, Eseta Tualaulelei and Judy McFall-McCaffrey explored the concept of the Pacific research paradigm, unpacking the sustainability of research inspired by Pacific ways of knowing and being. Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffrey track the emergence of the Pacific research paradigm in both its early and contemporary phases, eventually questioning the future implications of this Pacific scholarship that inserts our culture and experience into its academic application.

My research is concerned with creating space inside of which Pacific communities, and specifically Pacific screen communities, can collectively build aspirations for the future through sustainable screen industry. By inserting myself into these conversations both as an academic and as a practitioner, I aim to develop a more robust understanding of the power dynamics of film's political economy and how the global extremities of film have historically marginalised the representation of Pacific Islanders and the use of the Pacific, in global screen culture. In mapping these dynamics, I thus include my own voice as a Pacific screen practitioner and those of my academic and practitioner peers in this research to communicate the positive and negative issues facing the Pacific screen community.

In navigating the possibility of sustainable screen industry in the Pacific, I have encountered and spoken to multiple academic disciplines and articulated how these discourses affect the discussion of sustainable screen industry in the region. This approach to Pacific research applies disciplinary methods aligning with the cultural and decolonised learnings of Pacific Studies (Teaiwa, 2001; Helu-Thaman, 2003) in combination with the liberalist and constructivist studies of film and geopolitics. This inter-disciplinary approach, while a by-product of my own academic experiences with Pacific Studies at multiple institutions (see more on this below), is also now substantiated as a methodological device. Lana Lopesi, in her theorising of cosmopolitan worlds, highlights the role of *su'ifefiloi* (Lopesi, 2021). *Su'ifefiloi* draws on the canon of Indigenous and Pacific methodological scholarship to understand the ways in which Pacific researchers traverse any number of specialist disciplines through the conducting of Pacific centred research.

I use Lopesi's *ula* metaphor broadly to visualise this approach to my research. Although it could be posited that my research brings the Pacific closer to 'Moana cosmopolitan imaginaries' (Lopesi, 2021, p. 132), through potential technological advancement, creation of employment and authenticity of representation, I have chosen to embrace the significance of both embodiments of the *ula lole* and the *ula fugala'au* as a metaphor for both transnational and island based Pacific screen practice that is scrutinised in this research:

> In another supervision session, Leali'ifano Albert Refiti recounted how people, when they left from Aotearoa for their Moana homes, wore ula lole, and when they came back, they were wearing ula fugala'au (flower garlands). In this anecdote, the materiality of the ula lole speaks to the place of both the maker and the wearer of the ula, as the kind of ula one wears signals where they are leaving from and the materials of that environment (Lopesi, 2021, p. 135).

Positionality and assumptions

My positionality as an active member of the Australian screen industry and Pacific screen network bears significant influence on the research I have undertaken and the way I have chosen to perform it. My positionality as a student of Pacific studies across multiple Pacific studies departments (Victoria University of Wellington and the Australian National University) has also largely influenced the eventual design of my thesis.

I completed a film degree and have actively worked in arts, culture and screen production for twelve years. As co-Director of PFF, I have developed programs that endeavour to build capacity in Pacific screen communities. These have included incubator programs for the creative development of Pacific work, pitching competitions that allow Pacific creatives to put their work in front of industry professionals; and film challenges that give aspiring practitioners hands on experience in time sensitive production situations. As a freelance producer, I have had the privilege of working specifically with Pacific creatives to produce and promote Pacific stories.

In this, I strongly sympathise with writer/director Issa Rae who spoke of her 'fortune' in having only worked on projects led by people of colour in Hollywood. In an interview with Amanda Seales on the *Small Doses* podcast in 2020, Seales noted

that the majority of Rae's industry experience had been outside the mainstream. Rae agrees, responding:

> … when I had jobs, I worked in non-profit but as far as the industry is concerned, I've been very spoiled in that I've only worked within productions of colour for the most part … (Issa Rae, on *Small Doses,* 2020).

Indeed, Rae uses the adjective 'spoiled' to describe her experience because it is rare. I consider my screen industry experience in similar tones. Since I entered the industry, I have worked almost exclusively with Pacific stories, storytelling and production. In this time, I have witnessed and spoken directly with Pacific practitioners who have expressed the challenges they face and the perceived privileges they possess. I have also experienced these challenges and privileges first hand. Thus, I have great expectations about the development of a regional screen industry and the influence of my research to that end.

In my academic career, I have studied English, Media, Pacific Studies, Film, and Communications, all of which have had some bearing on the tone and direction of this research. The discipline of Pacific Studies has had the most significant impact on my academic journey. At Victoria University of Wellington, Va'aomanu Pasifika and, in particular, Teresia Teaiwa's approach to the study of the Pacific built on my formative understanding of my culture and identity as an Australian-raised Samoan. Through these studies, I came to a newfound understanding of the Pacific as a region, rather than separate entities, and as inclusive of the transnational communities that live apart from their islands yet stay connected. At the Australian National University, I interrogated this understanding further through a geopolitical approach to studying the Pacific that focused on the region in its entirety, with less investigation of transnational Pacific communities. The combination of these experiences, coupled with this interdisciplinary approach (Hereniko, 2017), has influenced the way that I have designed my research on a largely untapped sector of the region's cultural industries, with great potential for economic development and sustainability.

It is important to note here that my positionality as a practitioner affords a level of privilege to this research. The auto-ethnographic aspect of my research drives a significant part of my analysis. In that, I acknowledge that my understanding of screen industry machinations, and my proximity to participants, blurs traditional understandings of any 'boundary' between researcher and participant. In navigating this, I have had to consider carefully the ethical implications of my research style, analysis and presentation of findings.

One strategy I have used is to demarcate information that I know as a practitioner and colleague from that which I have learned as a researcher, acknowledging that I have been privy to some information from respondents precisely because of my positionality as a fellow practitioner. I have also been conscious of the need to cite information and informants in such a way that does not jeopardise their work. To this end, this research has been structured conceptually so as to present an institutional critique of the Pacific screen industry. Critique of traditional screen industry practices and the ways that these practices are inequitable does not reflect on specific individuals. This research is not a critical review of the content of Pacific screen products, Pacific storytelling, or its producers. Aware of my own position within the practitioner community, I have intentionally sought to maintain professional boundaries and respect the knowledge of participants and colleagues in Pacific screen. I came to this investigation with the underlying assumption that a regional screen industry will be extremely difficult to achieve. This assumption is based on previous experiences and knowledge of the sector. More specifically, I understand that the complexities of the Pacific create a multitude of factors and issues that need to be taken into account, the two most glaring being distance and exclusive economic zones. Distance has historically been noted as a barrier in the island Pacific, despite Hau'ofa's determination that we envisage ourselves as a sea of islands (1994) rather than a disparate group of small islands separated by ocean. This dialogue could be credited with informing the regionalist viewpoint that the Pacific Island Forum's '2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent' (2017) has emerged from. Despite this emerging dialogue, the distance between Pacific Islands, magnified by trade routes that are influenced by exclusive economic zones and territorial ties, can pose a significant barrier to the development of a regional screen industry. These zones and the colonial ties that are still strong in the Pacific restrict

some island nations from the sovereignty to make their own contributions to regional policy design for a Pacific screen industry. The geopolitical loyalties of countries to powers outside of the region could affect the membership of countries in a regional screen industry.

To note, distance has not been an obstacle for myself as a practitioner. Digital technology has filled the void of distance in the Pacific (Currah, 2003) through zoom, email and other platforms, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the advent of COVID-19, I worked on screen productions in Pacific locations that are often considered fairly remote. Examples include Guåhan and Honiara, Solomon Islands. I also attended film events all over the Pacific and maintained networks in these interactions. Despite this, my assumption is that Pacific governments and regional organisations may not consider this travel to be simple when designing structures that could build regional screen industry.

I have also considered the contribution that this research will make in establishing a foundation for extended discussion around Pacific screen. Regionally, discussions of cultural industry have seemingly stalled in the wake of intellectual property complications and cultural capital discussions. While this research could be seen as actively sitting in a cultural industries space, it also occupies a subset of the cultural industries. Pacific screen industry will be technologically based, inherently grounded in the creation of new cultural products and storytelling over traditional cultural artefacts. Thus, concerns around intangible cultural heritage are lessened. I believe that having this research as a base, demonstrating the economic benefit of screen industry as well as its intricacies, could elicit credible conversations around the regional benefit of screen industry. This could take place at both a local and regional level. My assumption is that discussions would start locally, before wide spread networks could be developed in the region. I believe these conversations would need to occur in this manner because of the fundamental lack of infrastructure for screen production throughout the island Pacific. For a regional industry to be strong and sustainable, local and national industries would need to emerge.

Transnational communities have and will play a key part in the development of a regional screen industry. Transnational screen practitioners have the resources available to make quality screen work, and have the advantage of built infrastructure

in their respective countries, to maintain careers in the screen industry. With these careers, transnational practitioners have travelled their work to the island Pacific, to work with and develop the skills of their regional counterparts and to tell Pacific stories, in country. Despite this, transnational practitioners navigate their own struggles in western countries, encountering the complexities of procuring funding and in production and distribution processes that are not aware of cultural nuance or Pacific viewing habits.

In the region, the key barrier for screen production will be the lack of infrastructure. Infrastructural deficits in this context involve a lack of funding, no equipment, no training or mentoring and no formal networks. Conversely, the freedom of a non-regulated industry could also enable high rates of production and freedom of expression. As a practitioner, actively working in Pacific screen, this has been my observation. While the lack of infrastructure can undercut many potential practitioners from participating in screen production, or create a barrier to active practitioners because of cost, those who continue with their screen practice do so without the impediment of bureaucracy or regulatory bodies overseeing their work.

My own purpose within the industry and within this research is that of service. I have developed a strong body of production work in the region and creative sector. In doing so, I have observed the nuances of the region, and I have identified and facilitated opportunities for Pacific practitioners and the Pacific region within the wider screen industry. I entered this research with the above assumptions based on my own experiences and work in the screen industry. These will and have, changed or altered based on the research I have undertaken. My work in this sector has always put service at the forefront, to ensure that there is a basis for growth. In essence this research attempts to position itself in service of the wider industry and the wider Pacific, by engaging in discourse around a structure that will grow into an industry that has made a concerted effort to build policy and create networks.

Mixed methods

My positionality as a practitioner in this emerging Pacific screen network has informed the mixed method approach that I have undertaken. Mixed method is

generally understood as a design that allows researchers to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Bowers et al., 2013).

A mixed method approach has allowed me to investigate and illustrate the opportunities and challenges inherent in a sustainable Pacific screen industry. I attempted to provide a quantitative snapshot of as much of the region as possible through a survey of practitioners across the Pacific. This was converted into an infrastructure map. Qualitative data to support the ways in which the survey data presents barriers or enablers to Pacific screen practice was collected through in-depth *talanoa*-style discussions. Having deep insider knowledge of the Pacific screen community has also facilitated the dissemination of a regional survey of screen production infrastructure into my research.

While first-hand accounts from Pacific screen practitioners is incredibly useful information in documenting individual production needs in the region, this survey allows the development of a literal map, illustrating the availability of certain infrastructural elements in parts of the Pacific. I hope to provide this map as a policy tool for screen industry in the Pacific. I also intend to update the map continuously upon conclusion of this study, as I think this information is key in development of Pacific screen industry and screen economy.

The qualitative methods I have utilised provide first-hand accounts from practitioners of Pacific communities of the intricacies of screen production throughout the region. My role as a producer in this community has informed my Pacific auto-ethnography and allowed me to analyse the intricacies of screen industry with corporate and insider knowledge. This position has also influenced rapport I have achieved with Pacific screen industry stakeholders as respondents to these *talanoa*.

In outlining my approach to mixed method data gathering, I acknowledge its blended nature. Not only is the influence of my status as both an academic and a practitioner, evident; the blend of research design traditions and knowledge traditions in the Pacific have influenced a necessarily amalgamated research design. This research design thus acknowledges and follows research traditions of academia, while acknowledging and incorporating my duality as a Pacific person, with knowledge of Indigenous knowledge gathering practices, that will enhance the gathering process. I

now outline the specific methods – quantitative and qualitative – used in this thesis in greater detail.

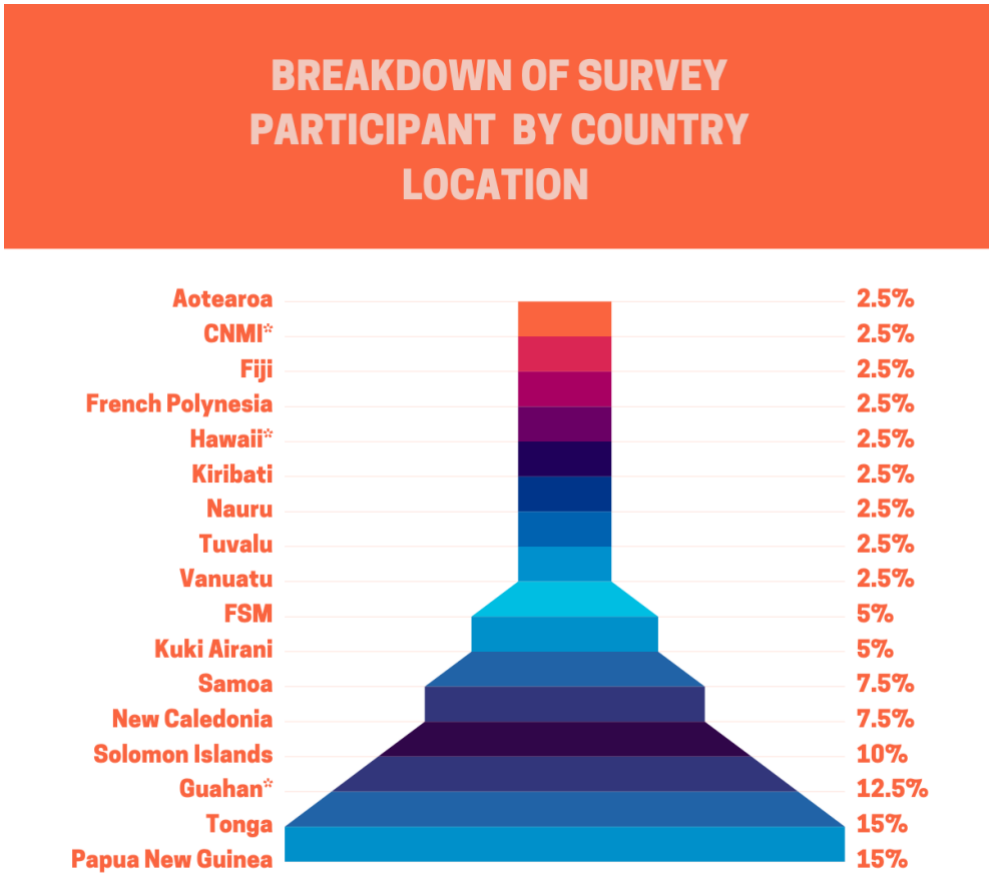
Quantitative methods

Punch (2003) notes that quantitative means the method is designed to produce numerical data. The intention of this study in using quantitative survey data is to create a resource that maps the amount and type of infrastructure available for a screen industry in the Pacific. This survey was sent to screen practitioners across the region, to gather statistical data on the availability of tertiary courses in screen culture, governmental and peak bodies associated with screen, availability of equipment, available funding streams; and production networks. These have been collated into a 'Pacific Screen Infrastructure Map', which will feature in the analysis chapters of this thesis. The purpose of this method is to explore the barriers, enablers; and also needs, difficulties and benefits experienced by the Pacific screen community. I will then use this information to systematically decide what could effectively contribute to the development of a sustainable regional screen industry.

Forty-two participants across the Pacific completed the survey, Figure 2 presents the geographic makeup of these participants. Participants were received from: Aotearoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan), Fiji, Guåhan (Guam), Te Kuki Airani (Cook Islands), Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei), French Polynesia (Tahiti), Hawai'i, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. This survey was not targeted at practitioners with projects in production or distribution, which was the case with the *talanoa*-style interviews. Rather, this survey was sent to any known stakeholders in screen from a Pacific community. They were asked to please complete the survey and pass on to anyone they considered a screen practitioner. I attempted as much as possible to find respondents in every island nation or territory. Though I did not think it would be possible to cover every single island in the Pacific (e.g. in French Polynesia I was only able to receive one response from a screen practitioner in Tahiti), I did see value in attempting to have responses from as many island nations as possible, to ensure the identification of regional screen activity and the pockets where the most infrastructure existed. Island nations from which I did not receive

responses included American Samoa, Australia, Niue, Palau, Rapanui (Easter Island), Tokelau, Uvea mo Futuna (Wallis & Futuna). Despite this, I have industry knowledge to identify answers for some of these island nations without having sent it to local practitioners. I intend to continue this research after finalising this thesis to have a continuously accurate snapshot of the Pacific's ability to support screen industry, despite our aquatic highways and smaller islands.

Figure 2. Survey participation, by country location



*denotes non-independent states

In my qualitative methods, I gathered data using *talanoa*-style interviews. A key difference in the criteria for data gathering between the two was within the discussion of Indigeneity. Although the vast majority of respondents to this survey are Indigenous to the Pacific, select few are either non-Indigenous to the Pacific or non-Indigenous to the Pacific nation they currently live in. The discussion of infrastructure does not require a need to define what Pacific film actually is. Rather, the necessity is to identify what infrastructure is available locally. To answer these questions, the

survey was distributed to anyone operating within the region who could answer these questions.

Qualitative methods

Marshall and Rossman (2016) quote Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 2), in describing qualitative research as ‘a field of enquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters. A complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions surround the term qualitative research’. Marshall and Rossman extend this definition by noting that ‘qualitative research methodologies are now well-established important modes of inquiry for the social sciences and applied fields…’ (2016: 2).

In this study, qualitative methods were key in developing theories and modelling of effective screen industry in the Pacific. I was aware that for the most part, screen industry in the Pacific has not been adequately explored. As noted in Scene One, the documentation of the Pacific on screen and the prevalence of Pacific cultural industries has been addressed, but the convergence of these two things in an idealised regional screen industry, has not yet been investigated, outside of *Cinema Pasifika* (SPC, 2016). As a consequence, I was keen to ensure that the qualitative research methods I used in this thesis were drawn from various disciplines and fields to enable a more comprehensive answer to the research question.

The qualitative research methods I used in this study are:

- A **Pacific auto-ethnography** of my own experiences working within the screen industry in 2019 and 2020, both as a commissioner with Pasifika Film Fest and as a freelance producer.
- **Participant observation** of eight Pacific film festivals, with specific focus on the way which festivals establish opportunities and structural outlets for the Indigenous film festival circuit, and the emerging Pacific circuit.
- ***Talanoa*-style interviews** were conducted with screen practitioners, industry stakeholders, funding bodies and distributors.

These are now described further below.

Pacific auto-ethnography

It is pertinent as a Pacific researcher that a significant part of my study or outcomes are influenced by observations I make as a member of the emerging Pacific screen industry. I intend to utilise my understanding of the Pacific, as a Pacific woman and the screen industry, as a practitioner. This understanding affords me some authority to articulate the complexities of any potential regional industry.

Pacific auto-ethnography was not originally intended to be a focal method of data gathering for this thesis. The completion of my fieldwork research however, demonstrated the influence of my positionality as a Pacific producer. Auto-ethnography generally 'seeks to analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience' (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011; Jones, 2005). My use of auto-ethnography from a Pacific and practitioner perspective will be used in conjunction with the more traditional modes of enquiry I have listed. Both participant observation and *talanoa*-style interviews were undertaken across the period of fieldwork research. As a practitioner, I have been able to contribute my own understanding of the experiences producing screen projects in the island Pacific and Pacific transnational communities, to strengthen the findings and outcomes produced as part of this thesis. In completing this Pacific auto-ethnography alongside a participant observation and *talanoa*-style interviews, I hope to present a perspective on Pacific screen and screen industry, driven by the values of the practitioner, that is, those who will be the primary beneficiaries.

The postmodern questioning of traditional modes of inquiry, enhances the credibility of auto-ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274). Pacific auto-ethnography has allowed me to decolonise traditional methods that have historically 'othered' or rendered the Pacific 'exotic' in writing (Smith, 2019) in similar ways to decades-long experience of ethnographic documentary making and filmmaking in the Pacific. Sharing the stories of Pacific screen practitioners and stakeholders as told to me through interviews, and comparing those with my own experiences, recognises and uncovers experiences and issues that may otherwise not be documented. These include the identity politics of filmic storytelling and the funding bias experienced by transnational Pacific practitioners. In applying this method, I capitalise on an opportunity to hold space for Pacific practitioners. By questioning whether screen industry can be sustainable in the Pacific, this study deliberately holds space for the possibility of creating screen

industry structures in the island Pacific and metaphorically collapses structures that are barriers for transnational Pacific practitioners.

As an active member of the Pacific screen community and a researcher, I have observed that my duality has created interesting dynamics in my work during the course of this thesis. During my research period, I undertook a large volume of screen work. This was not limited to PFF, which ran its fifth iteration in 2020. I also produced 25 Pacific-related projects for film festivals based in Australia, Germany, Aotearoa, Solomon Islands and the US (more information is available at Appendix A). This slate of work illustrates the depth of my positionality in the industry I have undertaken to research. In completing this work, I have observed the dynamics of screen industry, and the effect these dynamics have on Pacific practitioners. I have utilised this standing to build rapport with stakeholders in interviews. The responses to these interviews should effectively inform the construction of screen industry policy in the region. These relationships were initiated prior to the period of my research. Undertaking fieldwork research on the international film festival circuit facilitated opportunities to discuss projects with creators and stakeholders, from both a creative and business context. The film festival circuit provided a space to observe Pacific practitioners watching their creative outputs become business products, eliciting a broader understanding of the global screen industry's overall design.

I began my participant observation of film festivals with the intention of investigating the history of Pacific programming and the depth of audiences for these works on the international film festival circuit. However, what became more intriguing was observing the performance of filmmakers depending on which film festival they were attending to show their films. Of interest was the prevalence of influential Pacific films and their filmmakers showing at A-list international film festivals before returning to screen at film festivals in the region. The films *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* (Mita, 2019), *For My Father's Kingdom* (Mafile'o & Tauamoiti, 2019), and *Vai* (Arahanga et al., 2019) all travelled to at least three of the major international film festivals I attended. All started with premieres at Sundance or Berlinale and travelled thoroughly through the film festival circuit, where I continued to meet the filmmakers at various international locations. Observing the reception of these films in different places and the varied distribution strategies possible for each project (taking into account budget, distribution company and the intentions of the

filmmakers themselves) provided a rich array of data to build a snapshot of how Pacific practitioners navigate industry, and how their work was building an argument for distribution back to the Pacific islands.

This observation is important to note as it demonstrates the different relational positions filmmakers assume depending on the festival they are attending. For example, in A-list film festivals, filmmakers would switch into strategic business mode to network with distributors, public relations, funders and the like. In comparison, filmmakers are much more relaxed at Pacific film festivals, where their intention and participation in Pacific film festivals is more for the viewing pleasure of Pacific communities

The travel of these projects back to film festivals in the Pacific in 2019 prompted me to reconsider the second portion of my fieldwork and revert to focusing solely on film festivals in the Pacific. At the time, the Pacific was developing its own regional film festival circuit. As a result, my research now looks holistically at the journeys of these Pacific practitioners and stakeholders, taking their projects all over the world, only to bring them back home to the audiences they were initially intended for. These journeys contribute robust discussion to the decolonisation of screen practices in the Pacific.

This section of my research was intended to report on business practices and how the political economy of film could negatively or positively operate within a Pacific paradigm. What unfolded between March 2019 and February 2020 was the emergence of Pacific owned distribution pathways that could be slotted into the international film festival circuit.

My proximity to what is essentially a very small community of people has its benefits and setbacks. I consider my role as a producer one of extreme privilege in pursuing information and data. I believe that within the process of data collection, my colleagues were willing to give this information through an unspoken trust. I hope that recognise my intentions in producing this research to be benevolent and in service of progress. However, researching an industry at a time when you are also producing work within it can be stressful. While I do not feel that my research was adversely affected by any such stress, my professional work did suffer from fractured relationships in the networks around me. While I usually actively work to facilitate

networks and create opportunities, I cannot control those around me. Thus, in the case of splintered or ruptured chunks of Pacific screen networks and industry, I largely attempt to continue working to create synergies and solid relationships in the region.

Participant observation

Given the interest of this thesis in the political economy of screen industry, a key strategy was to observe international film festivals with programmed Pacific content. I was interested in how screen creatives monetised their work and did so sustainably. These activities tend to be very visible in the distribution patterns of film festivals and the activity surrounding them. I travelled to seven film festivals: Berlin International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Māoriland Film Festival, Te Kuki Airani Film Festival, Nuku'alofa Film Festival, Native Lens Film Festival and Festivale Internationale du Film Oceanien, Tahiti. To a lesser extent, I also observed the program at Sydney Film Festival and Winda Film Festival (both Sydney-based). I also directed the two iterations of Pasifika Film Fest, Sydney.

The Berlin, Māoriland, Native and Tahiti festivals were particularly instructive in demonstrating the journey films took in this period, often travelling around the world to be shown in these festivals. Observing these festivals demonstrated the distance Pacific projects travelled in a year, and the nuances of the festivals that these projects were commissioned to. The Berlinale, for example, selected a program of Pacific works in 2019, showing as part of 'Berlinale Native'. The now disbanded section of the festival rotated its program of Indigenous film between different global native communities biennially. In 2019, the focus of Berlinale Native was the Asia Pacific. As non-Indigenous commissioners curated the section within Berlinale, there was an effort made to engage advisors who could provide suggestions of authentic filmmaking from these Indigenous communities. I was invited to attend as an advisor to Berlinale Native. The final say on the curation of the program sat with the Berlinale staff.

The Māoriland Film Festival, by contrast, is the largest Indigenous Film Festival in the southern hemisphere and is positioned primarily as a decolonising platform for Indigenous made or led stories. Māoriland takes place in Otaki, approximately 40

minutes from Wellington, Aotearoa. Māoriland's geographic proximity to the wider Pacific facilitates a strong Pacific presence in its year to year programming. The inaugural Native Lens Film Festival took place in November 2019 in Honiara Solomon Islands. Directed by Solomon screen practitioners Georgianna and Regina Lepping, Native Lens is focused on creating a platform for Pacific screen to be viewed by local communities in the Solomon Islands. The festival has its base in Honiara, with the intention of creating satellite venues in outer provinces. This ensures that screen projects, especially those of the Pacific, are viewed in the Solomon Islands. Many of the stories pushed through Native Lens are from the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia by virtue of geographic location.

FIFO (Tahiti) is focused primarily on the presentation of ethnographic films about Oceania or the Pacific. The festival takes place in Tahiti and is not geared towards decolonising screen content about the Pacific. Despite this, the festival has included more Pacific screen works in recent years. In 2020, the festival included Pacific lead narrative short films in its program. Given the nature of the festival, it receives delegates from both mainstream and niche parts of the screen industry.

The observations I made while attending these film festivals informed subsequent data gathering, but they also gave me an entry point to make stakeholder connections (see below). It was also valuable in demonstrating that observation alone does not lead to a nuanced understanding of the business models and distribution pathways necessary for a Pacific screen industry. Rather than simply building case studies by observing the interaction of Pacific content in non-Pacific spaces, I decided to concentrate on the ways in which Pacific practitioners learned from and mimicked these wider industry practices in service of a Pacific industry.

Talanoa-style interviews

A strong program of Pacific screen work travelled the 2019/20 film festival circuit. I conducted *Talanoa-style* interviews with 46 Pacific screen practitioners and stakeholders at varying levels of position and experience. The purpose of using this methodology was to gain qualitative data on the barriers and enablers that Pacific screen practitioners encounter when producing work. This data would complement

my quantitative data and screen infrastructure map. The *talanoa* provided first-hand accounts of Pacific screen practice, with description of obstacles encountered and screen industry practices that were beneficial to their work. I employed a *talanoa*-style of interview (Vaioleti, 2006). The original strategy for interview was semi-structured to create a level of comfort between participants and myself. I redirected this semi-structured style to *talanoa,* a method of knowledge sharing and storytelling that I am familiar with culturally.

> … there is a danger in assuming that all Western, Eastern and Pacific knowledges have the same origins and construction so that, by implication, the same instruments may be used for collecting and analysing data and constructing new knowledge. Researchers whose knowing is derived from Western origins are unlikely to have values and lived realities that allow understanding of issues pertaining to knowledge and ways of being that originated from the *nga wairua* (spirits) and *whenua* of Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu or the other Pacific nations (Vaioleti, 2006).

Vaioleti deconstructs the reasons why Western styles of data gathering will not always function positively in Pacific environments. My approach to *talanoa* involved building rapport with potential respondents prior to interview – for example, between attendance at the Berlinale Film Festival and the Māoriland Film Festival – and then conducting informal interviews with participants at another event. This allowed participants comfort in the interview setting and encouraged storytelling as part of their responses. In some instances, this would require multiple meetings and interviewing on the third, fourth or fifth. An example would be meeting potential interviewees at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah, US (February 2019) and not actually interviewing them until six months later, at Te Kuki Airani Film Festival in Rarotonga (August 2019). Between those two events, I attended three other festivals.

While I devised a set of questions that guided the interviews, I prioritised storytelling and the comfort of the participant over the order by which the questions were answered or answering of all of the questions (if it seemed that specific questions were sensitive or irrelevant). Control questions were asked in each interview, to

identify participants' ethnicity, location and the role they play in the screen industry (see Appendix B for full questionnaire).

To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were allocated to each participant interviewed for this research (used in Scenes Four, Five and Six). Respondent pseudonyms take the form of character names from the *Harry Potter* world (e.g. Rowling, 2007). There may be no direct correlation between the *Harry Potter* film franchise and the Pacific screen industry or Pacific screen practice, but it represents a film movement comparable in size, production and revenue generation to those previously referred to in this thesis that were shot in the Pacific (that is, *Fast and Furious, Jurassic Park* and *Jumanji*). The *Potter* film franchise, built on the creative work of J.K. Rowling, has also defined global popular culture over the past decade, its reach into the Pacific being no exception. There was also a practical reason for using this world of characters to represent the Pacific screen practitioners and stakeholders interviewed in this thesis: there is an abundance of characters in the franchise, making it very easy to keep the full sample of respondents' names confidential.

Figure 3. Interview participants by Pacific ethnicity

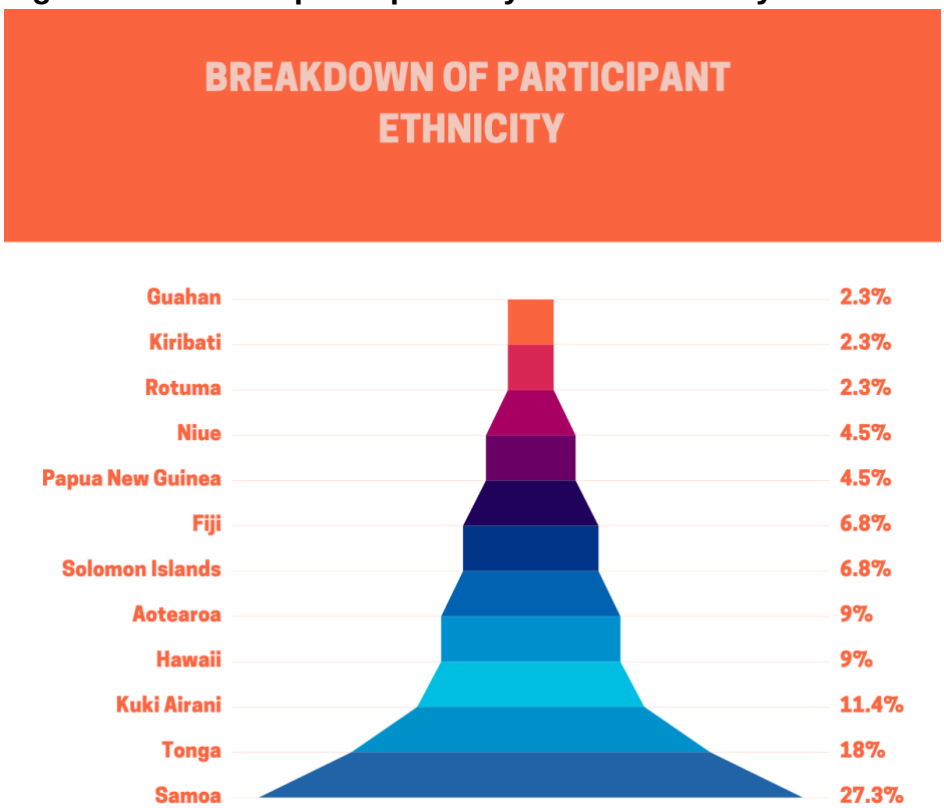
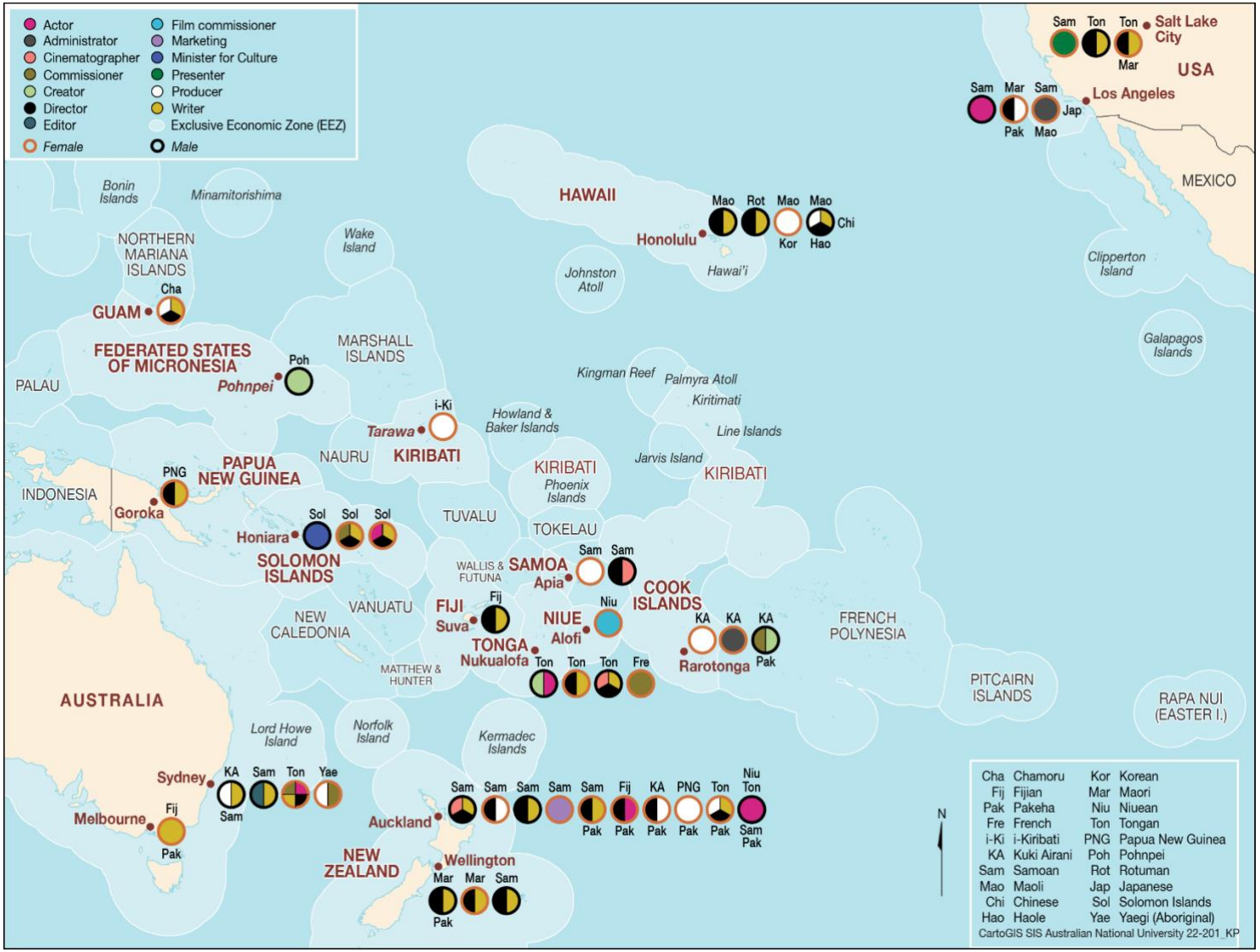


Figure 3 breaks down interview participants by ethnicity, further demonstrating the depth of screen activity throughout the region. It is important to note that while practitioners self-identified as Pacific, many were also based outside of the region in transnational communities. Fifteen interviewees identified as such. Twelve of these participants lived in Aotearoa, six in the United States; and two in Australia.

In Figure 4, I map respondents based on their roles in the industry and ethnicity. The geographic patterns in terms of spread and concentration provide an interesting indication of existing human resources to build a comprehensive and functional screen industry across the region. Figure 4 is therefore, a critical method itself in capturing the vast geography of screen practice in the region, showing the size, diversity and breadth of activity that currently exists.

Figure 4. *Talanoa*-style interview respondents, mapped by their crew role, ethnicity, current location and gender



All the practitioners that I interviewed were between 25 and 45 years of age, and approximately 60 per cent of these were between 25 and 35. Just over 60 per cent of my respondents identified as female, and the majority of these female practitioners were located in Auckland. Many of the practitioners surveyed, mentioned that they work in various roles within the screen industry. Of those who identified as female, 15 mentioned undertaking multiple screen industry roles. Because many respondents were multi-skilled, more than 46 crew and screen industry roles were listed from this pool. Each of these roles and positions within screen industry build a full snapshot of the expectations of all parts of what could be a well-developed sector in the Pacific. Below, I define these industry roles further to support a better understanding of the specific roles needed in the production process, and what Pacific stakeholders currently do.

Early development – Writer, Producer, Policy maker/funder

Often, the role of the writer is considered to be a major employer in the screen industry. At face value, the writer is simply writing down an idea to create a script. However, these ideas create employment opportunities for all crew eventually associated with the project. The producer is vital in this early period in securing funding, crew and cast. The producer is one of the few people who will see a project through from the beginning to the very end and will source funding to ensure that the project is able to happen. The producer can employ or end employment for any cast and crew on set. Policy maker/funder has been included in this part of the production process as it is the point at which funding is often sought. The development of a script necessitates the creation of budget lines, as the producer is able to identify the number of cast needed, the technicality of shots required and the degree of post-production technicality, among many other elements. The producer will thereby seek funding by creating a budget and pitching the project to potential funders, government based or otherwise. This part of the process is currently the most difficult within the region, with little to no funding available at government or corporate level. The economic benefit of screen industry and, to a wider extent, creative industries have yet to be fully explored in Pacific countries. The exception to this would be Pacific territories and countries such as Australia, New Zealand and

the United States. The Australian and New Zealand governments heavily fund these industries.

Pre-production – Director, Actor, Director of Photography, Editor

There are many instances in which the role of Writer and Director are occupied by one person on a screen project. Creative ownership of the project is often controlled through these two positions. In the scheme of things, however, the role of the director generally starts later than that of the writer. On a set, the role of the director is to work with actors in attempting to embody the vision of the script (as written by the writer). This work occurs in the pre-production process. While the Director is beginning the process of understanding the script and the ways in which it could be communicated to potential audiences, the producer is working towards recruiting crew and casting actors to play acting roles. There are many instances in the screen production process in which this exact order does not eventuate. In most cases, it does help the process if it works in this way. For any production, it is a good idea to have an editor signed to a project while it is in preproduction to allow discussion with the director of photography around technical requirements for the handover of footage and file formats and so forth. Despite this, an editor is generally part of the 'post production' process on a set. The need for the director of photography in the pre-production process is for planning of logistics, identification of key shots required to capture the story of the script, and any other technicalities. This work reverberates in the sourcing of locations for shooting, props, art department, catering, accommodation etc.

Production

All of the industry roles mentioned so far contribute to the process at the 'production' stage. Of those roles named by interviewees, there are none that are specific only to production. Generally, the actual shoot or 'production' is the shortest element. It can also be the most arduous physically. Most of the employment on any screen project takes place during production in which all departments and cast are employed. While the cast are procured and start rehearsals during the pre-production phase, they actually undertake their jobs during this stage. Ancillary sectors of the screen

industry are also most involved during the ‘shoot’, such as caterers, cleaners, and removalists (for any art department and so forth).

Post-production

Though already named in the pre-production process any editor, both sound and visual, are key members of the post-production process. While it is often preferred that these crew members are brought into the process during pre-production to ensure they are aware of the story’s vision, their role becomes a primary focal point after the completion of the shoot.

Distribution – Commissioner, Presenter, Marketing

This stage of the process is not part of production. It is however the main aim of screen projects. That is, to disseminate screen work to prospective audiences. In this study, I was able to interview festival curators, commissioners, presenters in cinematic spaces; and lastly marketing experts in the screen industry working with Pacific projects. These roles are all facilitators of the distribution process from different sectors of the screen industry.

All of these parts of the screen production process were covered to some extent by the selected interviewees in this study. These accounts and experiences allowed insight into all factions of screen industry to enable a depiction of what it could look like in the Pacific.

Timing and conduct of the research

To answer the key research question and address research objectives, I undertook three phases of primary data collection. The first phase took place between December 2018 and March 2019. I conducted *talanoa*-style interviews with screen practitioners while attending and observing conferences and observing film festivals in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Samoa and Aotearoa. The second phase took place between August and November 2019. Importantly, a shift in my research objectives occurred between these first two phases. I had originally

planned to attend ‘ImagineNative Film + Media Arts Festival’ in Toronto, Canada, the world’s largest presenter of Indigenous screen content. After attending international festivals with Indigenous programming, such as ‘Sundance Film Festival’, ‘Berlinale’ and the ‘Māoriland Film Festival’ I made a conscious decision to redirect my focus to Pacific film festivals in the region at a time when more were emerging. Thus, I spent this time collecting data in Rarotonga (Kuki Airani), the Solomon Islands and Guåhan, observing film festivals and conducting *talanoa*-style interviews. During this phase, I also determined that data was required to create a map of screen infrastructure, both as a methodological component of the thesis and as a lasting legacy of this project.

The final phase of data collection took place between January and February 2020 in Hawai‘i (US) and Tahiti (French Polynesia). Again, I attended and observed conferences and film festivals and conducted *talanoa*-style interviews. I began compiling data for the infrastructure map during this phase. Secondary data collection continued between January 2020 and February 2021, contributing to the auto-ethnographic aspect of this study.

Participants in quantitative and qualitative research methods were all current or prospective stakeholders in Pacific screen practice. Participants in the survey and the interviews were from two different groups that did not overlap. To collect the quantitative survey data, I used the online platform Survey Monkey for comprehensive geographic reach in the region. Respondents were sent a link directly through email and message to respond to the survey. They were also able to pass this link on to other appropriate participants.

Interviews were conducted in person or in a format requested by the respondent. As mentioned in this chapter, rapport with interview participants was developed over time. Interviews often took place at either the second or third meeting. At the request of a few participants, interviews were conducted over zoom and only audio recorded.

To collect data for my Pacific autoethnography, I kept a record of my own reflections in daily diary entries, during fieldwork research and while working as a producer. As well as this, I have kept comments and reviews from stakeholders and participants to capacity building exercises I have worked on. With screen projects that I have produced and overseen the distribution of, I have collected data from distribution

portals YouTube, Facebook Watch and Instagram TV, noting where these projects are being viewed internationally to gauge geographic reach and strength of responses to the content. It has been interesting to receive positive responses from television networks in the region that screen these projects. Data collected during the production of PFF 2020 informed regional consumption trends for Pacific content. PFF 2020 also demonstrated an event with clear links to the wider Pacific, often having broad representation across the Pacific in event participation, ticket purchase and film submissions. While the data provided by industry stakeholders have informed the key findings of this thesis, it is my own experience of screen industry and the Pacific's place within it that largely informs the structure for Pacific screen industry that is presented in Scenes Four, Five and Six.

Data analysis

Given the mixed method approach of this research, I have analysed my empirical data using both descriptive (Kemp et al., 2018) and thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) techniques. I have used descriptive analysis in my quantitative data sets to highlight what the data illustrates as a region map. This infrastructure primarily informs potential policy makers and aspiring screen practitioners about the networks and infrastructural resources available to them throughout the region. The information provided in the infrastructure map will be unpacked by analysing the nuances of the data when presented on the map. It has been kept simple for the purposes of this thesis. Outside of this study, I have also reproduced the Pacific Screen Infrastructure Map as an interactive online project to be kept in an online space for regular updating as screen industry infrastructure grows in the region.

Thematic analysis is commonly used in line with qualitative research methods to identify recurrent themes in the data. Here, a theme is considered to be an idea that recurs or pervades within a work. I have used thematic analysis in the coding of *talanoa*-style interviews and in reflection of my diary entries during the Pacific auto-ethnography phase of the research. The flexibility of thematic analysis could create reflexive lines of enquiry, and expansive coding aggregates, through a tendency towards the escalation of thematic importance. This is a dynamic that happened in the analysis of my data, creating an extraneous and sometimes repetitive list of codes.

In returning to my data to re-code these themes, I was able to identify such repetition and/or overlapping themes. This contributed to a more focused presentation of my research, as well as conceptual and thematic structures within which I have framed my research and modelled sustainable screen industry in the Pacific.

Research and data collection limitations

Covering the region

Though extensive attempts were made to cover the region equitably in the collection of both my qualitative and quantitative data, I was not able to interview or survey screen practitioners from every island nation. I was also unable to interview or survey screen practitioners from every island within each Pacific Island country. For example, I received survey responses from screen practitioners in Pohnpei, FSM, but not the outer island of Yap in FSM. I was similarly unsuccessful in reaching all corners of the French Pacific. Despite this – perhaps inevitable – data collection limitation, the data remains relatively representative of the region as a whole. Both primary and secondary data collected provide a clear illustration of current screen production practices in the region, and how these practices will contribute to future embodiments of Pacific screen industry.

Changing methodological objectives

This research was initially designed to identify the barriers and enablers for screen production in the Pacific. The questions in the *talanoa*-style interviews were framed to elucidate what Pacific screen practitioners identified these to be. The infrastructure map was created as a tool to visually demonstrate where specific inequities exist in screen production throughout the region. Some, but not all, of the data collection methods changed through the course of this research, which was a similar case for some of the objectives of this research.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the approach I undertook in addressing the research question and objectives. As an exploratory study, my methodological structure developed into a mixed method paradigm. I was able to use my position within these

Pacific screen networks to collect varied and rich data. I have also detailed the three-phase process in which I gathered data, demonstrating how each phase influenced the next. I also justify each phase of data collection and the methods used and outline two limitations of this approach. In data analysis, I have highlighted the thematic and descriptive analysis techniques and identified why I chose to adopt them.

Scene Four: *Le Malu* – A Pacific Centred Screen Industry

Introduction

In this thesis, I conceptualise a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific as one that is Pacific centred, economically viable and socially and culturally legitimate (Scene One, Figure 1). This Scene unpacks the first of these critical elements, namely that a sustainable screen industry is Pacific centred. Pacific screen practitioners are an emerging community, not only represented across the global industry but also in the Pacific region. As regional arts and culture conversations go, the discussion around screen, or film and television, has emerged only recently (SPC, 2016). This being the case, the idea of a Pacific centred industry may seem premature. Yet, as I detail in this Scene, it is fundamental if Pacific screen is to reflect the true stories and experiences of Pacific Islanders.

Scene Four critically engages with what I have termed drivers of a sustainable Pacific centred screen industry identified in the conceptual framework of the thesis. These drivers are Pacific centred policy development, Pacific centred capacity building, the prioritisation of Pacific crew and the Pacific film festival circuit. I investigate the importance of these drivers in building an industry that deliberatively places the Pacific at its centre. In doing so, I present empirical data that illuminate the barriers and enablers Pacific screen practitioners encounter in the screen production process. This data, taken from interviews, a quantitative survey, and Pacific auto-ethnography, illustrates a Pacific centred screen industry and justifies its criticality to the achievement of sustainability. With both a political economy and decolonisation lens, I interrogate what has – and has not – been achieved in the sector. In analysing current structures and the experiences of Pacific screen practitioners, Scene Four will demarcate potential structures that would enable this.

Pacific centred – a definition

The Pacific's decolonisation of the screen industry borrows from Indigenous screen practice's 'Fourth World Film' (Herrington, 2011), or Fourth Cinema, as coined by

Barry Barclay (2003(a)(b)). At the time, ‘Fourth Cinema’ was conceptual, with the hope of future viability in story sovereignty and ownership of business and economic practice. Indigenous screen industry has since continued to thrive, forming sustainable industry practices and crossing these into the mainstream.

For example, two current shows, *Rutherford Falls,* created by Teller Ornelas (2021), showing on Peacock and *Reservation Dogs* by Harjo (2021) on Hulu, are principally created by Native American practitioners. These shows exemplify how Fourth Cinema has penetrated the mainstream streaming services and networks. The accessibility of these shows through commercial streaming services demonstrates the realisation of the aspirations of Fourth Cinema and its community of Indigenous makers to distribute Indigenous stories on mainstream screens. The release of these projects, made with Indigenous writing staff and creative control, signifies Fourth Cinema's arrival into popular culture.

Current pioneers of the Indigenous screen sector progress the discussion of the decolonisation of screen through data gathering and policy development. As the most significant global Indigenous film festival, ImagineNative has contributed to this narrative. In its 2013 report *Indigenous Feature Film Production in Canada: A National and International Perspective,* ImagineNative Film and Arts Festival is described as having ‘a mandate to foster and promote the Aboriginal film and media sector’ and is ‘recognised globally as the leading presenter of Indigenous film and media content’ (2013, p. i). As an Indigenous owned and led organisation, a platform such as ImagineNative is demonstrative of a local screen movement that has successfully adopted sustainable industry practices. In doing so, this platform has bolstered policy and industry configurations centred on the Indigenous screen community, taking into account its nuances and dynamics and aiming to work within these parameters to develop sustainability. My research looks to Indigenous screen practice for guidance on these points, given the progress made in this space since the early 1990s. I use the *malu* – first introduced in Scene One – to visually represent a Pacific centred industry.

Le malu

As explained in Scene One, I engaged traditional tattoo artist and Papua New Guinean documentary maker Julia Mage’au Gray (Melanesian Marks) in the visual

design of my conceptual framework. Gray contributed motifs that are recognisable across the region, with cultural and symbolic significance, to illustrate the key drivers of a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. Image 2 (Scene One) presents Gray's contribution to the visual and cultural interpretation of *malu* to depict a Pacific centred screen industry.

In Samoan and Tongan, the word *malu* can mean shelter or protection. I use the *malu* allegorically: the four corners of the diamond represent separate pillars upholding a figurative structure. Each pillar represents a separate driver of a Pacific centred industry. Each pillar 'protects' the centre of a Pacific centred screen industry, being a network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners. Together, each of these different aspects of the *malu* emphasises the importance of screen productions being Pacific led. This idea builds on screen industry practices in 'Fourth World Film', which suggests that creating educational opportunities and policies unique to the Pacific and owned by the Pacific will give agency to the region and provide economic freedom for those participating in the sector. By developing a sustainable Pacific screen industry and screen practices, I contend that collective and systematic screen sovereignty is possible and necessary in a similar way to other Indigenous communities (Coe, 2000). Decolonizing screen in the Pacific would allow the region to challenge derogatory stereotypes and place itself at the centre of a narrative that has historically used the Pacific primarily, and only, as a backdrop.

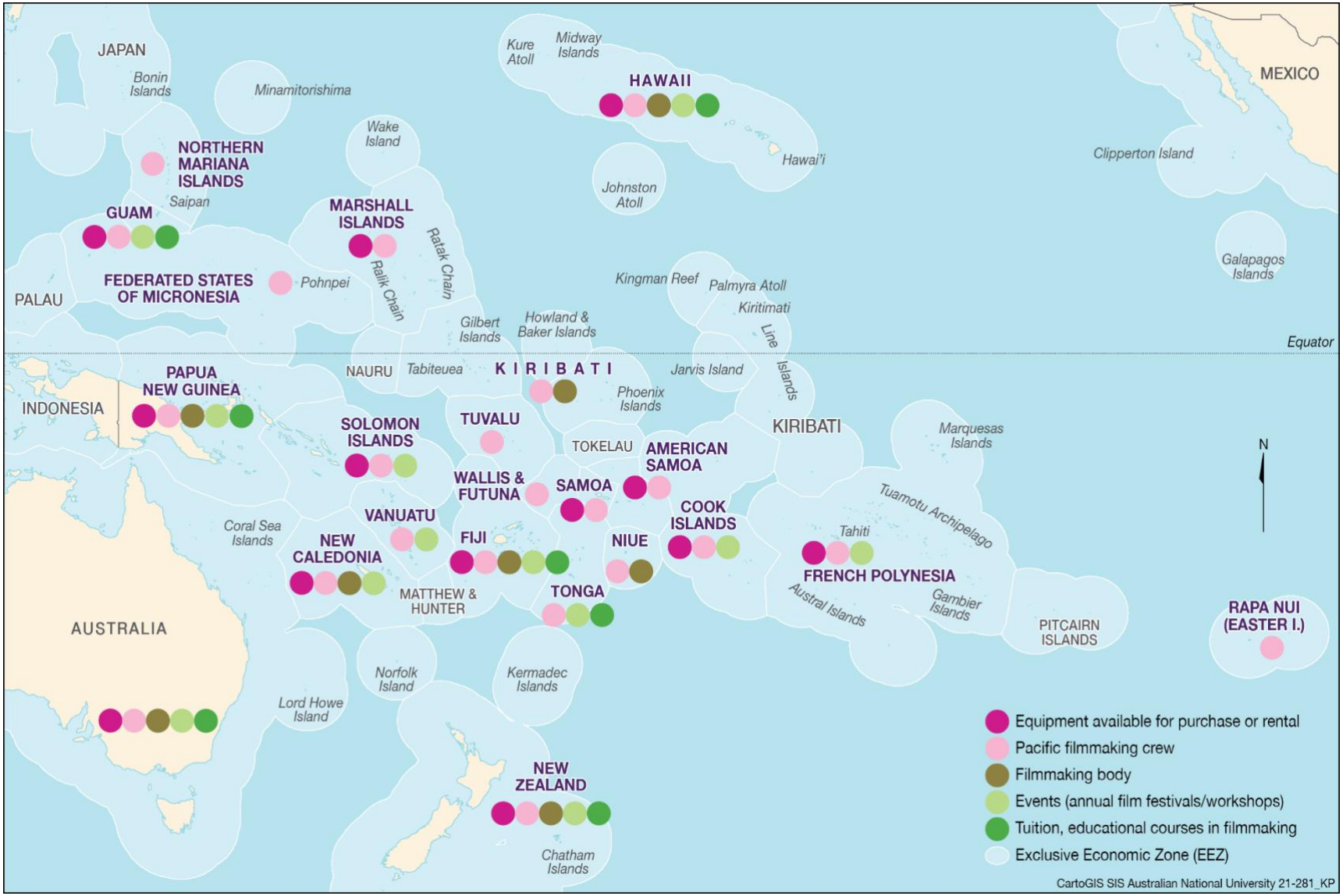
Following a geographic snapshot of Pacific infrastructure presented in Figure 5, I discuss each of the drivers that would comprise a Pacific centred screen industry, beginning with the development of policy and regulatory frameworks. In particular, I review existing screen policies across the region including digital policy parameters, industry regulation (and non-regulation), and issues related to industry investment. I then consider mentoring and training opportunities such as formal education and industry programs, followed by transnational and international organisations' opportunities. Finally, the Scene considers the extent to which screen practices currently prioritise local Pacific crew.

Mapping Pacific screen policy and infrastructure

Figure 5 presents pockets of infrastructure for screen production, as they exist in the Pacific. The quantitative data compiled here illustrates the availability of training

courses and tuition for screen practitioners in the island Pacific and its transnational communities. It also highlights the availability of crew, the availability of retailers who sell equipment and the prevalence of a peak body associated with screen. Mapping this activity serves to demonstrate specific patterns of production throughout the Pacific. Transnational communities in Australia and Aotearoa have access to all identified elements of screen infrastructure. The only Pacific island nations that can access all five drivers are Hawai‘i, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. Despite this, *Cinema Pasifika* notes that screen production courses in both PNG and Fiji are not fully functional. Equipment is also not readily available. PNG has only recently announced its intention to establish a peak body associated with screen. Hawai‘i is the only Pacific island nation that has invested in industry infrastructure and investment. Each of these issues will be explored in the respective discussions.

Figure 5. Map of screen infrastructure in the Pacific



Pacific centred policy development

Until recently, there has been minimal policy development around screen industry in the Pacific. Despite this, studies have demonstrated the growth of the Pacific's screen-based output over the last ten years (SPC, 2016) in both the island Pacific and transnational communities, with differing levels of commercial and cultural significance. A few examples of culture-based policies that have been developed in the Pacific include the Pacific Community's Regional Culture Strategy, *Investing in Pacific Culture* (2018). In its review of phase one, the strategy noted:

> … the objectives and indicators were overly ambitious and not uniformly attainable; that the strategy had failed to address the need for institutional strengthening, which hampered the effectiveness of the strategy; that insufficient attention was paid to resource mobilization and to communicating the strategy nationally among stakeholders … (SPC, 2018, p. 1).

Investing in Pacific Culture upheld global trends in valuing culture in international development. With this in mind, the Pacific Community and the Council for Pacific Arts and Culture developed the strategy to provide 'a guide to countries on how to mainstream culture into other economic and social sectors; and how to promote culture as a sector in itself' (SPC, 2012, p. 5). This goal recognised the lack of structures prevalent in the formalisation of cultural products in the Pacific. The strategy encompassed 'dances, songs, chants, performances and handicrafts' as cultural products, not yet recognising a more recent global progression towards creative and digital industries (UNCTAD & UNDP, 2010).

In this section, I will present auto-ethnographic data and data gathered in *talanoa*-style interviews to describe existing screen policy in the Pacific and consider the policy gaps and opportunities required to develop policy for the sector. For a regional screen industry to be Pacific centred, deliberate policy decisions that account for the nuances of the Pacific are required. This section will examine select examples of policy and policy gaps from around the region. Pinpointing policy deficits is a crucial strategy in this research to support more sustainable practices in the future.

Existing policy

The most common screen policy in the Pacific region is geared towards regulating offshore projects that film in the island Pacific, especially large-scale productions. Offices associated with this work exist primarily in the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Niue, with smaller offices in other Pacific island countries.[9] These offices work specifically to administer paperwork for offshore productions shooting on island. 'Film Fiji' also advocates for local screen production by creating outreach activities with the Fijian Department of Education. The 'Kula Awards' 'allow high school students to participate in three streams – film, dance and art. Students are put through a training program and then use their creativity to produce a short film, dance routine or a piece of art, depending on which stream they participate in (Film Fiji, 2022). Samoa's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has focused on broadcasting in the past, having designed a broadcast strategy for the 2019 South Pacific Games (Wilson, 2019).

My research found that these offices only oversee the administration of paperwork for offshore screen projects, not for local screen projects. Thus, if a local group from Nuku'alofa intends to shoot a project in a nearby village, they have no government bureaucracy to refer to. More likely, these practitioners would be required to seek permission from a village council, as respondents Lily and James explained:

> Lily: You just have to go through the Tongan Visitors Bureau, you just fill it out, they're really good actually and they don't charge a fee for us.
> James: But it was different too because when we do our TV stuff there's a bit more red-tape because they know [Fresh] and all that stuff right, but when we do our independent films, they let us go.
> **Respondents Lily and James Potter, Auckland (Tongan and Samoan)**

There is, then, a difference in the access and treatment of local, compared with international, screen practitioners who shoot in Tonga. However, as transnational Pacific practitioners, respondents Lily and James are also classified as 'offshore' screen practitioners. Being familiar with the 'Pacific way', respondent Lily, of Tongan

[9] In Tonga, there is no official peak body for film although respondents to this research advised that documentation (such as permit requests and approvals) associated with filming on island is administered by the Tonga Visitors Bureau. Similarly, permits to film in Tahiti (French Polynesia) are administered by Tahiti Tourisme.

descent, uses her connections to influence the Tonga Visitors Bureau to waive administration fees when she travels to Tonga to film independently. Yet she notes that this is not a consistent approach. When she approached the Tonga Visitors Bureau for her television work, these fees were not waived. This demonstrates the complexities, inconsistencies and lack of transparency that result from a lack of dedicated policy infrastructure in the Pacific.

In other parts of the Pacific, there has been some policy reform and development. In Fiji, the national government has developed policy incentives for offshore projects looking to film in Fiji (Film Fiji, 2022). The '75% Film Tax Rebate' is available to fully funded offshore productions, calculated on total Fiji expenditure, and lodged after the completion of production. Fiji's film tax rebate represents an incentive to offshore projects to spend as much of their production budget in country as possible, with a minimum expenditure of 250 thousand (Fijian) dollars. By training skilled crew and developing potential policy around quotas for the local crew on any sets in country, Pacific governments could develop pathways for economic development around human resourcing in national screen industries. Film Fiji, Fiji's peak film body, developed a production policy and licensing regulations for local practitioners that facilitates some of the activity emphasised above. The Fiji Film website explains:

> Licensing of Audio-Visual Agents
>
> The licensing regulations for audio-visual agents came into force in 2012. It was to eliminate "back door" operators who undercut and undermine bonafide operators. The licensing regime assured that the right people were engaged in overseas production, ensuring efficient and timely delivery of services and agents providing services expected by international productions. Any person who wishes to work directly with a foreign production company eligible for tax rebate can apply to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport (Fiji, 2016).

While an important recognition of the industry, Fiji's policy is still skewed towards servicing offshore productions. A perhaps unintended (but positive) by-product of this is the development of criteria that legitimise local screen work and accreditation for local screen practitioners. Although this legislation is developed to service the presence of offshore productions that travel to Fiji, it also ensures a level of control and quality over the pool of emerging practitioners in Fiji that can lend their skills to local and regional productions.

In 2021, Papua New Guinea's National Cultural Commission announced work on a new policy to grow screen industry in the country (Esila, 2021). While no final policy has been unveiled since the Pacific's biggest country developing such infrastructure could influence the screen industry sustainability more broadly in the region. The rest of the independent Pacific does not have developed policy around local screen production. Many of my respondents noted the availability of some form of office or bureau associated with film or television in Pacific Island nations. Often, these offices were purposed solely to administer paperwork and charge location fees associated with offshore projects on both large and small scale. These offices can be found in Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Niue, Tonga, Kuki Airani, Fiji, Guåhan, Papua New Guinea and Tahiti. However, policy extending further than the administration of filming applications and location permits is non-existent in most Pacific Island countries. Respondent Dedalus Diggle describes the purpose of the film commission in the Solomon Islands:

> Diggle: … there is a film commission. It comes under the Prime Minister's office, under the Department of Communications… So, if a filmmaker comes here and wishes to do filmmaking here, he (sic) has to get a permit and he gets it from that particular department - so the government Communications Unit.
>
> Interviewer: … are permits for people from here as well?
>
> Diggle: … especially [for people] from overseas. Like BBC, if they wish to come and do shorts here, they have to get permission - TV groups and all that.
>
> **Respondent Dedalus Diggle, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Diggle describes the actual function of the Solomon Islands Film Commission, which acts almost entirely to process paperwork for external productions that travel to the country. There is no considered focus on paperwork for local productions. Interestingly, a thriving community of keen young filmmakers in the Solomon Islands are making work without any supporting policy or legislation.

While a lack of proverbial red tape or paperwork can benefit local productions by reducing the policies that regulate them, it also means that there is no clear direction these practitioners can take that will guarantee economic independence or sustainability should they continue to produce screen-based work. The screen production environment is similar in Niue.

> Yeah, they do need a permit especially for production… we're just concerned about filming companies or production companies … if they are gaining some sort of benefit or some sort of commercial value out of the production. The argument is, if people are coming here to take footage from this location and making money out of it, we should be able to get a bit of money out of that. But with the situation at the moment they are getting more than what they pay us…
>
> **Respondent Fred Weasley, Niue (Niuean)**

Respondent Weasley discusses attitudes towards offshore productions shooting in Niue, noting that Niue should benefit economically from any projects that come to the island nation for filming. Weasley acknowledges that such projects are currently receiving more out of the association with Niue than Niue receives in return. Weasley's perspective highlights the concern that has been outlined in literature around the distribution and exploitation of resources in screen industry that extracts from the Pacific, as the Global South, in service of the Global North of the screen industry. Comparative to the burgeoning community of screen practitioners in the Solomon Islands, respondent Weasley also discusses the very small pockets of screen practice in Niue.

> …we have a television company that is government owned and it's been operating for over 20 years, so they do have the infrastructure, the personnel in place. I think they do have some capability and capacity in their department or broadcasting corporation to do some of this. I think that looking at our TV at the moment maybe its 95% is overseas programs and you only have the news that is local. There's nothing else.
>
> **Respondent Fred Weasley, Niue (Niuean**)

Minimal screen industry that works mostly to mimic media-based resources available in western countries, without utility of the economic and developmental benefit to Pacific nations, is common throughout the Pacific. A lack of developed practice in the television sector in Fiji is observed by respondent Diggory below and reverberates the observations of respondent Weasley:

> …TV stations here… I left television because I got bored of it. Because all the TV stations, if you come here and you watch local television, it's all just talk shows. Like the station I worked for had eleven talk shows and it's like, 'what are you talking about man'… No like drama. I think they have a drama show in Vanuatu called *Love Patrol,* but there's nothing like that it's all just talk shows.
>
> **Respondent Cedric Diggory, Fiji (Indo-Fijian)**

In a larger country such as Fiji, respondents still identify common dynamics in screen practice. Where respondent Weasley acknowledges the only locally produced content in Niue is news media, respondent Diggory believes a larger volume of locally produced content but is disillusioned by it being predominantly talk show based. Talk shows and news media are generally cheaper productions to undertake, compared to narrative or even documentary content, explaining the state of Indigenous television in the Pacific. Understanding this lack of innovation or stifled creativity in the Pacific establishes the need for policy reform and exhibits the need for industry investment in Pacific screen culture.

As a stalwart of the Hollywood production machine, Hawai'i has developed policy around creative industries that is inclusive of screen. Hawai'i's Creative Industries Division (CID) is a state government agency overseen by the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) in Hawai'i. CID's update report (2020) defines creative industries and profiles their economic performance. This report includes specific sectors under the umbrella of 'creative industries', namely: marketing, photography & related, performing and creative arts, engineering and research & development, business consulting, computer and digital media products, cultural activities, film television video production and distribution, design services, architecture, publishing and information, music, radio and television

broadcasting, and art education. Of the screen-based sectors, the report gave an economic impact of seven hundred and seven million (United States) dollars. Screen-based sectors in Hawai‘i created three thousand three hundred and three jobs. In the more established screen context of Hawai‘i then, policy has served to measure economic impact by monitoring the flow of finances associated with screen industry in and out of the State. Job creation data also points to an industry that has developed policy to generate employment and assess the effectiveness of workforce building strategies. Policy has also been designed around unionisation of screen crew in Hawai‘i. In fact, it can be argued that the unionisation of the workforce highlights an industry sufficiently developed to provide a criterion for screen practitioners who can and should engage with offshore and local productions, as well as policy ensuring local crew quotas are filled by unionised crew, to ensure fair rates of pay.

The regulation of industry through policy could set standards for pay rates and practice in screen production for the Pacific island region. Such policy should also create the structures that train and build capacity in prospective practitioners, enable the creation of work through funding, ensure the accessibility of quality equipment and distribute Pacific screen work. This section has found that policy – primarily in the form of offshore project regulation – exists in some parts of the region, specifically in Fiji, PNG, Niue and Hawai‘i. The current state of screen industry in the Pacific highlights an opportunity to propagate more comprehensive policy frameworks further across the region.

Industry (non-)regulation

In addition to policy gaps, my research identifies a concern among my informants with the lack of industry regulation. In *Cinema Pasifika,* country snapshots demonstrated that any building of screen industry structures in the Pacific did not have longevity. Despite this, Pacific screen practitioners continue to create, often producing and distributing (Thomas, 2011) in an ad hoc fashion. Almost half of my respondents mentioned a lack of a regulated screen industry as an enabler for screen production in the Pacific. A quarter of respondents regarded the lack of screen industry infrastructure as a significant barrier.

> … I guess there's some benefit to not having an industry in place because there's nothing [to stand in your way] - like you can go and shoot anywhere and anyone can do that. So, you can shoot anywhere, there are no … labour laws in place for filmmaking, I don't think. So, it's a wide-open industry, which is both advantageous and dangerous.
>
> **Respondent Cho Chang, Guåhan (CHamoru)**

Respondent Chang highlights the benefit of not having a regulated industry in Guåhan. The same lack of regulation that profits off shore productions through tax offsets and overall cheaper economies benefits local practitioners in their day to day production needs. Respondent Chang mentions that filmmakers can go anywhere in Guåhan and shoot however and whatever they like (within reason) without the impediment of labour laws. In fact, there are industry awards for actors or crew, meaning a shoot could start and finish at arbitrary times.

Another unregulated element of screen in the Pacific concerns the technicalities of screen production. In the Pacific, there is no restriction on how to manipulate technical equipment that would affect a budget. Conversely for example, in Australia, the use of a vehicle on a location shoot is highly regulated, as evident in the directive of Transport New South Wales:

> If a vehicle is not covered by a Conditional Registration Vehicle Sheet, RMS will still consider individual vehicles for conditional registration for the purpose of the filming event. On application RMS will consider the non-compliance of the vehicle and impose conditions that mitigate any risk. As a general rule, vehicles conditionally registered for filming events will be restricted for use at a shoot only and will not be permitted to travel freely on roads or roads related areas. However, conditionally registered vehicles approved for this purpose do not need to seek approval for individual shoots; provided they are used within the conditions, they can be used on unlimited shoots throughout the period of registration (New South Wales Government, 2018).

This New South Wales government requirement of having any vehicle involved in a film or television shoot restricted to the set of the project also limiting the ease with which all footage set in the vehicle is obtained. For example, to film shots from a

vehicle, a screen production is effectively required to hire a studio that allows space for a vehicle to be driven with a camera mounted to the hood, and lights mounted to the ceiling of the vehicle's interior. Alternatively, a studio that has facilities to park a vehicle inside and use green screen,[10] or a screen large enough to project the desired background of the scene in real time could be used. These facilities have obvious associated costs. The average chromakey studio in Sydney could cost 1,350 (Australian) dollars for a day's hire.

Comparatively, in Guåhan, one vehicle would be able to drive freely on public roads with a camera mounted to the hood to shoot all required scenes. In terms of budget, this would involve only the cost of the camera, the equipment required to fasten the camera to the vehicle, and any lighting equipment. This option is cheaper and will involve less logistics and scheduling than what would be needed to shoot this scene legally, in the Australian state of New South Wales.

Throughout the island Pacific the same can be said for a lack of regulation of screen practice and the benefits it possesses for an independent screen industry in its infancy. Despite these benefits, however, I contend that the lack of regulation does not cultivate sustainability. Although an absence of policy engenders creativity and independent filmmaking, it can also create a culture of screen practice that minimises safety and does not focus on remuneration. This has been discussed in academic film exchanges in Europe (Olsberg SPI, 2012). A lack of labour laws does not require effective remuneration of people on film sets. Thus, this model of screen production does not presently allow individuals to build careers or business out of their creative work.

The benefits and challenges of industry non-regulation are also evident in access to screen production equipment in the island Pacific. The cost of equipment required for screen production anywhere is high. In the Pacific, physical access to equipment is higher given geographic barriers imposed by the sea and distance. In Guåhan, the purchase of equipment from the Philippines is common, as is the hiring of equipment from the United States, to be flown to Guåhan and returned by airfreight after a shoot. In the Solomon Islands, practitioners also ship their equipment from the Philippines because it is cheaper than shipping from Australia or Aotearoa.

[10] A green chromakey background allows for a separately filmed background to be inserted.

Practitioners in Tonga advised that they purchased equipment from Aotearoa. In many Pacific Island countries, a lack of policy and regulation translates to a lack of import of quality production equipment. Respondent Chang notes the difficulty associated with procuring quality equipment in Guåhan:

> … I think they are the only ones that do formal renting and their equipment is very outdated, like it's very old equipment … if we need equipment that we don't have, we either have to purchase it or we have to network among our friends and find out who has the camera that we need or the lens that we need.
>
> **Respondent Cho Chang, Guåhan (CHamoru)**

Auto-ethnographic evidence gathered during the production of CHamoru language short film *An Gumupu I Chankleta* informs this discussion. During the shooting of this project on Guåhan, equipment was flown from the Philippines to supplement the camera and lighting departments. The main camera (a RED digital camera) was flown with a chaperone from Los Angeles. The camera's chaperone eventually doubled as a gaffer (lighting technician) on the project. Altogether these two budget activities accounted for approximately 3,000 (United States) dollars of the entire 6,000 (United States) dollar grant that the project received. Comparatively, auto-ethnographic evidence gathered during the production of short form content in Australia, highlighted a different scenario for transnational Pacific practitioners. On a 15 to 18-minute project, where crew members do not come with their own equipment, a project can incur equipment hire costs of approximately 3,500 (Australian) dollars. Where crew members come with their own equipment and transportation, this often marks up the crew members contracted price by at least 500 (Australian) dollars. This is dependent on the amount and value of equipment being supplied.

The lack of Pacific screen industry regulation is broadly beneficial to producing independent, island-based Pacific projects because of the associated freedom for practitioners. Yet it also comes at a high price, given global industry structures that ultimately cost screen practitioners more than they would otherwise save from not having to abide by strict regulations found, for example, in Australia. This makes it

more difficult to develop a sustainable Pacific screen industry grounded in its own infrastructure and policy development.

Lack of industry investment

A lack of industry investment is not something that was articulated by many respondents to this study as a key barrier or enabler for screen production. Fewer than one in ten of my interview respondents mentioned or alluded to a lack of industry investment when discussing their production experiences. Having said this, the key questions that were established in the development stages of this research, were geared towards identifying how Pacific practitioners produce their work. They were also targeted at individual instances rather than the wider structures that enable industry. Thus, I observed that in answering a question about barriers or enablers, respondents were not inclined to identify the broader social structures inhibiting or facilitating their work. Rather their accounts were associated with immediate challenges and benefits they faced.

In this section, I unpack how this broad industry deficit affects screen practitioners' day-to-day work. While the idea of investment could usually be defined by economic injection through funding for screen production; this study defines industry investment more broadly. Although there is a recognisable lack of financial investment into the Pacific screen industry, there is also a clear lack of time and manpower towards the development of infrastructure. As noted in Figure 5 above, Hawai‘i is the only territory to benefit from industry contribution. The respondents' experiences further emphasise the contrast in industry investment across the region.

> *Delacour*: …so right now we have many people bombarding us with messages saying they can’t participate this year but they’re doing the project for next year and some people who emailed us like there’s a friend who works in the bank and I had no idea he was interested in filmmaking, stuff like that… Hoping that the government will realise that we do need this. We need to build on the creative…
> *Ravenclaw*: Yeah, I will just say government should support more creative arts. Not everyone’s going to be a scientist… they should have scholarships for young artists in filmmaking and any other way they can tell the stories,

> preserve the stories.... we don't have that here in the Solomon's, for many years now. Our government should support that…
>
> **Respondents Gabrielle Delacour and Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Respondents Delacour and Ravenclaw in the Solomon Islands encourage their government to make an investment into culture and the arts or to promote contributions from industry, including transnational industries. They observe a high volume of people in their community who aspire to make screen content, but they do not feel confident or supported or have the resources available to complete their projects. Subsequently they do not see viable career paths in screen production. Both Delacour and Ravenclaw think that government and industry investment would be a key facilitator for this work and these practitioners.

> … it would function under the government, but I think the whole idea of exploring individual skills through technology would be a bit hard to find with government… it won't happen because the commitment isn't there… I think that's how a lot of NGOs fail, because when something like funding stops, your passion still has to be there to support it. But when financials not there, we tend to give up, because we have a family to support, we have other commitments…
>
> **Respondent Kingsley Shacklebolt, Samoa (Samoan)**

Acknowledging the general lack of investment in arts and culture in parts of the Pacific directly links to the likelihood of screen investment as a broad umbrella sector under which screen practice can sit. Recognising the value of screen industry in the Pacific and making a corresponding investment in the organisation of infrastructure implies a vested interest in developing a sector that is beneficial to the region and will lead to a Pacific centred industry. Ensuring the Pacific centredness of policy development allows the Pacific to grow industry so that it can be nurtured and be innovative in and for the Pacific environment.

Digital policy

Thus far, this section has analysed the state of policy development in the Pacific screen community. I have identified significant gaps in screen policy and regulation in the region. Focusing on the global advent of digital technology in the Pacific offers an opportunity to investigate a branch of critical policy development needed for the Pacific screen industry. Given the impact that digital technology has had on screen production practices globally (D'heer et al., 2012), the possibility of a simpler transition to screen practice in the Pacific using digital is a credible speculation. Dheer et al. refer to digital production as a technological phenomenon:

> Although television consumption is predominantly related to domestic life … the Internet allows family members to interact via multiple meso-publics. In this respect, the audience, a discursive construct related to broadcasting media, shifts to a more hybrid and fragmented constellation. People are more connected than ever, participating in and engaging with media through various platforms and channels. It is up to the individual to select, mix and match the media technologies at hand to manage social contact, regulate time and space, self-representation and media consumption (D'heer et al., 2012, p. 195).

Within this study, very few (less than one in ten) respondents discussed digital production when reflecting on their experiences with screen production. Based on international data and the pace with which the Pacific now participates in social media and smart technology (Watson et al., 2021), I suggest that digital technology will be a focal part of policy development and infrastructure needed to create sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. Those respondents who identified digital production in their reflections noted the key role it will play in facilitating screen work from Pacific people. Respondent Moaning Myrtle, for example, considered digital technology as playing 'a huge part in the future and now', and noted that it places the practitioner in 'the driver's seat' of production.

Screen practitioners and their growing networks in the island Pacific have experienced a massive increase in accessibility to digital production services and screen content broadly. At least 60 per cent of Pacific Islanders now have access to a mobile phone (Cave, 2012), creating a new environment of consumption and

disruption in the screen industry (Currah, 2003). The inexpensive cost of digital production allows it to take place easily in the Pacific and all over the globe. This has hugely facilitated the motion picture industry's movement away from traditional centres of production to 'peripheral locations'. Thus far, 'peripheral locations' or 'runaway locations' have been analysed in this study under the guise of film's political economy. This study has noted that the use of the Pacific for its 'peripheral locations' may disadvantage the Pacific financially, although an opportunity exists for Pacific countries to leverage these locations to prioritise the employment of local, skilled crew.

In the day-to-day organisation of logistics on a production, digital technology allows producers to monitor the progress of production remotely, transmit daily live action footage over the internet for production and post production, and alleviate time constraints and security concerns around mail and courier postage of footage when shooting wraps. Affordability of digital equipment and specialized computer programs has dramatically reduced the cost of shooting and editing film, again increasing the feasibility of screen production in and to the Pacific (Currah, 2003). On the distribution side of production, digital technology continues to demonstrate clear benefits to Pacific screen industry, as noted by respondents Scamander and Brown:

> Using social media, we just can put up whatever we want which means whoever will come through and see it. It's their choice to see it or not to see it. And also, to promote our stuff to start making money out of it and promote Tonga. I think that was our biggest thing for a social media is to promote anything from Tonga positive things.
> **Respondent Newt Scamander, Tonga (Tongan)**

> I made it for online because I wanted it to be evergreen content that will live on the site that will be like a premium piece of content for the platform and it will give more eyes to the platform and also because I want everyone to see it you know … I never saw it as having a commercial back end and all that … I suppose the other reason that people like having public screenings is the ego of the live situation and sitting there and everyone going, 'I love your movie' … I just wanted people to watch it so it's the first documentary - first feature

> documentary, that has been funded in a very limited way for online. So that's kind of exciting … I'm just hoping not everyone is going to rip it in the end.
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

These respondents consider the Internet's inherent ability to connect with audience and distribute work directly without third party interference. The expectation of these respondents is to distribute their work, free of charge for their regional and local community, speaking to an emerging screen network's choice to initiate the production of content, and work towards a critical mass of screen work for the Pacific to consume. This is only one facet of the large web of activity that is distributed in the screen industry. As a focal part of the industry, distribution will continue to be analysed and interrogated throughout this study and will appear as a key driver of an economically viable screen industry in Scene Five.

Strategic business in digital technology, mobile technology and smartphones has facilitated the rise of viewership. The accessibility of digital technology has also facilitated the viral popularity of Pacific content all over the region and at all levels. Since the opening of the public market for mobile phones in the Pacific in 1994 (Foster & Horst, 2018), Pacific Islands have expanded their data coverage from 2G to 4G very quickly and developed markets for telecommunications. Mobile data is generally expensive in the Pacific and Internet bandwidths are not high. Papua New Guinea is one Pacific country that has experienced significantly high mobile data charges as the country navigates negotiations between PNG's federal price regulator and telecommunications companies (Watson et al., 2021). Despite this, mobile data bundles can be purchased, offering cheaper data per megabyte for the use of specific social media platforms. To this end, telecommunications companies in the Pacific provide smart phones that come with Facebook loaded to the phone, offering data bundles that allot cheaper megabytes of data purchase for use of Facebook. These developments emphasise the exponential growth of digital technology, its use in the Pacific, and the many prospects that are availed through these developments for the business of screen production.

With the majority of the Pacific and its transnational communities having access to devices that have been disseminated through this digital revolution, online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook Watch and IGTV (Instagram) have facilitated a previously untapped market for regular individuals to push their own video content digitally, as 'social media influencers' (Enke & Borchers, 2019). Often, these influencers are able to generate revenue in a similar way to traditional television practices, through advertising revenue generated through their content, and paid to them by social media platforms. While this level of revenue is not as evident for social media influencers from the island Pacific, the popularity of this content is indicative of the potential for revenue streams from Pacific screen practice.

The popularity of social media personalities such as the 'Funny Taganez' (Fiji) (Instagram @funnytaganez) in 2018/19, or the global viral sensation that grew out of Samoan couple Asuelu Pula'a and Kalani Faagata being cast in the US reality show *90 Day Fiancé* emphasise how easily these forms of entertainment and screen content can now be accessed and consumed throughout the Pacific. The 'Funny Taganez' have not posted on their Instagram page since May 2021. Prior to that they generally posted sporadically. Despite this, the @funnytaganez instagram handle garners over 10,000 likes per post, beginning with their first posts in May, 2019. *90 Day Fiancé* cast member Asuelu Pula'a joined the show in 2016, travelling from Samoa to California, US to stay with his future wife Kalani Faagata as part of the show. Asuelu's general antics and comedy received mixed reviews from the Pacific community; however, his initial appearance on the show became undeniably popular, extracting humorous comments and reactions to the show's promotions using the couple.

Today, Asuelu's individual Instagram page holds 335,000 followers and his video content has garnered over 3.5 million views since June 2021. While social media analytics were unattainable for both these pages, as a social media platform Instagram user, I can comment on the continuous sharing and posting of content from these social media influencers within the Pacific community. The broad possibilities for screen-based storytelling on a rudimentary level are highlighted in these examples.

The flipside of digital distribution is how easily intellectual property can be stolen in an unregulated industry such as the Pacific. Respondent Brown articulated a hope that everyone would not 'rip it in the end', referring to the content they developed to live online and be consumed directly by the Pacific community. Brown refers to piracy and the ease with which copyright can be breached in this digital era. As an enabler of the creation and distribution of screen content in the Pacific, the key issue with digital technology is that its accessibility can be exploited. The ease with which digital content can be produced and disseminated means monitoring all content is difficult. There is plenty of technology available to illegally download, using sites such as YouTube and Facebook, which are popular in Pacific communities.

According to the website Business of Apps, YouTube viewers watched one billion hours of content on the platform every day in 2017. In 2019, the site made 15.15 billion (United States) dollars in advertisement revenue. Facebook reported its daily active users at 1.84 billion on average for the month of December 2020 and advertising revenue at close to 85 billion (United States) dollars for the month of December 2020. Business of Apps reported that in 2016, 95 million pictures were posted to Instagram every day. While official usage statistics for the platform have been rare since it is believed that figure is likely to have increased significantly since. Highlighting the weight of these platforms and their influence highlights the prevalence of digital viewing habits as they increase around the world and in the region. Digital technology is a growing opportunity in the Pacific. As Pacific communities continue to engage with digital technology and devices, more and more economic prospects avail themselves and illustrate the possibilities for sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. These opportunities signal the need for policy creation.

In the development stages of this research, key questions were established to identify how Pacific practitioners interact with screen production. It has been mentioned that these questions were targeted at individual instances rather than the wider structures that enable or inhibit industry. Here, I have unpacked how the broad structural deficit within which Pacific screen industry currently operates could be countered through policy reform, with a view to being Pacific centred. This section of my research addresses some of the economic recommendations from the Pacific Community's Regional Cultural Strategy and *Cinema Pasifika* by suggesting ways

that screen industry can engage with the economic and social sectors to further develop.

To bolster these discussions around screen practice in the Pacific, I have referred to examples of existing policy, noting a lack or abundance throughout the region. I have also accounted for the lack of regulation of screen industry throughout the Pacific and how practitioners perceive this. Canvassing the region's relationship with screen policy has allowed a comparative analysis of digital technology, including its role in the Pacific screen industry and its possibilities in elevating Pacific screen practice. This comparison points to possibilities within the Pacific screen industry were it to be structured in such a way that is focused back on the region before it is outward facing the global industry.

Pacific centred capacity building

Building a network of skilled workforce to supplement the volume of potential screen work in the Pacific is vital to ensuring sustainability of industry. To this end, building capacity in Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners in the island Pacific and transnational communities is key to ensuring Pacific screen industry places Pacific stories at the centre of its practice.

As evidenced above, this sector remains an emerging industry in the Pacific (Stupples et al., 2021), with a corresponding lack of investment. In addition to infrastructure and industry contributions, Figure 5 (above) shows that tuition that might arm aspiring individuals with the required skill to produce work in screen production is not highly accessible in the region. In *Cinema Pasifika,* the Commonwealth Foundation closely analyses the accessibility of screen production programs in the region. In the report, an SPC supported regional film training program was established. Unfortunately, this course was eventually stripped back considerably[11] due to a lack of success placing skilled practitioners into screen industry roles (SPC 2016, p. 6). In the Pacific, screen production courses attached to educational institutions occur sporadically throughout the region, with varying levels

[11] This program was focused on staff at local television stations and government film units.

of success. Respondent Tonks comments on the importance of skilled screen production workforce in Fiji.

> They [are important] and highly skilled. I'm telling you, these people because they work on so much American stuff, there are some people in there that are like - Dave Hotchin he runs Guru Media in Fiji, he is a one-man band…
> **Respondent Nymphadora Tonks, Auckland (Fijian)**

All respondents in this study acknowledged training and mentoring as a key enabler of their screen work. Of those, half identified that access to local workforce capacity and capability was also highly enabling to complete their work. Despite this need, accredited screen production courses are not regularly provided throughout the region. This section now presents existing tuition opportunities for screen production in the region, types of courses available, and the prospects for a Pacific centred screen industry, with the growth of an Indigenous workforce.

Formal education

The Pacific has various formal courses associated with screen production available. Figure 5 presents the accessibility of formal training for transnational Pacific communities in Australia and Aotearoa. The Academy for Creative Media (ACM) in Hawai'i is a key education provider for screen practitioners living on island. Outside of these Pacific metropoles of screen industry, screen production courses exist with varying levels of success. These courses are mapped in Figure 5 with tuition marked in green. The nuance of these educational institutions is audited below.

Fiji National University (FNU) offers a Certificate IV in Film and Television Production. While this course is still in operation, in 2016, *Cinema Pasifika* noted a lack of satisfaction with the quality of its graduates when placed in screen jobs. PNG's National Film Institute (NFI) offered screen production courses in the past while also administering the entry of external productions into the country to film on location. At the University of Hawai'i, ACM has produced many successful alumni, including those of Pacific and Maoli descent. Auto-ethnographic data shows that many ACM's graduates enter the mainstream US screen industry, crewing on

Hollywood productions and making their own work successfully. At the National University of Samoa (NUS) journalism courses operate in lieu of screen production courses. Students learn video and sound production at a reporting and broadcasting level through these.[12] In 2020, the journalism course at the NUS was disbanded for the 2021 calendar year, only to be reinstated in February 2021 (Siutaia, 2021), in preparation for the 2022 calendar year. The University of the South Pacific's Samoa campus launched a journalism and media course almost simultaneously. The University of Guam and Guam Community College in Guåhan both offer courses associated with screen production at degree and associate degree levels. Accredited screen production courses do not exist in the Federated States of Micronesia. Despite this, the College of Micronesia on Pohnpei has a Film Club that offers access to production equipment. The College of the Marshall Islands offers associate degrees in liberal arts. This curriculum does not cover film, cinema and/or screen production (College of the Marshall Islands, 2022).

This audit of formal screen production courses in the region provides a snapshot of current educational opportunities, corresponding with Figure 5. The map demarcates formal education in the region, with the exception of American Samoa and Palau (where I was unable to receive a survey respondent). Some investigation was made into the availability of screen infrastructure in Tokelau, to which no discernible formal or informal infrastructure was found. I have limited the surveying of the US to its territories in the island Pacific. The quality of training available in Hawai'i and Guåhan are clear indications of the capabilities in the US, and this study focuses on the US structures and influences on film practice through my Pacific auto-ethnography.

Colonial ties influence the efficacy of training and mentoring institutions in the Pacific. Independent Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga all possess courses that have not been able to sustain or continuously produce international industry level practitioners. Hawai'i has developed its courses to a very high quality. The same can be said for the quality of training available in Australia and Aotearoa. In Australia, the Australian Film Television and Radio School is the nationally recognised tertiary institution for production and sits within a pool of educational institutions and training

[12] That is, one camera/one subject, with limited sound and lighting requirements

providers that either specialise in production or have developed screen production degrees. In Aotearoa, Victoria University offers the most extensive specialised film program in the country and sits similarly in a pool of other training providers, such as Massey University, Whitireia Polytechnic and Unitec. Analysis of the quality of educational opportunities and their geographic placement in the Pacific allows this study to analyse how the region could conceivably produce skilled workforce. Hawai‘i has been the focus of many parts of this scene. Hawai‘i is also an interesting case study as a Pacific Island nation that can track the development of its skilled workforce over twenty to thirty years.

The thriving ACM has produced a high calibre of Pacific practitioners such as Alika Maikau (*Mauka to Makai*, 2019) and Emmy Award winning director Ty Sanga (*Hae Hawai‘i*, 2018). Below, respondent Creevey reflects on his time at the University of Hawai‘i before the ACM:

> …I wanted to study film coming out of high school, there was no film degree at the University of Hawai‘i. And so, we had to put together independent studies in film. So, like I cobbled together some classes in the drama department, some classes from the English department … um … creative writing and then some production…
> **Respondent Colin Creevey, Hawai‘i (Maoli)**

This comparison draws clear boundaries between two different times in screen production for the Pacific Island nation: one without any defined tuition in screen production, and now, with educational programs that produce skilled crew to supplement world-class, high-quality screen projects.

Tonga’s formal education providers for screen production have not been listed in the above audit. While Tonga has a course associated with screen production, the Atenisi Institute is private and Indigenous owned (Stupples et al., 2022). Respondent Bones discusses the work of the institution:

> It’s called Atenisi institute… [we offer] opera, ensemble and traditional dancing and we travel a lot, as well as preserving our dances and our music.
> **Respondent Susan Bones, Tonga (Tongan)**

Atenisi Institute is a provider of tuition for aspiring screen practitioners. Respondent Bones advises that the school was initially set up to teach performing arts, but has expanded to include foundational courses in creative and script writing. The Institute's website gives that these courses were still available in 2021, ('Atenisi Institute, 2021). Outside of Atenisi, there are no other organisations (private or public) in Tonga, providing tuition in screen production. Thus, aspiring Tongan practitioners, much like in other parts of the Pacific are often self-taught, honing their skills by consuming educational content on social media platforms and videos.

> Interviewer: …so anyone who films in Tonga, they learn …
> Respondent: … by themselves or through YouTube, yeah.
> **Respondent Susan Bones, Tonga (Tongan)**

Respondents in the Solomon Islands and Samoa also observed a broad lack of education and training in arts and culture, at both primary and secondary level. This admission was noted to have a gateway effect on the lack of investment in screen production courses as a sector of the creative or the arts and culture industry.

> … we don't have like arts class in high school and stuff like that, so you can imagine how people are just suppressed… there's no way that they can express themselves you know…
> **Respondent Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

> … it's not taught at school. The only school that taught drama was Samoa College when I was there. They were teaching Shakespeare … Samoa College was doing drama…
> **Respondent Theodore Nott, Wellington (Samoan)**

Respondents Ravenclaw and Nott address the stark omission of cultural and creative industries education from the Solomon Islands and Samoa curriculums. Respondent Ravenclaw specifically discusses the suppression of creativity through this omission. While Ravenclaw does not openly state the effect of this suppression on mental health or wellbeing, my own analysis of the statement has led me to other ways in which building screen infrastructure could enhance sustainability of screen

industry by providing career options that cultivate passion for work and provide an outlet for creativity. Given the diversity of answers that have been gathered about tuition in screen production, analysing this dynamic is not the focus of this section. Ravenclaw's answer, however, is considered a key consideration for the future of Pacific screen industry.

When discussing a regional screen industry, navigating the formal structures that would sufficiently train and build capacity is interesting. From Figure 5, it is also evident that the most common form of screen infrastructure all over the region is the existence of production networks, that is, filmmakers and screen practitioners, or those who aspire to work in screen production. These networks are spread evenly throughout the region. Formal education or screen production courses however, are not. To service screen industry workforce demand, each island nation would ideally have local access to formal education. If this is not possible how can each Pacific Island country be ensured the opportunity to receive quality tuition and enter into the workforce? Analysing the prevalence of screen production courses in the Pacific underscores the importance of building workforce capacity in the region. It also promotes Pacific centred training and mentoring programs in the region. Outside of formal education, respondents to this study noted the benefit of industry programs in their experiences. These industry programs facilitate active learning and capacity building in screen production.

Industry based training opportunities

Industry programs are an alternative to formal education in screen production. In many instances they are complimentary to formal training, however industry programs can often provide mentoring to aspiring practitioners, or hands on industry experience with actual industry networks, to build a career on.

> Tribeca All Access - that was the program with the Tribeca Film Festival for underrepresented voices… it was amazing because you had a lot of support. You got to practice your pitch and then go – we did speed dating with buyers and agents; HBO, PBS programs all of this stuff… it was such a brilliant exercise in really understanding material and how to deal with agents, buyers and media groups. It was really fantastic and I've done a lot of those kinds of

> things over the years in the American system and yeah, it was really valuable in terms of career.
> **Respondent Katie Bell, Auckland (Kuki Airani)**
>
> … I got my first attachment through Create NSW and I believe I was one of the first Pacific Islanders. I was one of the first if not the only Cook Islander that graduated from AFTRS with a Masters of Screenwriting….
> **Respondent Barty Crouch, Sydney (Kuki Airani)**

Respondents Bell and Crouch both reflect on opportunities they benefited from in industry programs. Interestingly both respondents are of Kuki Airani Māori heritage. In this study, one in ten respondents traced their ancestry to Kuki Airani. Most of these (60%) were based in Rarotonga, Kuki Airani. while the rest were based outside of the island nation. Kuki Airani presently traces colonial ties to Aotearoa in free association. Both the above Kuki Airani practitioners participated in high quality capacity building programs outside of both their island home and Aotearoa, where they would usually have easier access to programs of similar quality. Respondents Bell and Crouch highlight the diversity of capacity building programs available to screen practitioners in transnational communities, depending on what part of the industry they associate with.

Producers benefit from receiving face to face time with agents and buyers of work, thus building networks and gaining experience in the business side of screen production. In essence industry programs geared towards producers will create an environment similar to respondent Bells' description of 'Tribeca All Access', in New York City, accepted participants are given full access to the film festival and its market programs, enabling networking and growing opportunities for these practitioners to gain knowledge about the business acumen needed to monetise screen projects.

Respondent Bell's experience with Tribeca All Access largely contributed to her ongoing career since, informing her ability to produce and monetise recently made Pacific screen work. Respondent Crouch recalls a 'director's attachment' he had the opportunity of receiving through the Australian state funding body Create New South Wales. An attachment (to any department head or focal member of crew on set) can

usually be characterised as an apprenticeship in the screen industry. In an attachment, the attaché shadows the director, producer or writer to gain industry experience on a professional set. Respondent Crouch's attachment gave him hands-on experience in a writing and directorial role.

Training and mentoring opportunities similar to Crouch's have not yet been thoroughly interrogated in this study. These often occur in developed countries, thus will most likely service transnational Pacific communities. Programs such as 'Script to Screen' (New Zealand Film Commission) in Aotearoa or 'Digital Originals' (Screen Australia/SBS) in Australia allow selected applicants to present their projects to industry in hopes of gaining attention for their stories and potentially gaining funding. These operate in a similar fashion to the program discussed by Respondent Bell, as activities that face the industry and demonstrate the business side of screen production to aspiring practitioners. While these programs provide tangible networking opportunities with successful international stakeholders, they also illuminate the nuances and or difficulties of a mainstream industry that does not understand Pacific stories or culture.

There are sporadic opportunities that have occurred throughout the region, such as Nia Tero's '4th World Media Lab', which awarded fellowships to Solomon writer/director's Regina and Georgianna Lepping, and Maoli directors Erin Lau and Justyn Ah Chong. Nia Tero's ad hoc work in the Pacific continues in 2022 with Pacific screen and journalism fellowships being offered by Nia Tero in the region. In transnational Pacific communities in the US, respondents discussed differing levels of engagement with screen industry programs, as captured in Respondent Pince's words:

> Yeah, it's a partnership that was established with AUT [Auckland University of Technology]… I think we've had so far - 3 interns that were provided. We had Matilda Poasa… and then currently we have Pouarii Tanner, that's our intern right now…. I think that's kind of where the institute and the labs and fellowships and all these workshops can help in preparing filmmakers to make that kind of transition…
>
> **Respondent Irma Pince, Los Angeles (Samoan/Maoli/Japanese)**

Respondent Pince is referring to the Sundance Institute Indigenous Program's annual internship, developed in partnership with the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). By 2020, three Pacific women (two Samoan and one Kuki Airani) had been placed in this internship and went on to work in the creative industries in other capacities. Matilda Poasa, who interned with the Sundance Indigenous program in 2018, is currently the Projects and Relationships Coordinator at Māoriland Film Festival, the largest Indigenous film festival in the southern hemisphere. Pouarii Tanner, who interned in 2019, runs an artist residency space in Rarotonga, Kuki Airani, and completed a Master of Creative and Cultural Practice at AUT. Since their internships, these practitioners have not gone specifically into screen production. However, their participation in the Sundance Indigenous' internship developed their skill and networks to build a portfolio of logistical and production work. Contrastingly, transnational communities in Salt Lake City, the closest major city to Park City, where Sundance is held each year have a differing perception of the festival.

> Filmmakers that I've run into that are starting out, don't even know that Sundance has labs all year round… There's the Utah Arts Department. That has tons of programming. And there's undesignated funding that can go towards a film project so there's resources available. I just don't know – there's a disconnect in getting it to community, or community accessing those resources.
>
> **Respondent Moaning Myrtle, Salt Lake City (Samoan)**

To the Pacific community on the West Coast of the US, Sundance is a momentous opportunity for Pacific screen practitioners to present any work they have produced, and also receive training and mentoring in screen production. Despite this, respondent Myrtle describes a disconnect between the Pacific community of Salt Lake City and the Sundance Film Festival. Respondent Myrtle provides her own anecdotal evidence as a member of Salt Lake City's Pacific community who has attended Sundance in the past but has done so as an individual, or with her family, but not her wider community. Sundance Indigenous' decision to partner with a university in Aotearoa to build the capacity of transnational Pacific practitioners in

Aotearoa demonstrates systemic and cultural factors inhibiting the connection of US transnational communities to mainstream screen production programs.

Formalised training in screen production can thus be supplemented by industry programs, as outlined above. Since 2010, a growing canon of screen production activities geared towards the Pacific have been developed to stimulate screen production. Australia's Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), Pacific Islanders in Communication (PIC) in the United States, and the Commonwealth Foundation (UK) have been key players in this activity, creating capacity building programs that demonstrate promising models of regional training and mentoring programs in screen production. Respondents to this study also provided examples of industry-based capacity building programs developed closer to the region.

PACMAS operates through the Australian public broadcaster the ABC and has a number of projects in the Pacific, such as 'Young Pacific Changemakers' (ABC, 2021). PACMAS' work relies heavily on media and journalism training in order to make inroads into government communication about development, civil society and business in the Pacific. This does not necessarily build capacity for screen based narrative storytelling; however, it does provide basic technological knowledge for aspiring Pacific practitioners in the region. During the course of this research, PACMAS created capacity building programs centred around narrative content in partnership with the NUS. While the program was well received by NUS and allowed local participants to work with high-quality equipment, participants expressed some concern that the workshop had been facilitated by an Australian and that the cost of this outside expertise constituted the majority of the workshop budget.[13] This highlights the challenge of donor funded development programs that do not prioritise local expertise.

The Commonwealth Foundation provides targeted opportunities for the development of screen culture in Pacific Commonwealth countries. In 2016, the Commonwealth Foundation announced a call for Pacific production companies to partner with and produce short films, written and directed by Indigenous practitioners in Tonga and Papua New Guinea. This resulted in the production of six short films under the banner 'Pacific Voices' (Commonwealth Writers, 2017). One of the selected Tongan

[13] Confidential personal communication, 15 January 2019.

writer/directors was Ofakilevuka Guttenbeil Likiliki, who contributed a vignette to the film *Vai* in 2019. The production company that partnered with the Commonwealth Foundation was BSAG Productions, headed by Kerry Warkia (PNG) and Kiel McNaughton (Māori). This company has since gone on to produce *Vai, The Legend of Baron To'a* (McNaughton, 2019), and a slate of television projects in Aotearoa (*The Feijoa Club, Find Me A Māori Bride*), one of which has been commissioned by the Sundance Now and Independent Film Channel in the US (*Good Grief,* McNaughton, 2021). Unfortunately, Pacific Shorts has not seen a second iteration, however, the prevalence of the funded projects at international film festivals and the continuous work of these practitioners in Pacific screen demonstrates the power of these initiatives to facilitate screen production.[14] The Commonwealth Foundation's partnership with a Pacific lead production company demonstrates more ways in which these opportunities look at industry development holistically, encouraging business development, network building and capacity building.

In 2017, Māoriland Film Festival (MFF) operated its first set of capacity building workshops with high school age students in Samoa, Kuki Airani and Tahiti. These were achieved with funding from agencies such as Screenrights and involved facilitation from emerging Māori and Pacific screen practitioners from Aotearoa. MFF worked with organisations on the ground in Rarotonga, Tahiti and Samoa to coordinate the 'Through Our Lens' project (Māoriland - Through Our Lens website, 2021). 'Through Our Lens' was targeted at Indigenous youth in the island Pacific who were interested in becoming screen practitioners. Māoriland travelled with established young Pacific practitioners from Aotearoa. These practitioners lead workshops with high school aged students in the four countries[15] to prepare them for the seven-day filmmaking challenge they were about to participate in. The workshops enabled participants to work in groups to create and produce their own short films. The program allowed participants to replicate a micro film crew. In the process groups conceived a short film idea, wrote the script and organised the shooting of it; shot and edited the entire project in the allotted seven days of the challenge. 'Through Our Lens' allowed young aspiring practitioners to navigate the

[14] For example, Malani Wolfgramm of Tonga continues to work in video production and Glenill Burua's short 'The Education of Grayson Toki' (2017) continues to be shown at festivals.

[15] This included Amberley Aumua, who wrote and directed one of the nine parts of *Vai* which premiered two years later in 2019.

collaborative team-based work environment of a film or television set. In effect, these programs provide a ‘crash course’ in screen production, operating on the principle that the fastest way to learn a skill is by doing it. Below, respondent Weasley refers to the ‘Through Our Lens’ challenge as it took place in Kuki Airani.

> …we have been able to develop a rangatahi program with Māoriland [Film Festival], which is - I would liken it to, you know the 24-hour film festival projects? It’s not 24 hours but its damn close to, because we only have a week to be able to workshop with the children. In that period of time we select a group of young people from the ages of 11 to 24, and then the Māoriland Film Festival project, which is called 'Through Our Lens’ - we bring over 5 young filmmakers from Aotearoa, 5 young Māori filmmakers and they work with our group of 15 filmmakers. And from whoa to go, it involves the concepting, the storyboarding the scriptwriting or draft script… filming sound, teaching, editing, screening.
>
> **Respondent Ginny Weasley, Rarotonga (Kuki Airani)**

Another skills and capacity building program that was developed in Kuki Airani was the ‘Film Raro’ challenge.

> … the ‘Film Raro’ challenge, which was a challenge where six teams from all around the world came to Rarotonga and had a week to make a film. We had - I had some crew I bought with me from New Zealand, including the director of photography. But in Rarotonga we worked with a crew on the ground. Our production manager, our assistant camera, our location managers were all Cook Islanders, which was really brilliant because they of course knew everything on the ground, and had all the local knowledge. And some of them had also been through a film course for six weeks before the crews all showed… Stan Wolfgramm ran people through a filmmaking course and it was really collaborative, it was really fun and some of those people after we left went on to make their own films…
>
> **Respondent Katie Bell, Auckland (Kuki Airani/Pakeha)**

Respondent Bell discusses the 2013 ‘Film Raro’ challenge. As described, ‘Film Raro’

allowed respondent Bell, as a transnational Pacific screen practitioner, to travel her project to Rarotonga, in Kuki Airani, to shoot as part of the challenge. Although respondent Bell travelled with some of her own crew, she was also able to work with local crew that had been trained in film production prior to the arrival of the 'Film Raro' participants. These crew had been trained to supplement 'Film Raro' to build production skills on island. It should be noted that while 'Film Raro's 'social good' model was designed to build capacity in Rarotonga, unfortunately, its logistical model relied heavily on local sponsorship for its production needs. Accommodation for participants was provided in kind by local resorts, as was catering, art department and costuming, among other key budget lines. This level of sponsorship has not been achieved for another iteration of the challenge and 'Film Raro' has not taken place again since 2013.

> … so, with 'Film Raro' … it gave me lots of things, it taught me lots, but it also taught me lots that made me think no. So, were talking about sustainable industries, right? So 'Film Raro' for me, I think that it is not sustainable for Cook Island people to have foreign films come over and we work for free. That is not creating a sustainable industry… call it what it is it's Indigenous casted, and it's all Indigenous funded, and it's all Indigenous funded to help bring this Australian story to life, this English story... There are many people on this island who were like 'I want to be an actor' and gave their time from their jobs to work on this thing, gave their homes, gave props that their grandmothers owned, things to make a house look more island and things like that. And where is this film career? I was like, we cannot make promises like that, no industry will survive.
>
> **Respondent Padma Patil, Rarotonga (Kuki Airani)**

Respondent Patil explores the lack of sustainability in 'Film Raro' further, despite it being a project designed with some sustainable development facets in mind. Respondent Patil's in-person observation of 'Film Raro' differs heavily to that of respondent Bell, who was very supportive of the project and continues to believe that models of collaboration such as 'Film Raro', should be utilised to develop sustainable

screen industry. Below she compares ‘Film Raro’ to the shooting of the 2019 feature film *Vai.*

> … it makes me think that a really great model for making films on the island is to do that kind of collaborative approach, so probably like *Vai* where people from New Zealand, Pacific Islanders, people of Pacific heritage, from Australia New Zealand or America go to the islands and collaborate with local crews.
>
> **Respondent Katie Bell, Auckland (Kuki Airani/Pakeha)**

‘Film Raro’ and other examples of transnational screen practice in the island Pacific, highlight industry development that seeks sustainability, but requires more infrastructural and financial support to achieve its goals. In order to build Pacific centred screen industry, this research finds that strategic measures should be developed to ensure a specified number of local and Indigenous crew are employed on all productions taking place in the region. By doing so, this measure ensures that local practitioners earn screen credits and create sustainable careers to contribute to the development of a regional industry.

Other smaller opportunities for island-based screen practitioners include the work of Pasifika Film Fest (PFF). Since 2016, PFF has created multiple capacity building programs with Pacific practitioners, the biggest of which is the 48 Hour Film Challenge. PFF’s inaugural 48 Hour Film Challenge, took place in 2018 in Sydney. A group of ten aspiring Pacific practitioners were selected and split into two groups of five, with the challenge of conceiving a script, shooting and editing it in 48 hours, similar to the objective of ‘Through Our Lens’. Participants were taken through three workshops: meeting deadlines and working on a microbudget, a script writing workshop, and a creative development workshop. The three workshops were run by Karin Williams (Kuki Airani), Bobby Romia (Kuki Airani/Samoan) and Cara Flores (CHamoru) and produced two quality five-minute short films. In 2019, the same formula was applied to Pacific practitioners in Salt Lake City during Sundance Film Festival (February). Here Pacific practitioners from Hawai‘i, Los Angeles and Sydney undertook workshops with aspiring Pacific practitioners and participants were split into two groups to produce short films in 48 hours. In this instance, PFF partnered with community organisation Pasifika First Fridays and the Smithsonian Asia Pacific

America Centre to provide state of the art equipment and a space for participants. In November 2019, PFF took the 48 Hour Film Challenge to Honiara, Solomon Islands during the inaugural Native Lens Film Festival. For this challenge, 16 participants were selected to participate. Workshops were facilitated by Solomon practitioners from local production companies (Sukwadi Media and Reveal Pasifik), and the PFF directors. The 16 participants were split into four groups and produced four original short films submitted to the Native Lens Film Festival and were in competition. Here, participants used their own equipment, although they were supplied with space for editing and a laptop sponsored by Oxfam.

PFF has also created a program called Pitch Pleez! which gives selected Pacific practitioners the opportunity to pitch their film or story idea to a panel of established industry professionals, broadcasters and/or production companies. The first iteration of this program was in 2016, where transnational practitioners in Sydney pitched their projects to a panel that included SBS (Australian broadcaster), Create NSW (New South Wales state screen funding body) and Information and Cultural Exchange (community arts and culture organisation). Winners of the pitch competition were awarded a place in Information and Cultural Exchanges 'Produce Perfect' program, which was an incubator and networking program for emerging diverse screen practitioners trying to develop short form screen projects.

In 2020, Pitch Pleez! Ran for a second iteration, this time completely online, because of COVID-19 Pandemic lockdowns and border restrictions. While the pandemic restricted the film festival from operating in its traditional way, programs such as Pitch Pleez! greatly benefited from the geographic barriers broken down in the online environment. In 2020, the Pitch Pleez! cohort represented Fiji, Samoa, Tokelau, Papua New Guinea, Guåhan and Tonga. The industry panel included Penny Smallacombe, Head of Indigenous at Screen Australia, Adam Piron, Acting Director at Sundance Indigenous, and Australian-Samoan producer Jessica Magro. The winner received one thousand (Australian) dollars for the creative development of their story, and the runner up received a mentorship with Kuki Airani producer Toni Stowers.

This section has discussed the benefit to Pacific practitioners of industry training programs. These programs give practical experience to practitioners in global screen industry practice. However, the lack of accessibility of these programs to Pacific

practitioners has affected capacity building efforts of Pacific screen networks. Indeed, more recent opportunities created in the Pacific illustrate the importance of building industry opportunities that are decolonised, Pacific led and recentred on Pacific screen industry norms. Documenting this progression is useful, as it presents ongoing data of Pacific practitioners participating in global industry programs, with the eventual advancement of Pacific practice to create Pacific owned industry opportunities.

International crewing opportunities

Capacity building opportunities are also available through global or international projects that travel to the Pacific. The US trend of moving production to offshore locations for shooting has been addressed in scholarly reflection (Elmer & Gasher, 2005; Pendakur, 1990). This trend fuels a large quantity of the screen production that occurs in the Pacific. Almost one in five respondents interviewed for this study identified the existence of international projects on island to be enablers of screen production. In order to demonstrate the potential benefit that these projects could have in the island Pacific, I present examples of international productions that have travelled to Aotearoa and Australia to shoot.

Major blockbuster franchises filmed in Aotearoa include *The Lord of the Rings* (Jackson, 2001, 2002, 2003) trilogy and *The Hobbit* trilogy (Jackson, 2012, 2013, 2014), filmed just west of Wellington. More recently, Marvel studios has developed a large presence on Queensland's Gold Coast where Taika Waititi shot *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017); and in Sydney where *Shang Chi: The Legend of the Ten Rings* (Cretton, 2021), and *Thor: Love and Thunder* (Waititi, 2022) were both shot. The latter example was associated with a move from Marvel studios to have a headquarters in Australia (Storey, 2021) at a time when many big budget Hollywood shoots were being shut down in Los Angeles during the COVID-19 pandemic. When largescale projects such as these have taken place in Aotearoa and Australia, local crew jobs are created for stints between three and ten months. At the same time, opportunities are offered to build capacity in aspiring screen practitioners by working on a professional set. As part of the shooting of *Thor: Ragnarok*, Māori director Taika

Waititi took on a director's attachment for an aspiring Indigenous director, which was given to actor and filmmaker, Shari Sebbens.

The shoot for the US network sitcom *Young Rock* (Khan & Chiang, 2021-), also shoots on the Gold Coast. Outside of the crew jobs that were created across the shooting life of *Young Rock's* first season, the US National Broadcasting Company (NBC) producers put out a call for a Pacific director's attachment on their set. Selected attachés were given hands on experience in the shooting of a US network television sitcom. Lastly, Brisbane based cinematographer Lucas Tomoana (Māori/Samoan) was selected to coordinate the shooting of all the American football scenes on the show. Tomoana was selected because of his qualification and experience as a cinematographer, but also because of his experience playing the sport in Brisbane. Similar to the Pacific director's attachment, the opportunity gave Tomoana a credit on a US network television sitcom and further experience using cinematographic techniques to capture and illustrate the sport of American football.

In the island Pacific, mainstream projects such as *Survivor Australia* (Parsons, 2016-) and *Bachelor in Paradise* (Fleiss, 2018-20) have shot in Samoa and Fiji. Auto-ethnographic evidence shows that a small number of island-based practitioners are engaged to work with these shows. Despite this, production companies do not officially document these opportunities as capacity building placements.

Half of my interview respondents found local workforce capability and capacity to be a key enabler of screen production in the Pacific. Of these, about a third also named educational institutions as enablers of screen production. This demonstrates the direct correlation between training and capacity building, and the growth of screen production practices in the Pacific. Offshore projects, both transnational and international are creating mentoring and capacity building opportunities for Pacific practitioners in the region. A lack of comment from interview respondents on the benefit of large-scale international projects to the production of their work, illustrates a disconnection from screen industry's predominance in the Global North. In contrast, training and mentoring activities created by smaller transnational production companies were identified by respondents as having tangible benefit.

In this section, I have emphasised the nature of capacity building for screen production in the region. At the moment, the Pacific operates at a deficit for training and mentoring opportunities. Though opportunities for formal education exist, they are scant and vary in quality. The prevalence of programs through development organisations, production companies (both regional and international), and mainstream industry platforms introduces aspiring Pacific practitioners to screen production without cultivating skill through ongoing tuition. Opportunities created by Pacific production companies or practitioners have sought to create prospective growth in the regional sector, through ongoing partnership and mentorship on island. Without ongoing or sufficient funding however, these programs and activities also suffer from a lack of sustainability.

The lack of access to training in individual countries and the difficulty in accessing formal education across colonial boundaries in the Pacific is a key indicator of the need for Pacific centred screen industry structures. Furthermore, the programs and training courses that have been implemented to date do not pipeline into any discernible regional industry. Forming courses, training and mentoring programs that are created by Pacific people/practitioners with knowledge of the region and its culture, will ensure opportunities that are not reliant on external players, thus contributing to sustainability.

Pacific centred production crews

The greatest asset for a narrative film and television sector identified in *Cinema Pasifika* was that 'the Pacific Island region is rich in unique stories and it also possesses much of the raw talent needed to transform these stories into commercially viable film and television products' (p. 2). Ethnographers and anthropologists have benefitted from the rich landscapes and stories in the region; and since the first movie studio appeared in Hollywood in 1911, the region has been the site of countless film and television locations. Miller and colleagues (2001) describe he large scattering of these locations across the globe as Hollywood's 'North, South, East and West'; and the compass points include the Pacific's beaches, rainforest and waterfalls. Indeed, Hollywood's major studios see these compass points as a 'New International Division of Labour' (Elmer & Gasher, 2005).

There is, then, huge potential for an abundance of screen work produced in the Pacific: not just from offshore projects, but from projects developed locally. In fact, half of my respondents believed that the existence of locally sourced crew was a key enabler of their screen work. Of these respondents, just over one in ten discussed specific instances outside of local facilitators in which crew skill has been developed through transnational Pacific productions shooting in the island Pacific. In this section, I draw on my quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate how Pacific practitioners are currently employed with screen productions, and why it is important to ensure that Indigenous Pacific practitioners are prioritised, when recruiting on any projects within the region. I suggest that this prioritisation of local crew, and the development of a slate of regional works, will create a working environment that centres the Pacific and is conducive to sustainability.

Runaway productions

At present, over 200 international locations compete to land major film and television shoots. Hollywood generally seeks to use these locales to take advantage of cost savings and tax concessions. Elmer and Gasher refer to these Hollywood projects as 'runaway productions': they are productions that literally run away with millions of dollars in jobs that would otherwise be held by Californians (2005, p. 3). In Scene Two of this study, I observed how the 'running away' of the blockbuster US feature film *Fast and the Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* happened twice in the Pacific. *Hobbs and Shaw* not only ran away from Hollywood, but also from the actual island location depicted in the film, to Hawai'i.

For most major international projects shooting on location in a Pacific Island country outside of Hawai'i, Aotearoa or Australia, crew is not generally sourced on island. To contribute further nuance to this dynamic, auto-ethnographic evidence gathered in Guåhan finds that there are CHamoru screen creatives on island who are leaving to work on Hollywood sets in California. The 'New International Division of Labour' currently favours screen's Global North. Pacific screen creatives are now actively seeking to build enough skill to work in Hollywood, prioritising this over developing industry on island. Almost one in five of my respondents referred to the presence of external productions on island, with either negative or positive response. The

comments of respondents Malfoy, Creevey and Lestrange are illustrative of broader sentiments among this cohort of stakeholders and practitioners:

> … there are a ton of Native Hawaiian talents on island that do get used for when Jumanji comes or whatever…
> **Respondent Narcissa Malfoy, Honolulu (Maoli)**

> … there are so many Hollywood productions there, and everybody's trained in the industry, I mean half the crews are local crews because we have a very strong union, that means you have to use so much union. So, all our friends work and they have to be consistent. They are all my age, they're all coming up wanting to make films … So they've since been trained over 20 years. So they have all the skillset, all knowledge, all the gear – everything, they have access to it all which is - its huge. Now they want to make projects, they're like okay I've been working in this industry let's start supporting filmmakers like myself, they come and work for my crew you know between their $1K a day job, you know squeeze us in for a couple of weekends, so well get all our crew but you know we have to be very flexible and smart with our schedule.
> **Respondent Colin Creevey, Honolulu (Maoli)**

> … we have a lot of super experienced crew because we're a backdrop for Hollywood so we have world class crew. They've worked with the top filmmakers in the US, they can make things look beautiful. So, we have like the best gaffers' cameras operator's steady camera operators, teamsters you name it with crew. But they're used to large-scale productions, they're not used to independent scale productions, and so every once in a while, somebody can activate them to do a short or something …
> **Respondent Bellatrix Lestrange, Hawai'i (Maoli)**

Respondents Malfoy, Creevey and Lestrange all describe how local Pacific crew in Hawai'i credibly contribute to international projects that shoot on island. Hawai'i has been profiled as an example of a Pacific Island with developed infrastructure in this study. Hawai'i is also an example of a Pacific nation with strong ties to the northern extremities of film's political economy. Not only does Hawai'i experience an

abundance of offshore projects shooting there, these projects often utilise skilled local and Pacific crew, as well as small to medium businesses as secondary production services (such as catering, vehicle hire, and cleaning). Respondent Malfoy states that there is an abundance of local Pacific crew that are recruited to work on Hollywood productions in Hawai‘i. Respondent Creevey however, discusses how this pool of practitioners has developed over a period of time. Creevey describes a period of over twenty years in which this network has grown and these practitioners have developed the skill and quality of work to gain crew positions on major film productions. In these roles, they make ‘1K a day’ and now benefit from a career in film, treat large scale productions as ‘work’, and contribute to passion projects. They would expect less or no pay for these projects, and as Creevey mentions, they would ‘squeeze us in for a couple of weekends’. Respondent Creevey gives other examples of how Pacific practitioners are interacting with different levels of screen industry in Hawai‘i. The dynamic between large-scale mainstream productions and independent screen in Hawai‘i highlights screen practice that relies on offshore industry to build and maintain screen production activity on island. However, the emergence of locally cultivated and Indigenous screen production practices emphasises the prevalence of screen-based activity and storytelling that could contribute to the State’s own sustainable screen industry. Respondent Creevey elaborates this further:

> See like the hiatus is coming up so we can shoot. We have three days after everybody comes off – they’re going to need a break for three days so all the huge scenes that require big crews at night in a scary location with dolly shots I just scheduled everything on that so we have on hundred people on set those nights and then we go back down to three people or five people, ten people.
>
> **Respondent Colin Creevey, Hawai‘i (Maoli)**

Independent projects may wait for hiatus in major Hollywood productions on island to shoot their scenes requiring large numbers of crew. There are almost two sets of screen industry operating in Hawai‘i in this sense.

The first is the mainstream**.** The mainland (Hollywood) screen industry shooting on island, relying on island locations and scenery, tax offsets; and local crew to shoot big budget film and television productions. This industry contributes back to Hawai'i's State economy through location and shooting fees, employs Hawaiian workforce by booking local crew and injects further benefit into Hawai'i's local economy through the use of sectors that supplement the screen industry (as discussed elsewhere).

The second is the local industry. Local screen industry is that which is currently growing (benefiting from funding such as PICs), with more and more Indigenous ownership of Pacific stories. The local industry works in and around low periods of mainstream industry activity, with the quality of its outputs benefiting from the experience local crew are gaining on major Hollywood projects. Respondent Lestrange's observations expand on the accounts of respondent Creevey.

In their previous response Creevey also mentions the development of a union in the Hawaiian film community. Hawai'i has several major film labour unions and an association of local coordinators that specialise in assisting foreign productions (State of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Island Film, 2022). Creevey mentions that the strength of the union in Hawai'i's screen industry ensures local crew are utilised on all locally filmed productions, both international and locally owned. Presently, other Pacific Island countries cannot demonstrate the same level of prioritisation or skill.

In Fiji, offshore projects continue to travel to the island nation entirely with crew. Secondary production services are engaged locally to assist in driving bigger contributions to the local economy. Examples of such projects include the feature film *Adrift* (Kormakur, 2018) and the television serial *Survivor,* which shot its 41st season in Fiji in 2021 (Film Fiji, 2022). The national government provides tax offsets to producers for these projects, as outlined in the Film Fiji's filming incentives. In return, productions such as *Survivor 2021* have contributed approximately 10.8 million (United States) dollars to the Fijian economy since February 2021. *Cinema Pasifika* analysed the ways in which Film Fiji generated economic profit for the country. In 2014, the budget for all foreign productions made in Fiji totalled 19.5 million (Fijian) dollars. Fifteen and a half million dollars of this was spent in Fiji. *Cinema Pasifika* asserts however that while Film Fiji had 'done an excellent job in encouraging foreign productions, there is almost no evidence that this increased

activity is helping to support the sustainable development of the local narrative film or television industry' (p. 5). The current state of global screen practice continues to sustainably benefit the traditional metropoles of the screen industry throughout the majority of the Pacific region. While some respondents to this research alluded to the facilitative benefits of international productions to screen practice in the island Pacific, others indicated that big budget international projects can hinder the work of independent Pacific practitioners.

Prioritising Pacific crews

At present, large scale studio productions create knowledge of screen, but do not leave space for Indigenous communities to cultivate their own industries in the Pacific. Thus, they make a financial contribution to domestic GDP but are not required to make investment into the development of local screen capability. In Canada, the political economy of film hinders local industry from developing, by monopolising local resources. Pendakur (1990) has dissected Canadian film's dependence on Hollywood and states that the US' frequent use of Canadian tax-free thresholds has monopolised Canada's film locations and skilled crew.

> … basically you're talking about island economies that are really struggling. So, in Tonga there's absolutely nothing. In Samoa there is a level of government investment but what they tend to do, which is really problematic - they tend to commission people from Australia for example … for all the tourism videos and all the government promos. You know there was a huge historic documentary done in Samoa. The most money Samoa's ever put into a documentary ever and that was over a million dollars and they commissioned Australians to do it. So, there's a lack of confidence in our own people as content producers and makers. And there's a really limited kind of confidence and idea of investment in the arts as well… But it's exciting, I just feel for everyone because everyone's had to do it and learn it themselves and there hasn't been any facilitation or help from you know any other sources.
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

Respondent Brown articulates the reasons why local crew or production companies

have not been prioritised for national work in parts of the Pacific. Brown also expresses discontent with this dynamic and the tendency of Pacific governments to commissioning non-Pacific screen practitioners to make government sponsored content. By-products of the Pacific's reliance on the global north of film to create its screen-based products are becoming more and more prevalent in the island Pacific. Respondents Potter and Brown allude to deficits that exist in Pacific screen practice.

> … So yeah, red tape wise, it's a little bit different depending on what we're working on. But now because Tonga's starting to experience people coming through and making a few films - and a few more overseas productions happening - people are starting to ask questions like 'will we get paid?' and 'who's going to see it?' and things like that. Because the other thing is too is that the more… I guess the more high-profile the production, the more people want to know 'how is it going to affect them?', 'how is it going to affect the Kingdom?', 'are they going to get paid?' all those you know, fair questions.
>
> But the other thing is too is that, because they have no real idea about how the industry works, they expect - for example in Samoa, *Survivor* has filmed over there quite a few times, so the Americans will throw their money around. And so they'll ask us, will they get paid? 'On Survivor I got $200 a day', or something ridiculous like that. And I feel stupid because our entire budget was spent on airfares, and I'm broke for the entire time they were going to be here, so I can't really pay you, you know. So yeah, money's always an important thing for everyone, but in the islands especially people want to know if they're going to get paid.
>
> **Respondent James Potter Auckland (Samoan)**
>
> The barrier for us is perception. And it's different on every island, but on Samoa for example, there's often this big perception that because they've had - most of the filming on the island has been done by big American companies and German companies - they pay all this money and you know they've set this precedent this expectation about the cost factor around filming. You know and some of it's great ... But then where it stings us is when we go in

ourselves to film stuff and then they try to apply all those rates to us, so it's trying to explain [the difference]…

I've found in Fiji there's a lot of protectionism around knowledge and access to things. You know, understandably suspicion around people coming in and taking things away. And I really get that, but it does make it hard when you're trying to knowledge share. So, it's that really precarious balance between where the knowledge sits and they don't want their knowledge taken and exploited, because that's what's happened in the past.

Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)

Respondent Brown explains a wariness and 'protectionism' of Fijian communities around intellectual property, which is based in centuries of knowledge captured on film and taken away from the island nation for external benefit and scrutiny. Both respondents discuss the growing awareness of screen practice in the island Pacific and how these projects will be beneficial locally. This concern is reasonable given the Pacific's history with ethnographic film. To add to this, this regional deficit of screen industry has begun to affect the productivity of transnational Pacific practitioners and production companies travelling to shoot in the region. The above data gathered from respondents Potter and Brown discuss how their productions are now affected when they travel to the island Pacific. With the growing awareness of large-scale screen production in the Pacific, locals are now accustomed to receiving large sums of money as payment for village land use or appearance as extras. Unfortunately, the emerging and independent nature of a lot of Pacific screen practice connotes a lack of capital in these more minor projects.

These are subtle differences that the wider Pacific community has not yet had the opportunity to grasp. The outcome is a burden on smaller Pacific productions given they do not have the budgets to accommodate the same rates of pay those large-scale international productions offer. While these dynamics do not directly illustrate the need to prioritise Pacific crew on in regional screen practice, they do emphasise the need to create the structures to develop screen practice in the Pacific to prioritise

Pacific crew and avoid reliance on external screen structures. These same transnational productions that have been hindered by the current political economy of film in the Pacific, have also sought ways to bolster regional screen practice through sustainable skills and capacity building opportunities.

Cultivating creative talent

Some transnational productions employ a hands-on and locally minded approach to cultivating and employing local talent. These productions also show an ongoing benefit to regional screen industry. Respondent Brown discusses ways that they have worked to upskill crew in the Pacific.

> … we've done a series of workshops in Samoa. That was where the capacity, the volume of interest was from. We did them up at NUS over three years and they were fantastic. They were mostly creative workshops, there was a little bit of technical capacity building… we did a 48-hour film fest as part of it, and those kids, so talented, so instinctively talented. You know especially with things like acting and ideas. And so thirsty for information like much more so than kids in [New Zealand] it's just amazing… we took a bunch of directors over there, Pacific directors over three years and did these courses there with these students…
>
> … they're part of our Tiki family, they've come in they've worked with us in [New Zealand] but now they've gone back over, so we can work with them… we work with them and we work with another freelancer on the island… those guys worked with us and they've upskilled their production capacity and trained other people up on the island as well. So, when we go over, we work with them and their trainees and they put them into key roles with our productions …
>
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

Brown discusses mentorship that occurs in productions they are involved in. When shooting in Samoa, Brown has worked with the NUS to develop workshop programs for young Pacific practitioners. On set Brown has worked with fledgling production companies on island to build their company capacity. These production companies have also been involved in workshops. By respondent Brown's admission, having seen what such capacity building looks like, these production companies have gone on to bring local trainees into their isolated productions and build their skills. These new crew have in turn, worked on Brown's projects when they have returned to Samoa.

This example of skill and capacity building can be drawn on for its impact on sustainability. Brown's workshops are not currently operational. While they were however, they demonstrated growth in local Samoan screen industry, which was achieved by cultivating skills in one group, who independently passed this knowledge on to others. By the time Brown returned to Samoa for newer screen projects, there was a larger pool of practitioners to work with, grown from programs Brown founded. This is a significant achievement for a country with no formal training provider in screen production. On transnational productions of a larger scale, Pacific practitioners continue to favour peoples of Pacific heritage in their crews.

> … Dave Hotchin, so he's Guru Media. I love him and his wife is from Rabaul, and she lives in Fiji. She came on and did my art department; she was amazing. This is what I'm telling you about the connections!
>
> **Nyphadora Tonks, Auckland (Fijian)**

Respondent Tonks travelled a project from Aotearoa to Fiji to shoot and worked with local creatives. Respondent Tonks worked with local Fijian practitioner Dave Hotchin as a local facilitator. My own knowledge of Hotchin is that he has quality local networks and encyclopaedic knowledge of local dynamics and how they affect the success and/or failure of screen production in Fiji. Supplementary to this, Hotchin is also skilled in camera and sound and has been described as a 'one man band'. Tonks' project also benefited from collaboration with Hotchin's wife, as mentioned by Tonks above. Tonks engaged her as head of art department, which she did not have

previous experience in, but demonstrated talent to do quality work. Respondent Tonks' experience highlights a prioritisation of Pacific talent and crew that was not facilitated through formalised programs, but through Tonks' own agency to give opportunities.

These small-scale illustrations of transnational projects, local capacity building in screen production and strengthening of local networks are echoed throughout the region. Though these programs and opportunities are not recognised on any wide scale or currently able to occur consistently, they exhibit an awareness of the talent available to screen practice in the Pacific, and the need to prioritise this over allowing productions to travel to Pacific locations with crew.

Multiple crew roles

Complimenting the value of local workforce capacity and capability in Pacific screen, is the noted benefit of local crew being able to perform multiple roles on set. In independent cinema, it is widely acknowledged that with smaller budgets and smaller crews, 'multiple crew roles' or 'multiple hats' become commonplace. Despite this, in an independent research report, Olsberg SPI asserted that the independent film sector operates on a 'broken business model' (2012, pg. 9). The report suggests that independent film struggles for market share and delivers relatively low rewards given the amount of work that goes in. Despite this, independent film is often critically acclaimed for the depth and quality of story-telling, owed in most part to the freedom to tell stories without being tied to funders or corporate sponsorship. While the independent screen creation process enables the making of individual screen projects, the development of sustainable screen industry is not viable along this path. With this in mind, it is important to note that this is the space much of the Pacific screen industry operates within. The very emerging nature of Pacific screen necessitates crew that perform multiple roles simultaneously on sets. Below, Respondent Umbridge gives an example in Samoa, where a crew of three undertook all crew roles for the shooting of a commercial.

> …in Samoa everybody's like a one-man band and they all play ten instruments. When I was working in commercials it was three of us. We were

> shooting everything, we were doing sound, we were doing lights. You know, I was arranging locations and casting and we were the ones who were cutting it, we were in post. You know you're killing yourself making 30 - 60 second ads because there's only three of you.
>
> **Respondent Dolores Umbridge, Samoa (Samoan)**

Respondent Umbridge uses the phrase 'one-man band' which is also used by respondent Tonks to describe Fijian practitioner Dave Hotchin in Fiji. Although Tonks' experience with Hotchin is positive, Umbridge's experience as a 'one-man band' reasserts the findings of Olsberg SPI that this is a broken business model.

I also uncovered the example of a Maoli screen practitioner who directed, produced and also recorded the sound for their documentary in 2017.[16] This is rare, however. In more remote parts of the region such as Tuvalu, I have only been able to identify one screen practitioner who is consistently producing screen content. The assumption for any Tuvalu based screen work therefore, is that one person is producing, writing and directing it, while also completing technical crew roles, such as lighting, sound and camera. They are also then in post-production, editing their own work. The purpose of recognising this dynamic is to acknowledge that its existence in the Pacific region echoes outcomes that have been observed in global screen industry practice. While this mode of operation currently facilitates screen production in the Pacific, it is not demonstrating itself to be sustainable. The above examples are demonstrative of island-based crew in the region, their experiences and their employment on screen productions. In order to increase sustainability in Pacific crews and productions, there is an onus on the region to build a workforce to supplement need.

Suppose the ultimate goal of a regional screen industry is sustainability. In that case, there is a need within a Pacific centred screen industry to continuously develop professional and skilled crew, ensuring that local and international projects are supplemented by a Pacific workforce that can drive and produce Pacific stories. A decolonised lens shows that the impact of Global North screen industries on the Pacific is not completely supportive of this aspect of sustainability and that it is

[16] Personal communication, Lacy, 10 February 2019.

primarily Pacific practitioners who are making considerable effort to prioritise the skill and talent of Indigenous Pacific practitioners in the region. I have uncovered the common practice among Pacific practitioners in undertaking multiple crew roles in the Pacific and the challenges and opportunities this presents for sustainability.

Conclusion

This Scene explores the key drivers I have identified to facilitate a Pacific centred sustainable screen industry for the region based on the empirical data gathered for this study, understanding this element of sustainability as an industry that will enable Pacific production, distribution and consumption that reflect the true stories and experiences of Pacific Islanders. These drivers are the development of Pacific centred policy across the industry, Pacific centred capacity building, and Pacific crew prioritisation. Together these drivers will assist in the capacity and capability of a network of screen practitioners in the Pacific to deliver a self-determined screen industry that benefits the region economically and socially.

Pacific centred policy and resourcing

The current state of screen industry in the Pacific highlights an opportunity to develop an equitable, comprehensive policy framework across the region.

At present, policy is sporadic across the region and focuses primarily on regulating offshore projects. These regulation policies however are not fit-for-purpose to develop a sustainable Pacific screen industry; therefore, there needs to be separate policies to advance, protect and cultivate local projects and production. I argue governments should prioritise investment into culture and the arts as part of their economic development plans, given the evidence presented in this Scene where there is a growing community of aspiring screen practitioners but are not currently active because they feel unsupported have limited finances and resources to complete their projects. To address this issue governments could develop a set of policies to redirect funds from offshore projects or encourage contributions from industry, including transnational industries, into seed grants or funding for local projects and production.

Pacific centred capacity building

Training and mentoring have been identified as key enablers for their screen work by all participants. Further, half of the participants identified access to local workforce capacity and capability as also highly enabling for completing their work. This demonstrates the need for, and importance of access to a local work-ready workforce for the success of screen products in the region, and this need would be exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic with travel and border restrictions internationally and regionally.

There are very limited accredited screen production courses available across the region, highlighting a training and learning gap for the screen industry. The lack of access to training in Pacific countries and the difficulty in accessing formal education compared to Pacific-rim countries in metropole centres such as Auckland, Sydney, and Los Angeles. Local training opportunities and infrastructure is critical in ensuring there is enough local capacity and capability for a Pacific centred screen industry.

Pacific centred crews

This research identifies a few equity measures that could be adopted to ensure to build a Pacific centred screen industry. One measure includes quotas to employ local and Indigenous crew on all international productions and projects in the region. Local crew based in Hawai‘i have more opportunities to engage with international projects, and the findings in this Scene demonstrate that they credibly contribute to these projects on island. While some respondents acknowledged the facilitative benefits of international productions to screen practice in the island Pacific, others detailed how big budget international projects can hinder the work of independent Pacific practitioners. One way of addressing this issue is by redirecting international fees or taxes to subsidise the hiring of local crew for local production. Having a local or regional commission or film office can help to facilitate and enforce such measures. Equity measures, therefore, can advance local practitioners to earn screen credits, expand their experience, and create sustainable careers while protecting the work of local practitioners and contribute to the development of a regional industry as a whole.

Scene Five: *Atualoa* – An Economically Viable Screen Industry

Introduction

Globally, difficulties in the independent filmmaking sector begin with the multi-pronged funding structures required to get a project 'green lit' (Kirkpatrick, 2015). Identifying expenses and allocation of budget in screen is generally a mammoth task and a focal point of a project's development and pre-production phases. Each screen project can be classified as a business in itself, and all costs associated with it can be found within its script or project pitch document. Screen production is an expensive undertaking. Screen Australia's 2019-2020 'Drama Report' notes that in the 2018/19 financial year, Australian feature films (screen projects of more than 50 minutes) spent 322 million (Australian) dollars domestically. Australian television and online drama spent 475 million (Australian) dollars domestically.

In Scene Five, I continue to unpack the critical components of sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. In this Scene, I address the importance of an economically viable screen industry, and the factors which both promote and sustain screen industry; and present challenges or barriers. I discuss the diverse sources of income that screen projects need to complete production. From creative development to post-production, screen projects will often procure funding from several private and public funding sources and in-kind support. I suggest that a Pacific screen industry also needs to employ this approach to ensure its economic viability. An economically viable Pacific screen industry would be one characterised by a steady stream of screen activity in Pacific countries and the region more broadly. I suggest this activity would include both offshore and local opportunities, all of which would provide recourse for ongoing careers and sustainable economic independence for Pacific screen practitioners. Diversifying the emerging regional screen economy with economic injections from offshore large-scale productions, can prospectively underwrite national and regional screen industry in the Pacific. Scene Five explores, through auto-ethnographic data gathered working with productions and screen events during the course of this research, the extent to which Pacific screen practice meets these ideas of economic viability.

Economically viable – a definition

The emerging status of the Pacific's screen community has been a continuous thread discussed in this research. Despite a reasonably active screen industry in Pacific transnational communities, Pacific screen productions are still characterised as independent, low budget and relatively unknown. The independent research report *Building sustainable film businesses: the challenges for the industry and government* notes that the 'structure and economics of the film industry are not well suited to building sustainable companies…' (Olsberg SPI, 2012: 9). The wider struggles of the global independent film sector are mirrored in the very emerging and developing Pacific screen networks that are mentioned in this research. There are no major production companies prevalent in the Pacific. Thus, any screen practice taking place does so very independently, with even less resources available than an independent practitioner in a developed country. These fundamental economic strains in Pacific screen practice will be explored in this Scene, underlining the economic status of Pacific screen practice in the context of the global screen industry.

I define an economically viable screen industry as one that generates profit from its work, provides a sufficient amount of work to supplement an annual income, and produces high-quality screen products at all levels of industry. Scene Five will present and analyse empirical data to interrogate the extent to which this has been, and could be, achieved in the Pacific.

Le Atualoa

As explained in Scene One, this research's visualisations of a sustainable Pacific screen industry have been developed in consultation with Papua New Guinean tattoo artist and documentary maker Julia Mage'au Gray. Gray imagined economic viability as a centipede, an ever-present insect across the region that commonly strikes fear for the pain that its bites cause. Similarly, economic viability is an issue across the Pacific, causing distress when there is uncertainty about the livelihoods of individuals and communities.

Image 3 (Scene One) symbolises the more aggressive and fear-inducing aspects of sustainable industry development. The three prerequisites for an economically viable industry – that it attracts locally sourced funding, is driven by both offshore and local funding opportunities, and that an increased demand for Pacific content supports it and a bigger audience – are labelled equally on either side of the centipede's body, recognising that these are weighty considerations and require a symbolic 'load sharing' across the centipede's back as it moves. The centipede reminds Pacific islanders of small dangers, keeping us accountable and ensuring that we are always walking with our eyes open. I propose that a key indicator of an economically viable Pacific screen industry would be the canon of Pacific screen work that is funded locally in the region. This content that is funded through locally led partnership travels on the back of, and is supported by the centipede.

Economically viable funding sources

It may seem self-evident, but funding – whether it be externally sourced or from personal reserves – is essential to screen production. Yet it is extremely difficult for Pacific screen practitioners to procure financing, especially in the context of a region in which governments tend to pay less attention to the regulation of arts, culture and creative industries, as demonstrated in Figure 5 (Scene Four).

Pacific practitioners deal with highly competitive funding streams and commissioning guidelines in transnational communities. While there has been an investigation into developing frameworks and infrastructure in the Pacific (SPC, 2018), creative industries have not been seriously incorporated into government planning and budgets. Pacific screen practitioners do not have infinite avenues through which to pursue financing of their projects: most are built on small and often one-off funding grants. Organisations such as the Commonwealth Foundation and Pacific Islanders in Communication offer funding opportunities for specific screen-based outputs, however, neither organization works throughout the region or even continuously in the region.

Over a third of all my respondents identified funding as an enabler of their projects. Just under forty percent of respondents identified industry funding and another forty percent of respondents identified government funding as being significant enablers

of their projects. Fewer respondents received funding from development organisations (11%), and fewer still (5%) obtained funding from corporate sponsorship or were self-funded (5%).

Funding diversification and access

In this section, I analyse the breadth of funding sources in the Pacific identified through an audit of current opportunities and my own production work. The only physical office in the Pacific that provides funding opportunities is Pacific Islanders in Communication (PIC) in Hawai‘i. While PIC does commission work in the region, it is more likely to fund screen projects from the US that depict Pacific communities and Pacific experiences. This work is outlined as part of PIC’s remit from the US Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). PIC currently works intensively in Hawai‘i and Guåhan. Respondents to this research extensively referred to the role of PIC in the funding of Pacific work. Interestingly in the United States and its Pacific territories, the work of PIC has crossed over with Sundance’s Indigenous department, which does not have an office in the Pacific, but has ties to Hawai‘i through its connection to PIC.

> I think that without Pacific Islanders in Communications’ presence – I think they’ve been really fundamental. I think having the space where people feel comfortable that their stories will get funded is massive. And feeling that you’re not going to have to have the conversation to convince why Pacific Islander stories [are] important, you can get past that. And I think that the work that Sundance has done is incredible. In fact, it’s almost like everybody at home only thinks of those two organisations.
> **Respondent Colin Creevey, Honolulu (Maoli)**

> At Pacific Islanders in Communication … the main focus as part of the national minority consortia, was to fund and distribute Pacific Island content, specifically documentaries for public broadcast in the United States and they also have a national series called Pacific Heartbeat which would acquire Pacific Island content and films for distribution around the United States … at the Sundance Institute we kind of do, I guess the same work as far as outreach and mentorships, fellowships for Indigenous people and yeah a

> large chunk of the work we do in the Pacific so far has been based around the Merata Mita fellowship that we have … other than that there have also been a few Pacific Islanders that have been involved in the fellowship opportunities and labs and workshops that the native program does.
>
> **Respondent Irma Pince, Los Angeles (Samoan/Maoli)**

Respondents Creevey and Pince reflect on PIC's role in the development and production of Pacific screen work. PIC is not a government funding body comparative to Screen Australia and the New Zealand Film Commission. Rather, PIC is a Honolulu based media body mandated by the US's public broadcasting corporation (PBS) to fund and distribute Pacific content. The responses of Creevey and Pince echo the opinions and experiences of many other Pacific screen practitioners in the island Pacific and in transnational communities. The work of PIC has been focal to the creation of Pacific led screen work over the last 25 years. PIC has actively worked in screen production communities to provide funding for many Pacific productions' creative development and production. The evolution of PIC's funding streams has also worked with the trends of Pacific screen storytelling. One specific example of this has been PIC's move towards funding narrative storytelling to accommodate the breadth of work coming from Pacific practitioners. PIC has historically been a funder of documentary projects (for example, Sanga, 2018) but has created funding streams that assist Pacific stories being told in a narrative format over the last five years. PIC also maintains strong ties throughout the Pacific to distribute Pacific stories through the platforms they have available to them, namely (the well subscribed) PBS and the PIC website streaming platform.

Despite the tangible effect that PIC has had on the landscape of Pacific led projects that have emerged from the region in recent years, the organisation also experiences its own obstacles in providing this platform. While PIC has consistently funded the work of Pacific screen practitioners through their media fund, the policy associated with the establishment of the organisation has meant that PIC cannot discriminate against screen creatives of non-Pacific descent. Thus, PIC cannot make non-Pacific practitioners ineligible for their funding streams in the same manner that ImagineNative Media Arts Festival has made their programs available only to Indigenous practitioners. This caveat could be a barrier to Pacific practitioners

intending to approach PIC for funding if they feel their application will not be competitive against that of a more experienced non-Pacific practitioner, telling a Pacific story. Despite this, each of my respondents who named PIC in their interview answers were positive about the organisation's contribution to the production and distribution of Pacific made and owned content. This was especially emphasised in reference to PIC's recent expansion of their general guidelines, to include narrative content. Respondent Creevey discusses the direct and tangible benefit of this move.

> So that's interesting. Things are changing so quickly all for the best. Like PIC up until two years ago, only financed – because they get their funding from PBS – so they can only fund something they can put on PBS. PBS wasn't looking for fictional dramatic narrative, they're only looking for documentary, right so … so PIC started a new funding apparatus that has actually been giving Hawaiian, Polynesian filmmakers money to make short fictional films so that's why we see, there's *Hae Hawai'i* … *Mauka to Makai*, *Kalewa*. So all these films benefit and all these filmmakers completely benefit so it's a great time to be a filmmaker because there are these structures to support that.
> **Respondent Colin Creevey, Honolulu (Maoli)**

PIC's position as a funder of Pacific projects in Hawai'i and Guåhan places it in a screen landscape that is otherwise saturated with Hollywood productions. This is especially so in Hawai'i. This creates a dichotomy between the mainstream and local screen practice. The participants' response in this research emphasises the largely positive role that PIC has had in building screen industry practice in the Pacific. To compare projects funded by Hollywood and film in Hawai'i and projects funded locally, I followed the development and production of the Netflix movie *Finding Ohana* (Weng, 2021) and the independent film *Waikiki* (Kahunahuna, 2020).

Despite being about a Maoli family, *Finding Ohana* was not written or directed by Maoli creatives. An offshore production company (Ian Bryce Productions) brought a fully financed project to Hawai'i. In other words, *Finding Ohana* did require additional funding from the state. *Waikiki* is an independent feature film written, directed and produced by Maoli screen practitioners from O'ahu. Because of the lack of funding structures for independent screen practitioners in Hawai'i, the process of getting *Waikiki* through story development to production and eventually distribution was an

arduous one. Writer/director Christopher Kahunahuna developed the story through the Sundance Native Filmmakers Lab, which he was selected for in 2014. This intensive program is available to Indigenous screen practitioners, allowing them the environment and time to develop their story ideas to a fully realized script. The production team diversified their budget to finance the shoot, including partnership arrangements and in-kind support from shooting locations. Eventually, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the release of *Waikiki* to November 2020, at the Hawai'i International Film Festival. Comparatively, the release of *Finding Ohana* was much timelier and more straightforward. Netflix announced the commissioning of *Finding Ohana* in October 2019 (Hawai'i News Now, 2021) and the film premiered just over a year later.

While PIC has worked in other parts of the Pacific it can only fund projects that have a US-based partner. In the wider Pacific, funding bodies like PIC do not exist. Respondent Ravenclaw discussed the challenge of securing funding for screen production.

> *Rowena*: In terms of grants here there are no grants for filmmakers yet
> *Interviewer*: So where do you get the money from when you guys make the films?
> *Rowena*: We save up … Most of the time yeah, we just find people who have the equipment, the resources and then we just combine together and make films together yeah.
> **Respondent Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Ravenclaw describes the ad hoc ways that screen practitioners gather funding in the Solomon Islands. Outside of the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), which funds training programs in media journalism, the Solomon Islands does not have a funding body. In the French Pacific, specifically French Polynesia, most government funding for screen projects or creative industries would come directly from Paris, over 16,000 kilometres away. Auto-ethnographic evidence highlights that when minority communities interact with western funding structures, funding bias' can be experienced. Usually, this is symptomatic of transnational communities interacting with funding structures in the countries they now live in. While I was

unable to interview any French Polynesian screen practitioners about any experiences of funding bias, this is an interesting question to consider in future research.

In this section, I have interrogated the scant availability of funding for screen production in the island Pacific. Hawai‘i based Pacific Islanders in Communication remains the only organisation of its size and scale working to fund screen projects, and though it continues to increase its reach in the region, colonial ties continue to hinder PIC’s ability to service the region outside of American territories. Outside of PIC, this section has briefly audited other forms of funding available to island-based practitioners, which has reinforced the lack of opportunities available to make these works in a way that can be marketed and consumed.

Government funding

In Figure 5 (Scene Four) I mapped the presence of peak bodies associated with screen across the Pacific region. At present, only six of the 25 Pacific countries included in this study have such a peak body. Australia and Aotearoa have the government funded Screen Australia and New Zealand Film Commission, respectively. Fiji and Papua New Guinea both operate peak film bodies but do not have the same level of financing or infrastructure to create the amount of policy or fund the same number of projects that are funded by the former. In this study almost half of my respondents mentioned government funding as an enabler of their work. Of this group, a small proportion were island based and eligible for funding streams in Australia and Aotearoa (5%). Most (42%) were from transnational communities or completely island based (30%). Of the island-based practitioners, two thirds were based in US territories and were either working with PIC, or some form of US government funding.

A more developed screen industry exists for transnational communities. In my own discussions with the New Zealand Film Commission in 2017, I was surprised to learn that while they intended to create more culturally diverse and representative works from Aotearoa for international distribution, there were no funding streams identified for Tangata Whenua or Pacific communities. This was in contrast to Screen Australia’s Indigenous Department, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2020.

Even more stark is the comparison with Pacific screen practitioners in Australia who do not have access to any targeted funding streams along the lines envisioned by the New Zealand Film Commission in 2017.[17] Screen Australia was contacted for information on whether there had been any documented funding of Pacific projects or even projects with Pacific crew attached. The agency confirmed that they did not have any documentation of this (personal communication, 2017). Through my own industry networks, however, I understand that Aboriginal/Māori practitioner Rima Tamou was funded by Screen Australia in the early 2000s. Tamou is based in Sydney. More recently Aboriginal/Tongan writer/director Enoch Mailangi was funded by Screen Australia and Screen Queensland to make the ABC iView series *All My Friends Are Racist* (Mailangi, 2021). This suggests that Screen Australia do not gather Pacific-specific data on funded projects for analysis. However, Australia's state and federal funding agencies do not have an extensive slate of Pacific work in their funded projects lists.

In the United States, with the very small pool of state funding available through the National Endowment for the Arts, Pacific screen practitioners are navigating a fiercely competitive sector. There is no targeted funding pool for Pacific screen projects, but there is for Indigenous projects, that is, Māori and Maoli. The United States' recent industry focus on Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month each year has influenced the importance of diversity and inclusion of these communities in US cinema and television representation. This discussion has yet to translate to the screen. Given time, this discussion will hopefully influence more funded Pacific stories from the United States. Having said this, the United States has demonstrated a propensity for placement of Pacific stories and characters at the forefront of blockbuster feature films and television (*Moana, Fast and the Furious Presents Hobbs and Shaw, Aquaman, Young Rock*) shows since 2015, much of which can be indebted to the agency of Dwayne Johnson's (Samoan) Seven Buck Productions. The visibility of high-profile Pacific actors and practitioners such as Johnson and Jason Momoa (Maoli), is currently positioned to facilitate some change in the funding of Pacific projects in the US.

[17] These strategies continue to be implemented in earnest, in collaboration with Pacific screen practitioners in Aotearoa.

With the current wave of Pacific storytelling originating in transnational communities and subsequently distributed across the island Pacific, it is crucial to understand how non-Pacific government funding bodies affect and impact Pacific screen practice. For Pacific practitioners, the stress of fundraising for screen projects can be exacerbated by the issue of 'funding bias', something that respondents have acknowledged to this study. Sixty-eight per cent of my respondents noted funding bias as a barrier to the production of their screen projects. Aotearoa-based respondents were vocal about the ways that funding bias affected their decision to participate in the funding process at all.

> The Labor government's been great in giving the arts sector a small bump … so there's a little bit more money, and then agencies like NZ On Air and Creative NZ have put more money into diversity strategies in the last year, which has been fantastic.
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

> So, I thought, 'oh nah I would rather do it on my own terms'. I figured if I fail sweet, I'll be at peace with that, no regrets. If I actually make a crap film, I'll still say oh sweet, I know now to stick to the lakes and the rivers you know … I was saving up money that I had a decent amount of capital and I felt I had the experience or rather enough - I guess competency is a better question, to make a film.
> **Respondent Severus Snape, Auckland (Samoan)**

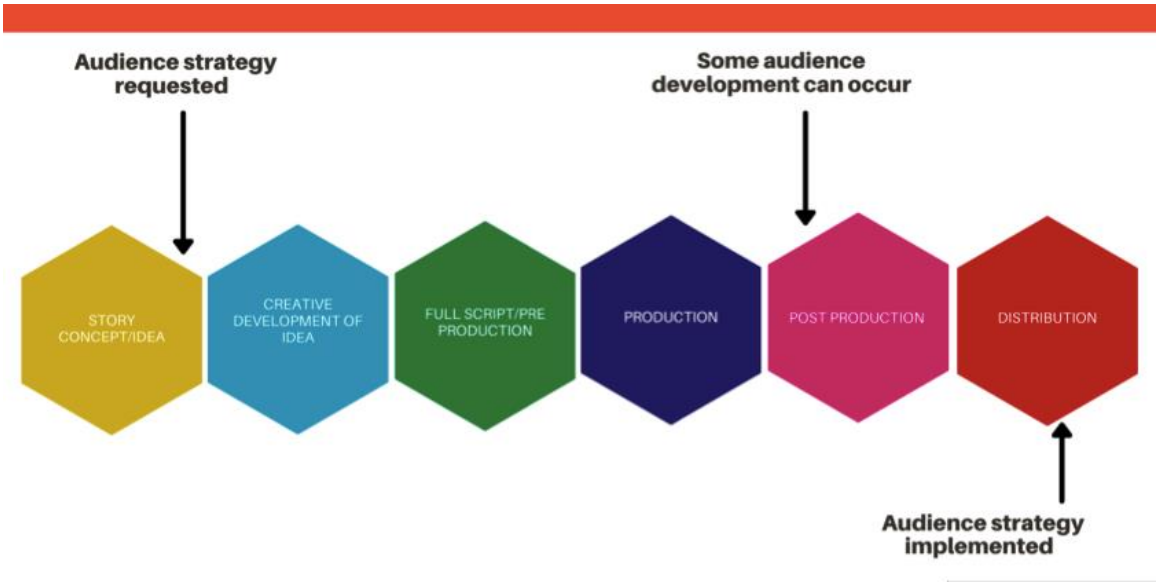
Respondent Brown acknowledged the important role that the Aotearoa (Labor) Government had played in the promotion and funding of arts practice. Respondent Snape however, opted out of the screen funding process altogether, specifically noting that he preferred to make a screen project 'on his own terms'. Respondent Snape saved up his own money to pay crew and make a project, and felt he had the experience and knowledge to effectively produce the project independently. Considering the evidence given by island-based practitioners with a severe lack of funding, it is a stark observation that Pacific practitioners with access to funding streams in transnational communities, would prefer to fund their projects in the same

way that practitioners in the Solomon Islands have been quoted as doing, above. Respondent Potter, below expands on some of the reasons associated with funding bias, that practitioners such as respondent Snape, would prefer not to work within the government funding system.

> …here in [Aotearoa] and probably the rest of the world, when you apply for your funding, they make you kind of define who your target audience is first. That always troubled me, because like, I haven't made the movie yet, so how am I supposed to tell you that? You know what I mean? Because if I was to show you my first proposal and then what the film became it was so different…
>
> **Respondent Harry Potter, Wellington (Aotearoa Māori)**

Respondent Potter raises an issue that I have also experienced first-hand as a producer: the need to identify and develop audience strategies for screen projects before the plot of the project's story is finalised. A fairly lengthy section of most screen funding applications in Australia, and (as identified by respondent Potter) in Aotearoa, is the audience development section. Here, an applicant is expected to identify their target audience. They are also expected to have a developed business strategy to target and cultivate said audience. As a requirement for the completion of a funding application, the work of developing an audience strategy, assumes that you have developed the business plan associated with this project (Gillard, 2000; Wasko, 2004). It also assumes you have attached a platform for distribution such as a broadcaster or distribution company (should you choose not to independently distribute, which would then require another strategy altogether). All of this is required while a practitioner work towards finalizing the project's script, or even its key themes. In essence, this process requires a practitioner to build the way that a product will be sold, before the product has been fully realised. Figure 6 demonstrates how this cycle, while beneficial to funding bodies, can be oppositional to the objectives of the screen practitioner.

Figure 6. Funding to Distribution Timeline



The amount of preparation required for this, when maximum effort is being put into the realization of a project's script, can hamper the efforts of any screen practitioner, even more so for less experienced Pacific practitioners. Structural issues such as 'audience development requirements' has been identified by respondents to this research as 'funding bias'. In Australia there are historical issues with funding bias in broadcasting. Auto-ethnographic evidence has demonstrated perceptions of Indigenous programming that ruled it out of commercial networks (specifically, channels Nine, Seven and Ten). Indigenous and culturally diverse work regularly screen through the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) or SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) as a result. Both ABC and SBS are either majority, or completely publicly funded. Presently, the National Indigenous Television (NITV), which was launched in 2012 and sits under the umbrella of SBS, is the chief broadcaster of Indigenous content in Australia. This silo approach to Australian funding and broadcasting, fundamentally limits inclusivity and diversity of representation in media. Communities that have not historically been incorporated into a country's media representation, are also eventually absent from the country's imagined national identity, as constructed by the mainstream broadcasting and screen sector (Erigha, 2015). Importantly, these communities are also then excluded from the economic opportunities that are afforded to projects that are perceived to be traditionally commercial.

The inherent funding biases and the westernisation of screen practice creates strong barriers for Pacific screen practitioners both in transnational communities and in the island Pacific. These barriers not only prevent Pacific practitioners from creating their work, but also prevent the possibility of any profit or economic sustainability. The efforts of some funding bodies to somewhat reverse these effects have been noted by respondents to this research. Respondent Dumbledore touches on a positive move from Aotearoa funding bodies, through the acknowledgment of alternative formats of storytelling.

> I think that in [Aotearoa] one of the things that they're now starting to get better at probably is understanding that what the film is trying to say or what the film is about doesn't necessarily have to fit into a western context … I think that the best thing that they could do is support those writers and directors and producers to work in the way that best suits them and their story rather than trying to pigeon hole them into what has traditionally worked essentially for western writer/directors… I think that's really really important, because at the end of the day white men and some white women still pull all the purse strings…
>
> **Respondent Endra Dumbledore, Aotearoa (Papua New Guinean)**

Respondent Dumbledore concedes that the current standards that funding bodies in Australia, Aotearoa and the United States measure excellence against are skewed towards a western storytelling framework.[18]

The novel *Cousins* (Grace, 1992) demonstrates the tendency of Māori writers in Aotearoa, to overwrite standard English writing code, and incorporate narrative structures that align with Pacific storytelling traditions. Tawake describes this as 'where the beginning is not the beginning and the end is not the end' (2003). Since 1992, *Cousins* (Gardiner & Grace-Smith, 2021) has been adapted for screen and was partly funded by the NZFC and New Zealand On Air (NZOA) for production. In March 2021, the feature film adaptation of *Cousins* was released. *Cousins* is written and co-directed by Briar Grace Smith, daughter in law of Patricia Grace. Since its theatrical release, *Cousins* has achieved streaming distribution to Netflix, through

[18] Western storytelling is known for its three-act structure or a linear narrative, which is told from beginning to end.

Vendetta Films. The movie follows similar non-linear narrative structures to that of the novel, and presents an example of alternative storytelling structures being funded by colonial governments.

More examples of alternative storytelling formats funded in Aotearoa would be the slate of screen projects produced by Brown Sugar Apple Grunt Productions. Here, the team of Kerry Warkia and Kiel McNaughton have created a storytelling model involving 8 vignettes, compiled into a feature length story, tied together by one narrative thread. The first in this slate of projects was *Waru* (Gardiner et al., 2017) and the second *Vai.* Both *Waru* and *Vai* involve a format, where eight writer/directors were brought into a writer's room to create eight vignettes that followed a set of parameters given to them by the creative producers. In the case of *Waru,* eight female Māori writer/directors wrote different perspectives on a domestic violence incident and an eventual *tangi* (funeral). In *Vai* nine female Pacific writer/directors were given the parameters of a female protagonist named 'Vai'. The story essentially followed the same character on her journey through the Pacific and over her lifetime, examining the struggles of women all over the region. These progressions, evident in the Aotearoa funding environment show the key steps being taken toward a statistically higher representation of Pacific practitioners in in funding discussions.

In this section, I have spotlighted the ways in which varied Pacific screen communities, but especially transnational Pacific screen communities, interact with accessible funding. As Pacific screen practice develops and funding bodies progress in their treatment of non-western or non-European storytelling, Pacific screen practitioners will continue to find and develop avenues to finance their work. Furthermore, procuring these funding streams will not be as tenuous as is currently the experience for Pacific practitioners. Understanding the difficulties associated with the procuring of funding in transnational Pacific screen communities underscores the importance of localised funding sources in the Pacific, to ensure self-sufficient and sustainable screen practices.

Funding from development organisations

Development organisations based in the Pacific have also provided funding opportunities for the realisation of screen work. As has been the case with other

sources of funding, this type funding is nuanced and can be political. Often development organisations will create tenders for specific video work that aligns with their agendas, thus providing opportunities for screen creatives to earn an income. Development organisations in the Pacific have also established ‘funding pots’ that are won through small screen production competitions. These competitions allow Pacific practitioners the license to develop their own ideas and execute them on a small scale, in line with the themes outlined by the organisation, in the hope of eventually gaining funding for works that are completely their own.

> Or like World Health Organisation might have a project somewhere funding mangroves and they have to send something back to a donor. That’s like the extent of most filmmaking here, in terms of documentary filmmaking.
>
> … they wanted filmmakers, they wanted to teach young people to make something on their mobile phones so I made a very short film on depression on my mobile phone and so the whole thing was shot and edited on my mobile phone. And it was cool because it won me a trip to Edinburgh and I got to go in the Social Entrepreneurs Forum and talk about it there and things like that and that was pretty cool … I guess that would segue way into something that’s happening here right now. Goes into stuff with like mobile phones and cheaper computers and stuff, it’s easier to make short films for yourself.
> **Respondent Cedric Diggory, Suva (Indo-Fijian)**

Respondent Diggory presents, hypothetically, the ways in which a development organisation such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) might seek out aspiring screen practitioners or youth on island in Fiji to engage with screen opportunities. He suggests that transnational organisations may have ‘to send something back to a donor' as a demonstration of outcomes that have been reached on a project. As such, budget lines will be dedicated to creating programs such as a filmmaking competition or a phone filmmaking competition.

Diggory also refers to a competition created by a development organisation for youth populations to demonstrate the capacity of mobile phones to produce screen content. Diggory’s success in winning this competition allowed him to travel with his

project wherever it was shown internationally. For Diggory, this served as practical experience in screen production in 'multiple meso-publics' (D'heer et al., 2012). The exercise also gave Diggory experience in the activities required for a project's distribution. Respondent Maxim similarly described her engagement with development organisations:

> Yeah, I have actually I'm making one this August/September, totally free of NZ film funds so I want to see how it goes. But that funding is through UN Women, so it's through our ending violence against women fund and the theme is sexual harassment.
> **Respondent Olympe Maxim, Tonga (Tongan)**

Respondent Maxim navigated the funding opportunities available to them and made a strategic choice to engage with UN Women – on the basis of their core program mandate in support of gender equality – to obtain funding for a film that addresses the issue of sexual harassment. An important point here is Maxim's admission that her original intention was to make screen work free of Aotearoa government funding, as discussed earlier. The work of Maxim also reinforces the ways in which the funding process associated with development organisations can affect the type of stories that are made in and about the Pacific (Stupples et al., 2022). Respondent Diggory explores this dynamic further.

> … there're two kinds of projects that I work on. The personal projects that I do - they're like little B-grade horror movies - [these don't] require funding because we just do it out of our pocket. We just sort of put in and just make it almost for the fun of it… [But] there's a lot of funding but for very specific stuff. So here right now in Fiji there's a lot of stuff for like climate change environmental stuff marine stuff things like that …
>
> Filmmakers come to Fiji and make things, but locally there's no sort of government grant; there's nothing that encourages local filmmakers. In fact there's lots of production houses and they all just make commercials, because there's no money in making documentaries unless you get money from some NGO or something that wants a specific documentary.

Respondent Cedric Diggory, Fiji (Indo-Fijian)

Diggory makes a fairly broad comment about the state of funding in Fiji. Fijian screen practice is a fusion of independently funded projects, documentary making and the most lucrative of all in Fiji, commercial production. Within this statement Diggory notes the positionality of development organisations. Diggory states that while there is a lot of funding available, it requires projects that address specific themes and issues. The implication is that this is because the funding is made available through development organisations. This point if underlined in the next quote where Diggory points to the lack of money associated with documentary unless it is a project being commissioned by a non-governmental organisation (NGO), at which time, these NGO's will want 'a specific documentary'.

In 2016, the Commonwealth Foundation announced a call for Pacific production companies to produce short films partnerships through the 'Pacific Voices' program. This call resulted in the production of six short films. Tongan writer/director Ofakilevuka Guttenbeil Likiliki wrote and directed *The Black Pen* (2017), and went on to contribute a section of the 2019 feature film *Vai*. The Pacific production company that partnered with the Commonwealth Foundation to make these short films was Brown Sugar Apple Grunt (BSAG) Productions, headed by Kerry Warkia (Papua New Guinean) and Kiel McNaughton (Māori). BSAG also went on to produce *Vai*, *The Legend of Baron To'a* and a slate of other television projects in Aotearoa. The projects that were produced through 'Pacific Voices' went on to have a presence on the international film festival circuit (Steel, 2017). The practitioners who were involved also continue to work in their local industries.[19]

The Commonwealth Foundation is a development organisation, principally based in the United Kingdom. Its work on 'Pacific Voices' is illustrative of a development organisation funding program that was predicated on the ideas of Pacific practitioners, rather than the thematic agenda of the organisation. The first indication of the burden of creativity being placed on the Pacific creatives is the commissioning of a Pacific production company to produce the slate of short films. By doing so, the

[19] Malani Wolfgramm (Tonga) continues to work in video production in Tonga and Glenill Burua's short 'The Education of Grayson Toki' (2017) continues to be shown at festivals.

Commonwealth Foundation relinquished creative and thematic control of the projects to Pacific producers.

The creation of ‘Pacific Voices’ is also unique for the kind of accessibility it provided to Pacific practitioners, both to island-based practitioners and transnational practitioners, through BSAG who are based in Aotearoa. The partnership with Pacific lead BSAG highlights the ways in which these funding opportunities not only provide capital for Pacific projects but also enable emerging Pacific companies, who are developing business strategies and slate of work to grow from. The growth of work from some of the practitioners who participated in Pacific Voices, and the considerable slate of work that has been developed by BSAG Production since, underlines the elevation of Pacific screen industry that can grow out of development and capacity building activities. Unfortunately, ‘Pacific Voices’ has not been able to continue since the first iteration. Understanding the contribution that the program and its format did make to Pacific screen practice provides insight into possibilities to make Pacific screen industry sustainable through a concerted and diverse funding strategy.

Development funding will continue to be an integral source of screen funding for Pacific practitioners and projects. At present Pacific screen practice works reactively to the needs and wants of development organisations, with the exception of practitioners such as respondent Maxim. Taking Maxim’s approach to the building of their budget, there is an opportunity in the Pacific, to look creatively at development organisations when forming production budgets. The way that development funding is currently administered will not create sustainable screen practice or industry in the Pacific, nor is it created for that reason. The ongoing presence of development agendas in the Pacific however could contribute the economic viability of a regional industry should there be engagement from Pacific governments and leaders to allow financial discussions to take place at multiple levels of society.

This discussion of funding sources in the Pacific illustrates the difficulty of securing funding for screen production. Considering the cost of screen production and the state of most island economies, the region is not well positioned to sustainably finance an industry. I have also demonstrated, however, that the current mosaic of funding streams conditionally available in the Pacific are also not conducive to

sustainability of Pacific screen. This mosaic cannot substitute dedicated funding for screen production. By interrogating the funding sources of current Pacific screen practitioners, I suggest that the creation of locally established and Pacific led funding pathways is required to support them in working towards sustainability. Creating such localised funding streams is neither straightforward nor easy.

Economically viable local and offshore projects

The availability of a diverse slate of projects, or a growing program of employment opportunities for screen practitioners will consist of local and offshore screen projects, to credibly contribute to the economic viability of a regional screen industry. Ensuring this diversity of projects ensures a steady flow of work, practical skills application/development; and a balance of local and international cash flowing into national and regional Pacific economies. This section will analyse the varied experiences of Pacific practitioners with offshore and local screen productions, in order to assess the possibility of developing this ongoing and diverse slate of work. These productions will be unpacked below, as local productions, Pacific led productions and international crewing opportunities.

Local opportunities

Very small pockets of local screen industry can be found throughout the Pacific. Samoa's screen practitioners, for example, produce corporate advertising and/or marketing collateral, maintaining sustainable careers in doing so. Fiji also has a strong commercial production market, although Fiji has also cultivated a local industry for magazine style and talk show television that continuously employs crew. PNG had similar screen work through national news broadcasters. Guåhan has a television sector that is usually saturated with locally made documentary style and magazine style content. This lives alongside news and talk shows, as well as corporate advertising and commercials. Outside of television, the majority of screen content made in the Pacific is independently produced, and thus will not always find broadcasting opportunities through commercial channels.

The Samoan soap opera *Silamanino* is an example of such independent production. *Silamanino* is a straight to DVD eight-part series of feature films, produced by Samoa based ETV between 2011 and 2016. Using their own funds, ETV produced the soap opera, set around a Samoan family in Samoa, and starring Verona Parker (former Miss Samoa and Miss South Pacific, 1997). After its release, *Silamanino* became extremely popular both in Samoa and in transnational communities. DVDs were purchased in Samoa or Aotearoa and taken to Australia and the US for Samoan transnational communities to purchase. The series is very much a 'fledgling moviemaking venture', as described by blogger 'Malae o Letalu' (Letalu, 2012). Despite its fledgling status, proceeds from earlier episodes contributed to higher production value in later instalments. By part eight of the series, ETV had the budget to produce a scene in which a village ***faleo'o***[20] is burnt to the ground. Presently, *Silamanino's* audience endures online. The original website which sold the *Silamanino* series (samoavideonews.com) is no longer functional, however trailers for each of the eight parts in the series are available on ETV's YouTube page. This page has only twelve videos on it, all of which average ninety seconds in length. The ETV YouTube page itself has only two thousand one hundred and thirty thousand subscribers, however the overall viewership of the videos is at over 1.3 million views. *Silamanino* was independently produced and distributed. Thus, it was not made available for viewing through Samoan television. The popularity of its independent DVD series, however, is evidence of the possibility of commercial and financial success, should *Silamanino* have received financial support from Samoan governments and broadcasters.

Examples such as *Silamanino* illustrate local opportunities for an economically viable Pacific screen industry. Projects of varying similarity occur throughout the region. In Vanuatu Wan Smolbag's *Love Patrol* (2007-) was acquired by national broadcasters in Fiji and Vanuatu in its first season and was eventually picked up throughout the region. The series was also broadcast to Māori Television in Aotearoa, ABC International in Australia, translated into French by SPC, and released on DVD. While the production company *Wan Smolbag* is owned and operated by non-Pacific Australian practitioners living in Vanuatu, *Love Patrol* is another clear demonstration of the capacity of Pacific practitioners to create local content when required.

[20] These are traditional open air houses in Samoa with thatched roofing.

Drysdale (2014) also notes this in an exploration of the effect of a locally produced television series on sex education and HIV in Vanuatu. Elsewhere in the Pacific, local practitioners are unwavering in their pursuit of opportunities to tell their stories, and this extends to casting as well as crews:

> *Delacour*: I'd say also many people are natural actors around here so when we write up a story and we want to get casting and everybody like just yeah willingly came out.
> *Ravenclaw*: Yeah so many people just willingly yeah wanted to be part of the film so natural actors and we have many times many people approached us and keep telling us oh I have a story can you just -
> *Delacour*: Are you going to make a movie any time soon cos I want to star in it? … We were like okay yeah but you know it's so easy there are many stories
> **Respondents Gabrielle Delacour and Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Silamanino and *Love Patrol* exemplify local opportunities for ongoing work in the region. Respondents Delacour and Ravenclaw in particular underline the breadth of untapped work and talent there is in the Pacific. Despite local capacity, national government is not currently supporting these opportunities and the youth community's interest in this work.

Pacific led offshore opportunities

The presence of offshore projects initiated by transnational Pacific practitioners and production companies promote sustainability of screen industry in the region, with the limited resources they have available to them. Production companies such as Aotearoa-based Tikilounge Productions and Sunpix Productions work in the region and build local skill and capacity by working with and employing local Indigenous Pacific crew, to give them practical experience. Because these projects travel to the Pacific with smaller budgets then some of their Hollywood counterparts, the economic benefit of these transnational/Pacific led opportunities is understood differently. On the spectrum of economic benefit, Pacific led opportunities sit

between the extremities of offshore blockbuster productions and completely locally based opportunities with almost no budget.

Pacific led offshore opportunities, however, do not possess the same level of financial contribution to Pacific country revenues. These projects will be required to complete paperwork to film in the country, but the expectation of economic contribution is not high on the list of priorities. These projects will make small economic contributions to countries through travel and hospitality as well as in the remuneration of its Indigenous Pacific and local practitioners. To this end, these projects will also make key contributions to the development of skilled workforce in country, that is, a network that will theoretically supplement the eventual depth of Pacific screen work in the region, which will be realised when an ongoing slate of offshore and local production work is realised. This could be perceived as an investment in the future of industry from the perspective of governments. Rather than expecting smaller transnational projects have the same level of economic contribution as those from Hollywood, Pacific governments view them for their potential future benefit. Below respondent Brown alludes to the capacity of Pacific transnational practitioners to produce stories that can and will be converted into screen products.

> … our creative currency as Pacific people in Aotearoa is so strong at the moment it's amazing. Like per capita the Pacific creative ability punches way above its weight you know … we've got ideas for days ….
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

The aforementioned Tikilounge and Sunpix productions in Aotearoa are two production companies that travel to and from the Pacific on a regular basis for media coverage and producing documentaries and sketch comedy. Their perceived regional economic benefit extends beyond the obvious fiscal contributions to an awareness and advocacy role. Projects that come from Sunpix and Tikilounge include *Tagata Pasifika,* a magazine style television show that airs in Aotearoa three times per week and broadcasts stories relevant primarily to the Pacific community of Aotearoa as well as the wider Pacific as a secondary audience. Being made available on YouTube, Pacific communities and international observers are given

access to understand issues that face Pacific communities, as well as the culture, the abundance of creativity of the islands themselves. Tikilounge Productions works with less factual material but regularly goes viral online with sketch shows such as *Pani and Pani* and *Mr Lavalava*. Canvassing the broad work that transnational Pacific projects do to broadcast an alternative perception of the Pacific in the greater global discourse, is a less tangible but vital contribution to Pacific economies. This work has capacity to generate interest in Pacific communities around the world and promote Pacific tourism.

In recent years, some of the more popular and fairly successful examples of Pacific led projects in the Pacific were produced by M2S1 Productions. The Vaiaoga-Ioasa led feature films *Three Wise Cousins* and *Take Home Pay* are both stories that had a large chunk of production take place in Samoa, thus both had significant opportunities to employ local Indigenous Pacific cast and crew and to provide Aotearoa industry rates of remuneration. In Scene Two I used these two feature films and the M2S1 slate of productions to demonstrate the importance of a sustainable regional screen industry for the continuous and authentic representation of Pacific stories and the Pacific experience. In this recounting of M2S1's work, the profit made from the success of *Three Wise Cousins* was estimated at over one million (United States) dollars, with a personal investment of approximately 100,000 (New Zealand) dollars. A return on investment such as this, facilitated the production of future projects for M2S1 films. In the context of the newer projects, Vaiaoga-Ioasa was also able to leverage any profit that went back into the company to produce more quality action sequences and special effects, by the time they were making *Take Home Pay.*

Other Pacific led opportunities of a blockbuster nature were also briefly canvassed in Scene Two. The work of Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson through his production company 'Seven Bucks Productions has resulted in many high earning and expensive action films that were shot in the Pacific, specifically Hawai'i. These films include the *Jumanji* (Kasdan, 2017; 2019) sequel series, *Fast and the Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw* and the recently released *Jungle Cruise* (Collet-Serra, 2021). It has been established that all of these stories were shot in Hawai'i. They were also shot through a major production company that is led by a Pacific Islander. Only one of these projects contains an actual Pacific story within the context of the

wider plot, which is *Hobbs and Shaw*. Despite this, I have classified all of these projects as Pacific led and also perceive them to be hugely economically beneficial to the region should they be dispersed to other Pacific Island nations outside of Hawai‘i to shoot on location. Although projects of the nature that is produced by Seven Bucks achieve a level or profile synonymous with international, or offshore projects in the Pacific, Seven Bucks projects are unique in that they are led by a Pacific practitioner and have exponential capacity to generate economic benefit to Pacific economies.

Although the fiscal possibilities through Pacific led opportunities are not finite, there is a definite capacity for economic sustainability in the work of these practitioners throughout the region. The possession of stories and ideas in the screen industry is the beginning of job creation in so many departments in a production. Not only does a high volume of stories enable the creation of screen projects, if analysed from a point two steps back from the production itself, these stories ideas and concepts are akin to small business ideas. These extend outside of traditional production roles to the screen industry's auxiliary sectors. This title applies but is not limited to the hospitality industry, through hotels and accommodation needs of a production; catering for set, cleaning for set and vehicle hire for actors' trailers on a set. Even such services as teachers for those underage actors who need to be home schooled on a set; or animal wranglers for those productions that have those needs and tradesmen if a set needs to be built. This plethora or bottleneck of stories and ideas, as described by respondent Brown, facilitates screen creation at its origin, and will benefit screen industry economically through the abundance of screen products they contribute.

Economically viable audiences

Finally, my research links the appetite of Pacific – and overseas – audiences for Pacific content to the economic viability of a Pacific screen audience. An audience may not directly impact screen production, but it is fundamental in creating the economic incentives that underpin a sustainable screen industry. To claim status as an industry, Pacific screen needs to show a business output, make a financial return, or produce and distribute commodities (Wasko, 2004). Yet this element of screen practice has not been explored in any literature about screen in the Pacific, including

in the seminal report *Cinema Pasifika.* Thus far, the focus has been on the development of infrastructure and the abundance of talent and stories without attention to one of the focal elements that will warrant sustainability, the audience. Scene One acknowledged the demand that global screen industry has in the Pacific, not just in terms of its landscapes but increasingly in terms of its stories. These stories and their production screen should furnish an audience of interested consumers both in the Pacific and further abroad. This section will establish the importance of and the role an audience of Pacific screen projects in the development of economic viability of a regional screen industry.

Market demand for Pacific screen

The visibility of the Pacific is becoming more and more pervasive in global screen and pop culture. Mainstream Hollywood television shows such as *White Lotus* (White, 2021) incorporate a high percentage of Hawaiian dance, tradition and choral music into its story, despite not being about Pacific people. The horror series *Chapelwaite* (Filardi & Filardi, 2021) has been adapted from Stephen King's 1970s short story *Jerusalem's Lot.* The story of *Chapelwaite* follows Sea Captain Boone and his children after the passing of his wife. They travel back to his hometown to live after years away. Although Boone's wife is never on camera, her funeral scene sees her being wrapped in what looks like *siapo*, or *tapa*, a traditional Pacific canvas made from bark of the mulberry tree. Boone's children are also Pacific, and have names that seemingly derive from Pacific languages. Captain Boone's son's name, 'Tane', for example, translates to 'man' in some Pacific languages. As a Pacific person viewing these shows, these stories present two very different insertions of Pacific culture into non-Pacific stories. One is clearly placed in the Pacific and thus the Pacific is presented as the background to the lives of the main protagonists. The second is a story that seems far removed from the Pacific, both geographically and chronologically, and yet involves Pacific people as its main protagonists. These examples, alongside a mosaic of other projects that have both been named in this study and exist in the zeitgeist of current work that references the Pacific, illustrate a growing awareness of the Pacific in global dialogues.

The question is whether this growing awareness translates to increased audience demand from the Pacific (and elsewhere) for Pacific screen industry produced content. I acknowledge that Pacific screen work is a much more emerging canon of work to dissect. However, within this emerging canon there are definite demonstrations of audience demand. The work of emerging production companies Pelesasa Pics and Satiu Studios (Sydney) online in 2020/2021 not only highlighted the prevalence of a Pacific audience, it also underscored the ways in which Pacific audiences have been pushed to view Pacific content online. Transnational Pacific communities in Australia and the US have been consuming Aotearoa produced shows such as *Fresh TV* and *The Coconet TV* (Taouma 2014-) for over 10 years. In 2020/2021 Pelesasa Pics released the pilots for shows *Deity* (Pelesasa, 2021) and *Parramatta* (Pelesasa, 2020) on YouTube and Facebook Watch. Satiu Studios released the pilot episode of the series *Breaking Bread* (Satiu, 2021) on YouTube, Facebook Watch and IGTV. Pelesasa Pics enjoyed great audience demand for their projects. *Deity* grossed over 40,000 views across all platforms. *Parramatta* achieved over 60,000 views across all platforms. Satiu Studios' *Breaking Bread* grossed over 30,000 views across all platforms, which was considered a key achievement considering how confrontational the *Breaking Bread* story was perceived as being for Pacific communities. For all of these projects, viewership was wide spread, not only in the Pacific but also in transnational communities. *Deity* and *Parramatta* were both picked up by Samoan television station TV3.

Acknowledging a demand for Pacific projects recognises a defined audience to view content and generate profit, either through box office sales, commercial revenue from television broadcast, or by need from development organisations, political parties and corporate entities. The question of demand for Pacific content in the region was not asked in interviews. Despite this, one in five of my respondents considered demand for work as a key enabler of Pacific screen production.

> … if you did an evidence-based research, you would see correlation between the fact that the pipeline of talent has come through with feature films and also the early talent is now maturing into better talent now. So, with more of their products coming out, the distributors are realising that we need to tap into more of the Māori and Pasifika audiences and they don't really know what to do so that's how we've come into the picture.

Respondent Sybill Trelawney, Auckland (Samoan)

Respondent Trelawney nominates the current growth of storytelling in Pacific transnational communities as the catalyst for diversity strategies to reach Pacific audiences in Aotearoa. Aotearoa has developed targeted diversity strategies at Māori and Pacific communities. While these strategies were taking place at the period of this study, they had not taken place prior. In the context of the screen industry, distribution refers to the arm that connects screen projects with an audience. Lobato (2009) identifies distribution as 'the most profitable sector of the film industry'. Distribution is also the sector in which many Pacific screen creatives have the least understanding. So, for example in the narrative sector, there is evidence that demonstrates a high demand for Pacific stories such as *Three Wise Cousins* (The Numbers, 2016b). The availability of wider structures to service an ongoing demand however, are not yet in place. One sector of screen production in the Pacific that already has a tangible audience is in corporate advertising.

> Advertisements … It's always the first jobs. Yeah, it's the same thing you know. Samoans don't like 30 second – a proper advertisement as I've learnt, is 30 seconds – Samoans they want like one minute, two minutes
> **Respondent Kingsley Shacklebolt, Samoa (Samoan)**

Respondent Shacklebolt notes that there is a strong market for television commercial production, sought after by local business and international corporations in the Pacific. Auto-ethnographic evidence identifies examples of this advertising market, where practitioners were able to set a standard of production value at approximately three thousand *tālā* (1,800 Australian dollars) for a 30 to 60 second commercial in Samoa. As these practitioners continued to produce high quality content, this set a standard for others in commercial advertising to charge similar rates for the same quality. Auto-ethnographic evidence also recorded how the growth in this market eventually halted with the departure of key crew who worked to set this industry standard. The departure of these people left a gap for others to damage the standard by offering much lower rates (five hundred tālā for a 30 second commercial) for

commercial production with much lower production value. With no one offering a higher quality standard of work, and no government policy to protect the industry, these standards of work and in turn the accepted fee rates were damaged.

Having an audience for screen work is focal to its economic success. This section has considered the importance of Pacific audiences and identified what demand for Pacific work currently exists. Respondents to this study identified how demand – particularly that generated to meet diversity targets in Aotearoa for example – has benefited the production of their work.

Creating a Pacific film festival circuit

The creation of a film circuit across the Pacific has deliberately brought Pacific content to Pacific audiences. The 2019/20 film festival season presented a first glimpse at the formation of a Pacific film festival circuit. While many of these film festivals existed prior to my period of research, it was the emergence of new festivals in the years 2018/19 that formed a wave of Pacific owned film festivals in the region, aligning with an incipient canon of Pacific screen content. While conducting interviews on the 2019/20 film festival circuit, and in my work as co-Director of Pasifika Film Fest, I observed the inaugural Native Lens Film Festival, in Honiara. I also attended a range of other festivals (as outlined in Scene Three).

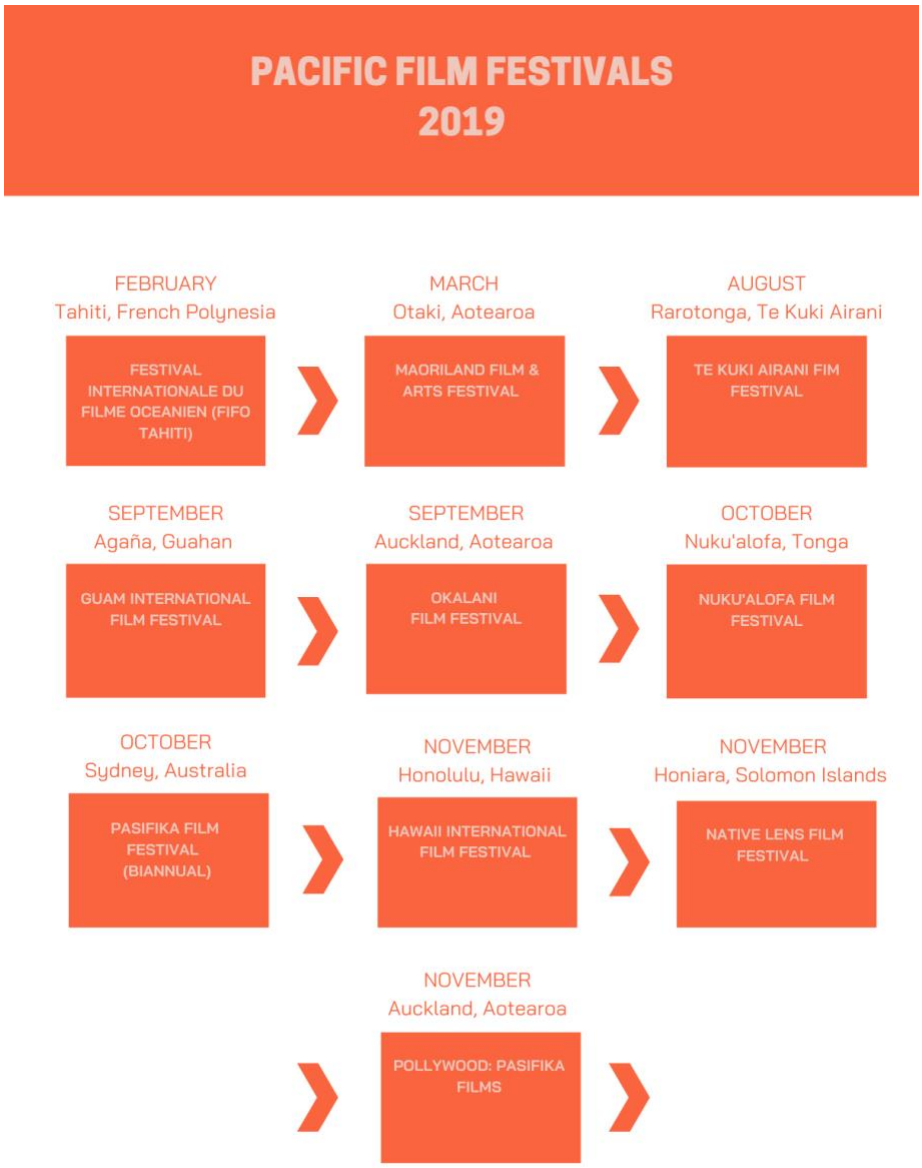
Image 15. Audience at the inaugural Native Lens Film Festival, National Theatre, Honiara

Alongside these regional festivals, I worked with, or had knowledge of other regional festivals. I observed that there is considerable nuance within each festival. Te Kuki Airani, Native Lens, Nuku'alofa, GIFF, PFF, PPF and Okalani Film Festival are all fundamentally Pacific owned and led film festivals. Māoriland is considered a Pacific film festival in this study, in so far as it is led by Māori, it is geographically in the Pacific, and includes Pacific content in its programming. Māoriland however, positions itself clearly as an Indigenous film festival. My attendance at these allowed me to observed the conscious effort of the Māoriland curators to program Pacific content. This included *Vai* as the opening night film, and the first Papua New Guinean premiere at the festival in *Aliko and Ambai* (Anton & Eby, 2017). In 2019, Māoriland included other programmed Pacific content from Guåhan, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Kiribati. The existence of diasporic film festivals such as Okalani Film Festival, PPF and PFF have also been included on this circuit. For a regional festival such as PFF, activity is based in Sydney, however can be accessible throughout the region. Okalani and PPF demonstrate smaller festivals that present Pacific work, based in Auckland and completely run by Pacific practitioners.

Neither FIFO Tahiti or HIFF, however, are Pacific owned. Both were founded by non-Pacific people and originally held non-Pacific principles at the heart of each festival's mission. FIFO Tahiti's historical focus has been on the promotion of ethnographic documentary made in and about the Pacific. There is no requirement for submitting filmmakers to be of Pacific descent. Despite this, the current director of FIFO, Mareva Leu (Mao'i), has made a concerted effort to include Pacific led projects in the festival. She has pushed this by also allowing narrative content into the FIFO program, which has historically only admitted factual content.

As the name suggests, Hawai'i International Film Festival presents international content. HIFF has targeted Pacific programming, such as the short film programs 'Pacific Showcase Shorts' and 'Made in Hawai'i Shorts'. HIFF has also made an effort over recent years to connect with PIC, as a media-based organisation, as well as Maoli practitioners in Hawai'i, to provide upskilling opportunities and show their work. HIFF is not Pacific owned or led, however it is actively engaging with the Pacific community and presents the standard for Pacific practitioners to connect to the wider international circuit. Film festivals such as PNG Human rights in PNG and Anuu-ru Aboro in New Caledonia, are not Pacific led or Pacific focused, and have thus not been included in this film festival circuit.

Figure 7. Pacific film festival line-up, 2019



Note: In 2020, PFF actually ran as a biannual festival. I include it here as a demonstration of what a Pacific film circuit could look like.

The Pacific film festival circuit demonstrates a diversity of festivals, not only in age, but in intention and sovereignty of Pacific stories. As this circuit emerged, it effectively connected Pacific screen practice to the international film festival circuit. I interacted with Pacific screen practitioners in the United States, Germany and Australia; and then Tonga, Kuki Airani, French Polynesia and the Solomon Islands. Travelling between these festivals the industry ties built into the Pacific film festival circuit were also prevalent, and added to the common programming across international and regional events.

HIFF provides inroads for Pacific screen practitioners to have their work seen by international audiences. The connection of PIC to this work in Hawai‘i and at Sundance provides further concrete links of the Pacific film festival circuit to international and mainstream pathways. The links between Sundance and PIC can be traced back to pioneering Māori director/producer Merata Mita, who worked intensively with Sundance’s Indigenous program as well as PIC in its founding years.

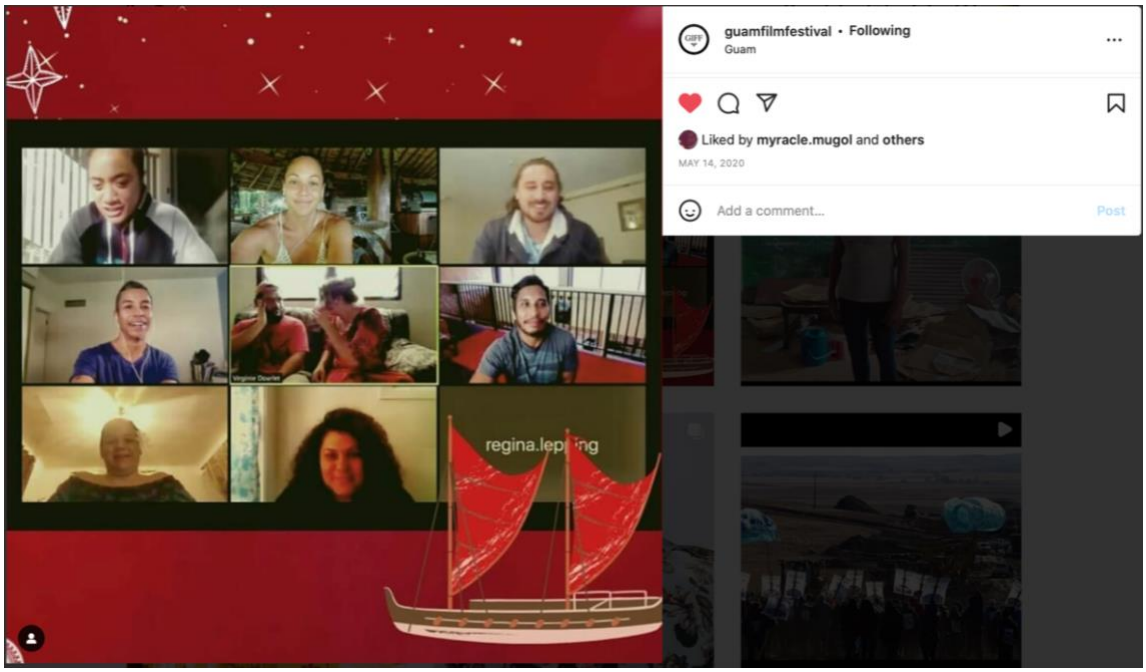
Māoriland Film Festival has been mentioned as a key part of the Indigenous film festival circuit. As a more established network, the Indigenous film festival circuit can be very generous with its connections. I have experienced this generosity firsthand, working with Winda Film Festival, an Indigenous festival based in Sydney each November. The Indigenous film festival circuit includes ImagineNative Media and Arts Festival (Canada), Winda Film Festival (Australia), Māoriland Film and Arts Festival, Rotorua International Film Festival, Wairoa Māori and Sundance Indigenous (USA). In past years, Berlinale Native was also included on this list, however Berlinale’s Native film program was terminated in 2020.

This Indigenous network has been extremely generous with their time and resources. In 2019, Bird Runningwater, then Director of Sundance Indigenous, attended the second iteration of Te Kuki Airani Film Festival in Rarotonga. This connection was largely facilitated by Pouarii Tanner who had recently completed an internship with Sundance Indigenous. Māoriland Film Festival also actively works to program Pacific content, and bringing Pacific screen practitioners into the ‘Native Slam’. Native Slam is a 7-day filmmaking challenge that occurs alongside the annual festival. In 2019 Native Slam had a large cohort of Pacific participants (Aina Paikai, Ian Leaupepe, Samson Rambo, Alika Maikau, Chapin Hall, Joshua Teariki Baker). While the Pacific film festival circuit is extremely emerging and perceivably isolated from the global screen industry, it is actually visible within the international film festival circuit. Winners of the Native Slam receive a place in the ImagineNative festival program, again demonstrating opportunities to link with the international film festival circuit and international distributors. To further emphasise Pacific connections to the international screen sector, presentation in the ImagineNative festival program makes projects eligible for Oscar nomination (Alika Maikau Instagram).

Currently, the Pacific film festival circuit largely concerns itself with the development of screening opportunities for Pacific screen projects. Many stops in this festival circuit are not focused on profit margins, although they do intend to expand on business practices in order to be sustainable. At the time of interview, almost half of my respondents had a project on the film festival circuit, emphasising the importance of these events in the distribution of work. Ultimately, this distribution creates economic opportunity, and develops Pacific and global audience.

To encourage these discussions, a group of curators from most of these film festivals met regularly in 2020 to discuss how they were navigating the complexities of presenting during the COVID-19 pandemic. In these spaces, they also discussed the possibility of actively presenting as a Pacific film festival circuit, and any collaborations that could be possible. The below image is of a zoom meeting between festival curators for PFF, Te Kuki Airani, GIFF, Nuku'alofa Film Festival, FIFO Tahiti, Okalani Film Festival and Native Lens Film Festival. These meetings also initiated thought provoking discussions on the value of film festivals, or presentation and distribution in the Pacific screen production process.

Image 16. Pacific film festival curators zoom (@guamfilmfestival Instagram)



These descriptions capture the importance of the film festival circuit in creating economic growth for Pacific screen projects, developing a business model for the wider screen industry, and international linkages with the global screen economy.

In this section, I have illuminated an opportunity to guide distribution channels for Pacific screen work that begins in the Pacific and is able to pipeline into international audiences. The formation of such business practices in a regional screen industry, places the Pacific region at the helm. This discussion does not take into account the importance of television, online, or streaming in this conversation. I view film festivals as an important regional tool for the development of screen industry and position these as events that develop the skills of screen practitioners and create processes that move toward a more complete business and distribution model for Pacific screen work, inclusive of film and online, alongside already existent television practices.

Conclusion

In this Scene I discuss the economic factors which enable and create barriers to the development of a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. The findings suggest that the economic and financial barriers are a significant rate-limiting factor for Pacific-led screen projects. In order to overcome some of these challenges screen practitioners must also be creative in the ways they attract, source and leverage funding. Therefore, I argue that a diversified funding strategy and approach to finance Pacific centred projects and productions will sustain screen projects in the region. In return a steady stream of screen activity will provide revenue to further reinvest in the industry while also promoting the Pacific and other sectors such as tourism.

There are several funding challenges I have identified through my research findings that impact on sustaining screen projects in the Pacific. One key economic barrier is the fact that there is very limited funding for screen production in the island Pacific. Hawai‘i based Pacific Islanders in Communication is the only Pacific organisation with the ability to fund screen projects. However, their reach and scope are limited only to American territories. Most screen projects in the Pacific are funded internationally by the Global North and any down-stream economic benefit or return to local Pacific communities is relatively small compared to the revenue and income generated by releases. Inherent funding biases and western-based screen practices also prevent Pacific practitioners from being able to implement and create screen circumventing profits and economic sustainability.

In addition, the issue of viewership and audience remains a challenge. Although there is growing awareness of the Pacific screen in global dialogues there is still not enough global demand to support a sustainable Pacific screen industry. Viewership of Pacific screen largely remains within the Pacific region and transnational communities. However, there are strategies that can be employed to generate viewership and promote sustainability. Film festival circuits is one strategy. The film circuit across the Pacific has deliberately brought Pacific content to Pacific audiences, increasing demand. Film circuits present an opportunity to distribute Pacific screen work beginning in the Pacific and then into international audiences.

Scene 6: *Atafa* – A Socially and Culturally Legitimate Screen Industry

Introduction

A socially and culturally legitimate screen industry is the third and final component of a sustainable Pacific screen industry. I define this as an industry that embraces cultural norms, subverts the western lens, and taps into advocates of Pacific screen and Pacific producers as key facilitators of change. With these structural tentpoles in place, socially and culturally legitimacy should effectively contribute to the sustainability of the Pacific screen industry through the implementation of locally legitimate infrastructure in the region. In Scene Six, I focus on the factors deemed to create social and cultural legitimacy in Pacific screen. This chapter will present data from my *talanoa*-style interviews and Pacific auto-ethnography to demonstrate how social and cultural factors can act as enablers and barriers to screen production in the Pacific. Analysis of these factors also illuminate how industry structures centred around social and cultural legitimacy can promote sustainability in Pacific screen.

Social and cultural legitimacy – a definition

Defining social and cultural legitimacy in any Pacific screen industry must always be careful not to assume a retrospective position of coloniality. The quest for social legitimacy supposes an empirical notion that societal acceptance can signal the success or failure of a 'regime' (Mulder, 2016). To this end, a search for cultural legitimacy presumes a general lack of cultural awareness or understanding. Dellmuth and Talley refer to social legitimacy in the context of international organisations (2015) and discuss its normative and sociological conceptual meanings. For example, what normative standards should we evaluate institutions' right to rule' or 'to what extent are institutions accepted by the people?' For the purposes of a Pacific screen industry, this research will view social legitimacy using the latter.

Kaime defines cultural legitimacy as denoting 'the quality of conforming with the accepted principles or rules and standards of a particular culture' (2011, p. 325). Kaime defines an essential characteristic of cultural legitimacy as 'authority and reverence derived from internal validity…presumably because it is assumed to bring benefits…'. Although Kaime's definition of cultural legitimacy is positioned relative to regulatory transitions for climate change, its application parallels this research in the potential benefits the screen industry could have in the region. This research also seeks to define ways for screen practitioners and broader screen structures to achieve cultural legitimacy through internal validity rather than an imposed or normative validity. Scene Six will adapt Kaime's understanding of cultural legitimacy to contribute to the explanation of how a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry will facilitate sustainability.

This section noted the position of coloniality that has been assumed in other attempts to define social legitimacy and cultural legitimacy in other literature. While this research has taken some guidance from these definitions, it is important to mention that social and cultural legitimacy provide frameworks under which external practitioners can be guided to operate within when working in the Pacific when applying these to a Pacific lead screen industry. This is the stance of a Pacific screen industry on its perceived social and cultural legitimacy in global screen practice and discussions.

Le Atafa

As in previous Scenes, this scene draws on an image (Image 4, Scene One) created by Papua New Guinean tattoo artist Julia Mageau Gray. Here she has contributed her interpretation of the *atafa* or the frigate bird to embody the composition of a socially and culturally legitimate screen industry. The frigate is another symbol found all over the regional Pacific, as they favour tropical climates. Thus, this bird is a familiar staple of the Pacific with deep cultural significance.

The frigate bird's feet and wings carry the fundamental tenets of a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry: embracing cultural norms which work with local facilitators of change to subvert the western lens. The ultimate indicator of a socially and culturally legitimate screen industry is centred in locally minded infrastructure and personnel. The centrality of this infrastructure is represented in the motif as being supported by the frigate's back as it travels through the region. Locally minded infrastructure is a metaphorical scaffolding for an industry that understands the nuances of the Pacific, the developing nature of screen culture, and the facilitation of screen production within these parameters. I now turn to each of these aspects in greater detail below.

Socially and culturally legitimate lens

Global screen industries generally operate from within western constructs (Mita, 1996). Hollywood in the United States operates the oldest screen industry in the world. It is a global trendsetter in screen and entertainment and a fundamental representation of the global mainstream. As a trendsetter operating from a western country, the prevailing paradigm that international screen industry sits within can stifle the perspectives of diverse communities wanting to participate. For the purposes of this thesis, this dynamic has been identified as a western lens.

The issue of a western lens can seem abstract. In this study, half of my respondents explicitly referred to their struggles in creating space for Pacific screen production that meets Pacific cultural mores. The principles of Fourth World Film previously referred to in this thesis, are designed to decolonise these paradigms and create channels for Indigenous screen and its practices to flourish. In this section, I apply decolonisation principles to the creation of Pacific screen, to understand how subversion of the proverbial 'western lens' propagates a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry. As with the other Scenes, this will be analysed alongside empirical data, providing examples of why subversion is required and how it already occurs. As will be detailed below, this includes the creation of industry that integrates Pacific cultural norms into practice, overlapping the findings of a Pacific centred industry. Thus, this could theoretically include Indigenous story development methods, non-linear narrative structure, and non-traditional distribution methods.

This thesis suggests that this process must be centred on the creation of screen industry that holistically decolonises global screen industry practices to reclaim stories that have occupied space in the Pacific for centuries.

Creative development

In Scene Five, respondents discussed the difficulties associated with western storytelling traditions and structures and how Pacific stories fit into these structures. Compounded with this meeting of sometimes opposing styles, was the competition for funding, whose measure of artistic excellence is often grounded in western storytelling paradigms. I contend that the creative development of a Pacific screen project also greatly benefits from subversion of the western lens. Scene Five mentions that Pacific storytelling methods will not always follow the same structures as traditional western methods. For example, the story *Cousins* by Patricia Grace, and the feature film remake by Briar Grace Smith and Ainsley Gardiner, follow a circular structure rather than a linear structure in keeping with Patricia Grace herself (Dudding, 2021). By undertaking to develop Pacific stories with the removal of a western lens, Pacific practitioners are given the freedom to innovate the stories and how they are developed. This could dismiss the traditional Hollywood writers' room, and replace it with a traditional Pacific form of sharing, telling and performing stories.

> … I'm going through that process right now... I've got a couple of scripts, and I floated a couple of them to the [New Zealand] Film Commission… but I'm wondering – if I go through the Film Commission – it's going to get like, torn to shreds.
>
> **Respondent Dudley Dursley, Sydney (Samoan)**

Respondent Dursley describes an industry custom that I have also experienced in my screen practice. I have also observed this process as an arts administrator in the arts sector. Scene Five documented the struggles associated with procuring funding in the face of inherent funding bias, being the institutional structures that favour and award projects that are familiar, or perceived as traditionally mainstream, over diverse projects with lesser known or utilised themes or storytelling models. At the

very early stages of project development, respondent Dursley unpacks the process by which funding bodies, grant funding to practitioners to develop their projects, and promptly make major changes to the project's story. I have observed processes by which scripts are deconstructed and reconstructed, returning to the practitioner as completely different stories.

Funding is a key demonstration of access to a developed screen industry that enables the creation of screen work. Respondent Dursley's admission questions the agency of Pacific practitioners to create work that is still inherently Pacific when it emerges from this environment. When funding bodies finance a project at any stage of development, there is an expectation that they will see all drafts of the script and exercise authority over its subsequent drafts. Here, the traditional story-telling mechanisms can be enforced using linear narratives and a three-part structure. In Scene Five, I identified respondents who feel funders are starting to understand non-Western storytelling forms when assessing funding applications. The above demonstrates that the reverse still regularly occurs. Yet the inspiration of successful applicants working with traditional industry structures and financiers to create non-traditional screen stories such as *Cousins* (Gardiner & Grace-Smith, 2021) and *Vai* (Arahanga et al., 2021) is focal to understanding the importance of creative story development that is grounded in Pacific culture and wears a Pacific lens.

Production styles

Cultural clashes that can occur in Pacific screen when Western practices are transplanted in the island Pacific have already been alluded to. Respondents to this study found specific styles of productive culturally restrictive but also dismissive of strong social practices in the communities they worked:

> …it is so un-Pacific… I was trying to adapt that framework to Tonga … if I could do it again, I would do it in a much freer sense and a much more collaborative approach with the community I was working with. Yeah. I didn't like the restrictions and the rigid kind of roles...
>
> **Respondent Olympe Maxim, Nuku'alofa (Tongan)**

Respondent Maxim reflects on the rigid culture of screen and how this clashes with Pacific culture and village culture, especially in Maxim's native Tonga. Here, Maxim describes a shooting schedule that required all elements of her eight-to-ten minute vignette to be shot over an 8-hour day. This rigorous and fast-moving shoot was made to ensure crew and cast members were not kept over a regulation day and that the next milestones of the wider shoot could be reached. The project that Maxim discusses was shot in the Pacific, and was funded by the NZFC, thus Aotearoa industry standards and regulations were observed (New Zealand Film Commission, 2021). While this dynamic did not hinder the project from being made, Maxim did not feel that the process was familiar to her, or her community, finally declaring that they would find another way to work in the Pacific, using a Pacific style of production. Maxim also expressed discontent with the idea that a (different) production, shot in a Pacific village, did not feed the local residents, when break time was called for the crew:

> … that's why I love the idea of a Pacific film industry, where you're just given the reigns… and you know when its lunch time, it's not just the crew, it's whoever's around. Yeah like it may seem little, but that's so important… like the community will talk about you. You know they don't know the impact of that! Like this little dumb project that came to our village and didn't even feed us you know, these little things, right?
>
> **Respondent Olympe Maxim, Nuku'alofa (Tongan)**

Respondent Maxim is calling for more of an inclusive, Pacific style of production that would incorporate a more collaborative approach with the local community. Sharing food with the community might seem small in the scale of the production, but it is a recognised inclusive practice that understands that Pacific communities live communally. Given the visitor status of the project in question, Maxim believes not bringing food into the village and not living communally with the village that had permitted the project to be shot was a stark indication of a project that did not understand Pacific cultural values and norms. A more sustainable Pacific screen industry would be mindful of how projects engage with the communities in which they are produced. To this end, a Pacific screen industry could enact production protocols

that reflect this awareness in production and workplace policy. Essentially, Pacific screen projects and Pacific screen industry would operate with a Pacific way of thinking at the forefront.

A useful strategy to support this community engagement would be to recruit, and then upskill local fixers or facilitators. Local fixers or facilitators, as I refer to them in this study, are comparable to a production assistant or concierge on island. Facilitators assist in the organisation of logistics prior to the arrival of a production in country. In this study, I found that the role of local facilitator has been prioritised for development in an *ad hoc* manner in the Pacific. The role, vested in people with local knowledge, cannot be sourced from foreign crew. There is, however, a need for transnational Pacific screen productions to prioritise the upskilling of local facilitators to work on their productions. Respondent Brown refers to this:

> … We've trained up a lot of good local fixers now. Which is the best pathway to filming on island is to train up someone to be a local fixer, pay them a decent rate and then those budget lines for local fixers should be what you're paying…
>
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

Producers subverting a western lens

Having Pacific people in producer roles was identified as crucial to the decolonisation of screen practice for Pacific practitioners. By continuing to vest power with the producer (Glossary of terms), Pacific screen currently still follows western processes, but intends to use these processes to subvert the western lens. My experience in Australian industry funding models is similar. Australian broadcasters do not consider pitching projects that have creatives taking on multiple roles to be feasible. Australian funders also prefer to have a producer attached to the project at development stages regarding the NZFC.

The US 'showrunner' model (Blakey, 2017) is finding traction in Australia and Aotearoa. This model places the power of veto on logistics and creativity in the hands of one person. A writer/director/producer is essentially given the role of creator or show runner. Though they may work in tandem with others to see the

project through all stages, this format is well used. In both models, producers hold a large amount of responsibility and power in the way that the story is eventually told.

For Pacific storytellers, the importance of having a Pacific person hold the intellectual property of the project is paramount. Screen practitioners face difficulties in dealing with funders that may not understand Pacific stories and thus attempt to control the narrative and its development. This suggests that having Pacific producers would greatly enhance the success of Pacific screen.

Pacific screen as a regional industry

Global screen industries currently operate within national boundaries. This practice begins in Hollywood, which has been referenced as the oldest international screen industry, and has been echoed in screen industries since (Bollywood in India, Cinema of China in China, Kdramas in Korea, Jdramas in Japan, Nollywood in Nigeria).

The Pacific's geopolitical strategies and tendency towards regionalism (Hau'ofa, 1994; Mara, 1997; Lawson, 2010), has been utilised in this thesis to posit the possibility of a regional screen industry. Here, I theorise that a screen industry that operates regionally in the Pacific, will be more facilitative of Pacific screen practice and industry. In the same way that a regional approach has broadened the Pacific voice in international conversations on climate and security Former president of Kiribati Anote Tong referred to this in an interview for the Pacific Wayfinder podcast, disclosing his experiences speaking in the international arena about climate change, compared to the climate discussion when he was a part of a regional voice.

> Even when the science was not clear, when I first heard any possibility that climate change would result in a marginal degree sea level rise it was really a matter of concern, especially for countries like Kiribati, on the very frontline of climate change. So, any suggestion there would be a rise in sea level, would be a serious security issue for us. So during my very first delivery at the UN gen assembly I made reference to that. It was interesting, because I was alone to do that… very fortunately in the following years other Pacific leaders began to see the real ramifications of what climate change would mean for their communities, and so then I guess the region we started pushing as a region in a consolidated fashion this issue at the international level…

(His Excellency Anote Tong, Pacific Wayfinder podcast, August 2021)

Undertaking to create a screen industry that is regional in its distribution and contributes another funding pool to potential national screen funds, is a definite subversion of the traditional models of screen practice. It is also an empowering approach to an expensive industry, that has little to no content from the Pacific.

The idea of a 'traditional' model of screen industry is contestable. As industries go, screen is a fairly innovative industry that has found countless different ways to fund and build its infrastructure around the globe. By installing structures that allow Pacific screen networks to interact regionally, with funding to be sourced centrally in the region and a distribution chain that is inclusive of the Pacific, this study theorises the various ways in which Pacific screen industry can subvert the broader western lens that global screen industry currently sits within.

Socially and culturally normative

In this study, almost half of my respondents (48%) identified culture as an obstacle for screen production in the Pacific. A select few (7%) identified issues with language. Interestingly, there were cultural or language-based factors that were nominated by interview respondents as enablers of Pacific screen production. In contrast to the economic barriers and enablers nominated in Scene Five, cultural and language-based barriers are non-tangible obstacles, with completely different solutions. The Pacific has well documented cultural norms and traditions, that affect day to day life. The social and cultural barriers articulated by respondents were varied. It should be noted that while this section broadly speaks about embracing Pacific cultural norms, the diversity of the region's cultures cannot be embraced or understood through a solitary or individual Pacific country. Rather, this section acknowledges that a screen industry created with a willingness to embrace the diversity of cultural norms in the Pacific is crucial to ongoing success.

Village culture

Respondents considered that culture has both negative and positive impacts on their screen productions. Screen practitioners need to navigate socio-cultural norms in the Pacific, including when they converge with westernised screen norms. The issues or benefits that could arise from this interaction are wide ranging. They could include issues of gender, age, religion and social standing. This section will draw on the experiences of respondents to interviews, to understand how day to day culture in the Pacific affects the success or failure of screen production.

Solomon Island practitioner Rowena Ravenclaw stressed the difficulties they experienced, when interacting with men in villages.

> Apart from that for women it's quite challenging because if you're trying to do an interview, a man won't want to be interviewed by a female.
>
> **Respondent Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

The incompatibility of Solomon *kastom* with the search for equality between men and women is well documented in academic research (Douglas, 2003; George, 2012; Jolly, 2000; McDougall, 2014). Cox (2017) unpacks this dynamic further by analysing woman led initiatives in North Vella Lavella, Solomon Islands, and how the women who lead these initiatives navigate the gender dynamics of the village. This dynamic is similar to that which is conveyed by respondent Ravenclaw when she describes a village dynamic whereby women, especially young Pacific women, consider socio-cultural norms to be prohibitive to their work in screen production, especially where close contact with men is required. For the most part, such contact with men who are not family members is deemed inappropriate.

This observation of culture and gender dynamics in the Solomon Islands highlights the tenuous and nuanced environment within which screen practitioners, both Pacific and non-Pacific, operate inside of, when shooting in the region. Practitioners are required to traverse both national and village cultures, and navigate a wide diversity of relationships within those communities. To add to this, practitioners are also simultaneously finding their way through these relationships and socio-cultural norms using technology and equipment that is often foreign to those being captured.

This dynamic is heightened when interacting with village elders or chiefs. The cultural protocols involved in approaching community elders are complex in all Pacific communities. In developed screen industries location clearances are required to record video and audio on any property or piece of land. In the Pacific, these clearances would be acquired through local chiefs and village councils. This process does not require the same level of paperwork; however, it could involve a monetary fee or financial contributions to the village, similar to the economic contributions of offshore projects to Pacific economies as outlined in Scene Five. The impetus behind both types of contributions is the same.

> When you're coming around with a camera, they're going to be like 'oh they have lots of money …', something like that. But it's very challenging, then they won't want to share their story.
> **Respondent Rowena Ravenclaw, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Respondent Ravenclaw touches on cultural issues that were also raised by respondents in Tonga and Samoa. In places where screen culture is not recognisable, previous experiences with much bigger offshore projects will colour the response of locals to independent Pacific projects that approach them for participation. The assumption of financial attachment is also common. Respondent Maxim previously referred to the culture of reciprocity and communal living that occurs in Tonga and can occur throughout the Pacific. Maxim also describes a way that non-Pacific projects can operate in Pacific communities inclusively and in acknowledgement of local culture and protocols, for example, by acknowledging the village on whose customary land filming is occurring.

Outside of cultural protocols, Pacific screen practitioners navigate the effect of local community, on the meeting of production deadlines (see Appendix A). In countries with undeveloped screen industry, communities have little understanding of screen production and the associated, often challenging time constraints. Locals may work to their own schedules, or sometimes do something completely different to what was discussed in pre-production. These dynamics will affect production timelines.

Respondent Riddle emphasises the difficulties of person-to-person interaction while organising to shoot in the island Pacific:

> …one of the challenges that we identified while doing the project and it also prolonged the production was like, communities have their own timing. Like we scheduled our own timing and we said we wanted to schedule that day and when we went in, they said 'oh the director they said that you cannot shoot here you will have to wait for one week or two weeks before you come back'.
>
> **Respondent Delphi Riddle, Papua New Guinea (Papua New Guinean)**

Riddle notes the delays can occur when working with Pacific communities which effect production timelines. Local practitioners would not only understand the lax time standards on island; but also have local relationships and trust. Despite this, the nuances of culture can still affect projected timelines for production.

In order to effectively plan a shoot, a First Assistant Director (First AD) is required to juggle a number of factors. They complete location permits from councils to shoot on roads, and check the availability of cast and crew, locations, vehicles, studio time, even animals and children. For example, in Australia, a child under the age of 15 cannot work on a set longer than 6 hours and no longer than 30 minutes at a time (New South Wales, Office of the Children's Guardian, 2022). These limitations make working with children, quite restrictive when scheduling screen production. The above examples are noted to illustrate the complexity of planning required for any screen production. Applying this to the island Pacific, a First AD could finalise a schedule and distribute it to cast and crew. In the experience of respondents to this research, village communities involved could change their own plans without notifying the production, which could delay or even shut the production down.

To add, the Pacific has extensive history with ethnographic documentaries (Mawyer, 1998). The experience of many Pacific communities is that such documentaries take from the Pacific rather than work in conjunction with or give anything back, further solidifying the perception of screen and film as external or colonial. This dynamic has been nominated by respondents to this study as a barrier for local practitioners. This works in two ways.

The first is through any lack of trust, which can often be palpable. The second is associated with the neo-colonial presence of screen in the Pacific as discussed in Scenes One, Two and Five. This is the presence of big budget Hollywood productions or offshore television productions in the Pacific. In the wake of these productions, respondents identified that local understanding of screen, is that there is a wealth of money available.

> … because filming is very new in the Solomon Islands, people are still coming to terms with what you can deliver… I don't blame them, when you want to go out to the village and most of the time they want to ask for money from you and stuff like that, because there are some other filmmakers who have been there who are not from the Solomon Islands and they have taken the stories away without showing what the end product looks like.
>
> **Respondent Gabrielle Delacour, Solomon Islands (Solomon)**

Respondent Delacour confirms the theory that neo-colonial screen practices create barriers for local practitioners to successfully produce their work in the island Pacific. Delacour's response confirms the struggles the Pacific has with trusting screen practitioners, describing a timidness in the Pacific to trust people with cameras.

> The barriers for filming in the islands, the barriers for us, is perception. And it's different on every island but in Samoa for example, there's often this big perception that because – most of the filming on the island has been done by big American companies… So, they come in … and they pay all this money and you know they've set this precedent this expectation about the cost factor around filming. You know and some of its great … But then where it stings us that when we go in ourselves to film stuff and then they try to apply all those rates to us…
>
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Aotearoa (Samoan)**

Respondent Brown reiterates the effect of offshore production practices on local practitioners in reference to Samoa. Below respondent Weasley remarks on similar dynamics in Fiji for transnational practitioners who enter the country to shoot.

> Sure yeah its really interesting because we were really like, outsiders coming in we needed to really get our contacts with people on the ground right, because things move in a different way and local knowledge is always the best in those situations… some of the issues that we may have encountered, may have come out of a misunderstanding of how things work and a lack of knowledge about where to find things… having your community at home… probably paramount to actually getting things done properly you know… if you don't have that I think we would've been stuffed.
>
> **Respondent Molly Weasley, Australia (Fijian)**

Respondent Weasley stresses how cultural and linguistic barriers are also encountered by transnational practitioners when they travel to their native islands for screen production. While they are native to the country, they are still outsiders and thus need to do some of the work required of non-Pacific practitioners, to ensure they mitigate barriers of trust and perception in their native country. Respondent Umbridge reinforces all of the possible cultural barriers named in this section, stressing the need for screen practitioners to be aware.

> Filming in Samoa – the barriers, *ola ni* barriers. I think filming in Samoa is not like filming anywhere else because… if you want to film around the island – because we don't have a film commission, we don't have a film office – you basically have to find a producer or a local person who can help you do those things, speaks the language… once you get 15 minutes outside of Apia, it's mostly Samoan or predominantly Samoan (speaking). Having an awareness of culture - not just Samoan culture but local culture, and how it works locally. I know a lot of frustrations that people who come from overseas have had are – you know this thing with Samoans where they say one thing but they do

> something else. Or you know, they don't answer their phones they just you know they stop communicating.
>
> **Respondent Dolores Umbridge, Apia, Samoa**

Respondent Umbridge reinforces all the points made about cultural dynamics made in this section. By acknowledging the sociocultural difficulties associated with screen production in the island Pacific, this section understands how these factors can inhibit the success of the screen sector at the scale that currently exists. Embracing socio-cultural norms and innovating channels and ways that enable screen production to comprehensively function in a Pacific context, is critical for a social and culturally legitimate and sustainable Pacific screen industry.

Normalising screen careers

In transnational communities, Pacific practitioners experience different cultural stigmas that translate to the island Pacific. These stigmas are attached to stereotypes of creative practice as viable careers in western societies. In Australia, work in arts and culture sectors is not associated with financial achievement or stability, especially if you are choosing creative practice, over administration. This stigma can be a deterrent for many people to engage with screen as a potential career (Bennett, 2009). For Pacific practitioners in Australia, Aotearoa and the United States, the undervaluing of creative sectors is experienced from government level down, with arts and culture historically underfinanced by governments (Australia Council for the Arts, 2022; Bowley, 2021).

This dynamic has been acknowledged anecdotally en masse by Pacific people in transnational communities. This community is inclusive of so many individuals I inherently see as artists, or creative practitioners. Despite their creative talent, they often have a primary job that supplements them financially; allowing their families the safety of a visible career trajectory and/or steady income. These careers can include policy-making, administration, project management etc. Their creative works become their secondary occupation or 'side-hustle' in this capacity. This work is what the person is more passionate about and dedicates more of themselves to.

Pacific cultures are full of performance and creativity. As elements of day-to-day Pacific life, performance and creativity are not aspirational career choices. The Pacific migration story (Cobley, 2013) is a key factor in this discussion, as younger generations in transnational communities anecdotally tell it. Pacific elders did not travel from their islands and struggle consistently in a new country for their children or their children's children, only to choose career paths that perpetuate that struggle with no guarantee of financial success. This dynamic can deter aspiring practitioners from pursuing the production of their stories, or even careers in screen, despite having developed infrastructure available to them. While these cultural barriers are not practiced norms, they are dynamics in Pacific communities that require consideration when structuring industry.

> Yeah, I mean I think that's a good point. When I started my career um, look all my family are storytellers. They're storytellers in song, they're storytellers in oral storytelling, but none of them feel as though writing is an actual profession… I feel as though parents now are a little bit more open minded about it, but education is number one so creativity is a tricky one. You can do it as a passion and if you have some success great, but at the end of the day, they still want you to be the doctor, and I think that's more intrinsic in the islands.
>
> **Respondent Barty Crouch, Sydney (Kuki Airani/Samoan)**

Respondent Crouch considers the cultural obstacles that transnational Pacific screen practitioners experience at home. The stigma attached to cultural sectors and the likelihood of financial success and stability is often a key barrier to aspiring screen practitioners seriously entertaining the development of any potential story ideas. This dynamic is not unknown to the arts sector. The dismissal of the arts, culture and the creative industries by governments, contributes to a lack of support for these practitioners in many communities. Being a talented artist is no guarantee of stability and financial independence for young people, thus parents are known not to support careers in these sectors. Discussions I have had with Pacific practitioners in these positions echo the thoughts of respondent Crouch. While Pacific cultures are full of

performance and creativity, these are not the professions that our elders are expecting of us.

> So that's a conversation that has always popped up. 'I'll do it but once it stops being fun, I'm not going to do it'. But in that same sense I also think that – they'll do it for fun because they're doing it for free. The majority of the time. There is no viable path for filmmakers to make money here in [Salt Lake City]. That is apparent to a lot of Pacific Islanders, so there's never an opportunity.
>
> **Respondent Moaning Myrtle, Salt Lake City (Samoan)**

Respondent Myrtle examines how Pacific screen practitioners in Salt Lake City, designate their screen projects as secondary to their day-to-day jobs, going as far as to call it a hobby. While this does not actually inhibit or preclude the production of Pacific screen projects in transnational communities, it significantly prevents skills development, networking and capacity building if most participating in screen practice are transitionary or seasonal. The responses of screen practitioners in transnational communities revealed multi-layered complexities underlying cultural barriers to screen production. Respondent Pince acknowledges a Pacific tendency towards humility that is not considered useful in the growth of Pacific screen industry.

> … it's the humility that's a double-edged sword. I think there comes a point where Pacific Islanders are just so humble and you know just culturally that's just how our culture is, but getting over that hump in selling your product and pitching your product and even considering yourself a filmmaker… that goes hand in hand with the money and asking for money … there's just a huge gap between the way that [the] Pacific Island filmmaking community is – in Hawai‘i anyways – and then jumping over and seeing just the way it's done on the mainland and in Sundance…
>
> **Respondent Irma Pince, Los Angeles (Samoan/Kanaka Maoli)**

It is presumed in respondent Pince's answer, that success in mainstream screen industry requires a level of self-promotion and acclaim. These are both individualistic

qualities not prioritised in communal Pacific societies. Humility and respect are cornerstones of culture throughout the Pacific (Efi, 2018). The by-product of this is often soft-spoken young people. In the western context of screen industry, such humility can affect a practitioner's proficiency in marketing their work, or pitching work to potential cast, crew and producers. The eventual distribution of work is also disadvantaged by key creatives who cannot push and promote the final product to distribution companies and public relations agents. These cultural dynamics play out differently in the island Pacific. While island communities similarly, do not understand what value screen careers could contribute to society, this is partly owed to the lack of infrastructure or domestic examples of practice.

The Pacific region is rich in diverse cultures and languages. The embrace of Pacific cultural norms required for local legitimacy must also therefore reflect this diversity. However, this diversity can be difficult to contain and can create production issues when it converges with the global screen industry's western lens. This section proposes the importance of a screen industry that embraces the nuances and quirks of Pacific culture to reflect that culture back to the Pacific and the wider world. Working with an industry that embraces cultural norms presents an opportunity to decolonise screen production processes, creating inclusive work practices. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, having a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry somewhat overlaps with the Pacific centred screen industry of Scene Four. Facilitating the training and mentoring of practitioners, encouraging the employment of localised crew and the developing of policy to create these structures, the existent screen network will eventually be bolstered to effectively adapt to current social and cultural norms in the region.

> … it's not taught at school. The only school that taught drama was Samoa College when I was there. They were teaching Shakespeare … Samoa College was doing drama… but not every school does it… once it gets taught and developed, people will see it as a new opportunity. They don't have to go play rugby... And some people don't believe, parents don't believe it's an avenue for their kids, like arts is not an avenue.
>
> **Respondent Theodore Nott, Wellington (Samoan)**

Respondent Nott makes two important points regarding the lack of education and training in arts and culture in Samoa. The first is that with ongoing teaching of arts and culture in schools, communities will see the benefit; however, commitment and investment in these sectors need to be made in earnest. The second point is that often parents do not value the arts and culture sector as a viable career option for their children. While respondent Nott does not refer to screen specifically, screen culture is a function of cultural and creative industries, and thus falls under this analysis.

Language

As already noted, a small selection (7%) of respondents in this study pinpointed language barriers as a key obstacle to the success of their projects. This low proportion implies that language may not need to be a consideration for the creation of a socially and culturally legitimate regional industry. Despite this, in order to effectively achieve cultural legitimacy, this study posits that each national screen industry within the wider regional framework need to speak its local dialect.

There is a statistically higher chance of local Indigenous practitioners speaking their local languages as opposed to their non-Pacific counterparts. Having a linguistic advantage would largely enable the success of screen production in the island Pacific. Practitioners will be able to effectively communicate with service providers, actors and crew. They can also effectively understand the nuances of local languages, and perhaps know how to navigate underlying meanings of phrases and colloquialisms. By acknowledging these dynamics in my own practice, this research recognises the cultural deficits that language capabilities fill in Pacific screen.

> … when I was directing, I was directing in Tongan. And so, it was very … I had a foreign film crew and I was having to direct in English and then revert back into Tongan. It kind of impacted my creative energy. It really did… it took up more time and my frustration was going up and down.
> **Respondent Olympe Maxim, Tonga (Tongan)**

Respondent Maxim notes the logistical difficulties in directing a multilingual cast and crew and how moving between Tongan and English (to accommodate crew that had been flown from Aotearoa) had an impact on their creative flow. This is a prime example of the importance of language in a successful and sustainable screen industry. Not only is language a key in obtaining cultural legitimacy, it is also key to sustainability for Pacific screen industry. The visibility of these languages both behind and in front of the camera, is focal to the representation of the Pacific that is serviced by sustainable Pacific screen industry (Scene Two).

In the example given by respondent Maxim, the value of locally sourced and trained crew is also apparent. In order to cultivate such crew, this research has addressed the need for the development of training and mentoring programs that provide tuition for such crew, as mentioned in Scene Four. The social and cultural legitimacy of such structures lies in the development of a screen industry that Pacific countries and the region can take active ownership of. Respondent Umbridge discusses the importance of using local languages in produced work.

> You're already speaking to a minority of people in terms of your audience, you know that's who you specifically want to relate to a story. And then the bigger things would be the language barrier. You know the ability to relate something to the language it's for, you know? When the mainstream audience is predominantly English speaking and you have to find a way to relay this deep and meaningful and spiritual message, that makes a hell of a lot of sense in your own language but requires like 50 more words in their language or something like that…
>
> **Respondent Dolores Umbridge, Samoa (Samoan)**

Umbridge's statement underscores the difficulties associated with language in both the logistics of shooting and translation of Pacific stories and their languages to mainstream audiences. Umbridge's concerns with regard to language align with the concept of an audience for individual Pacific screen projects, but also as a part of the wider Pacific screen industry structure, as highlighted in Scene Five.

This thesis has already hypothesised the importance of developing an audience for Pacific screen work, for the economic sustainability of industry. The ongoing audience engagement with Pacific culture, language and stories outlined in this Scene signifies the growing social and cultural legitimacy of screen industry. This is true in both local Pacific communities and global screen discourse. Pacific screen's current positionality in the global mainstream was noted in Scene One and Scene Two. It is important to question how this positionality and popularity will translate on screen if and when Pacific stories in language become as commonplace as the high-powered Pacific Islanders who currently exhibit their Pacific-ness on international platforms. By understanding the ways in which language has been used to communicate to the Pacific audience and then the wider global audience, this research reinforces the importance of language in the social and cultural legitimacy of a Pacific screen industry. Would a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry facilitate this?

When considering language, there is also a need for any screen industry to recognise that the Pacific is wildly diverse. In Papua New Guinea alone, over 850 languages and dialects occur. For Pacific screen to be socially and culturally legitimate, the industry would need to be aware of these nuances of language, and be willing to work within these nuances to create cohesive regional screen industry structures.

Socially and culturally legitimate change makers

Social and cultural legitimacy is closely linked to authenticity in this thesis. Authenticity in the screen industry can become the focal point of the positive or negative reception of screen content. When discussing the importance of authentic representation in historical film, Frey defines authenticity as a 'realistic historical experience, an effective suspension of temporal-spatial disbelief' (2018). This thesis aggregates authenticity with representation. Achievement of a socially and culturally legitimate screen industry assumes effective and authentic visual representation that incorporates the nuances of Pacific culture into production practices and values. This section will analyse empirical data, to understand how local facilitators and Pacific

producers contribute to the building of this authenticity, and associated social and cultural legitimacy through their roles in the screen production process.

As mentioned in Scene Four, 'local facilitators are often utilised by offshore screen productions shooting in the Pacific. In this thesis, a producer has been described as one of the few people who will see a project through from the beginning to end, and will source funding to ensure that the project is able to happen. Local facilitators and Pacific producers are in effect, advocates for screen production in the Pacific. This scene will examine ways that the local facilitator can be transformed into the Pacific producer. This chapter argues that local facilitators and Pacific producer advocacy engineers the momentum and structures needed to build a screen industry with social and cultural legitimacy to propagate sustainability.

Such is the position of Pinxit-Gregg (2021) in relation to creative producers curating and managing arts festivals. Here Pinxit-Gregg emphasises an 'in between' space (2021, p. 47) occupied by transdisciplinary creative producers. In this space, creative producers retain multiple hats and curate across multiple artistic genres and disciplines to create arts-based festivals and uphold festival practice all over Australia. Similar to the way that this research is approached using a 'su'ifefiloi' method of compilation, creative producers in the creative sector employ a transdisciplinary approach. They curate across multiple creative disciplines to produce festivals, of which each individual element could operate effectively in isolation, as well as part of the whole.

In this section, I propose a similar eclectic skill set for Pacific producers. Pacific producers must be multiskilled practitioners, willing to cultivate the 'in-between' space amidst culture and screen industry in the Pacific. This may seem to be in contrast to the theorising of Scene Four, where the development of a diversely skilled work force is the focus of ensuring a Pacific centred industry and sustainability. However, in focusing on local facilitators and the necessary but still emerging potential transformation of these resources to producers, this section acknowledges the need for architects of industry who can negotiate all aspects of the industry. These are people who have a sound understanding of most parts of the production process and most sectors of the industry, that is, people who are able to see projects throughout from the beginning to the end. This section identifies the

importance of such people in consulting with governments on policy development, in the development of a slate of Pacific screen work, and in the growth of programs and structures that build that are backed by industry knowledge and a keen awareness of the Pacific. In such expansion, this section demonstrates the opportunities to develop social and cultural legitimacy, as well as the economic sustainability potential open to Pacific screen industry facilitators willing to expand their knowledge and understanding of the industry.

Local facilitators

Local facilitators have been nominated in this thesis as one of the few crew roles that Pacific practitioners are knowingly engaging with, when collaborating with the wider international screen community. In my own work, I have observed the significance of locals who have an understanding of screen, and more importantly have an understanding of the lay of the land.

In Fiji, Dave Hotchin, head of Guru Media Fiji Ltd, has been described as a 'one-man band'. Hotchin has extensive experience in screen production, able to operate camera, sound and edit. He is also well utilised by offshore productions, in facilitating communication with local communities and ensuring location permissions are acquired, for shooting on location and any other production needs ahead shootings. In the Solomon Islands, Anouk Ride and Adilah Dolaiano, head Sukwadi Media and regularly work with businesses and government agencies in producing their content needs. While there are many local facilitators in French Polynesia, I have observed the work of Are Raimbault in Tahiti, working with Tikilounge Productions to produce episodes of *Fresh TV*.

Image 17. Are Raimbault working with Tongan producer/director Vea Mafile'o on a shoot at the Pape'ete Markets for Fresh TV

These local facilitators are a few of many examples available throughout the Pacific. The lack of industry infrastructure and sometimes screen networks in their Pacific locations, necessitate proficiency across multiple screen production skills. As with respondent Tonks' description of Dave Hotchin in Fiji, local facilitators usually understand camera use and sound recording. Despite having this technical knowledge, they can also organise all the administrative requirements of a shoot, to go into secondary and tertiary stages of production.

In interviews, exactly half (50%) of respondents identified people on island with skill in screen production as an enabler of their work. While the skills they pinpointed were not always those of the local facilitator, some did acknowledge this work.

> Yeah Nonga and Josh, yeah they’re really good and they are pretty on to it. But they’re kind of few and far between you know. And they're hungry, like actually hungry for stuff.
>
> **Respondent Lily Potter, Auckland (Tongan)**

Respondent Potter directly names Tongan content producers Nonga Pulu and Joshua Savieti of 'Tutu on the Beach', when discussing local facilitators and crew in

Tonga. In a similar fashion to Hotchin and Sukwadi Media in the Solomon Islands, Pulu and Savieti are multiskilled practitioners. They operate camera and sound, they edit their own videos together, and often act in the commercials they are commissioned to create. I was privileged to observe their work when in Nuku'alofa during the 2019 Nuku'alofa Film Festival as part of my doctoral research. Despite an obvious ability to produce, their multifaceted skillset is considered a by-product of the work the practitioners do to create their projects. As the most visible of a very scant network of practitioners on island, Pulu and Savieti produce through necessity, and transfer this skill to the facilitation of offshore projects, when asked.

There is a need for further analysis of the local facilitator, under the lens of political economy. Broadly, the development of local facilitators is advantageous to individual practitioners. In earlier chapters the availability of local facilitators was also nominated as advantageous to offshore productions, shooting on island. This fits the current model of screen industry operating throughout the Pacific region. With the level of importance allocated to local facilitators by respondent Brown, there is a risk of overlooking the development of a diverse screen work force, that is, other departments of screen production (camera, editing, sound), which is focal to the development of Pacific centred industry in Scene Four. Local facilitators are important for the empowering of socially and culturally legitimate screen industry emerging in the Pacific. Local facilitators currently act as a bridge between local knowledge and screen knowledge in the Pacific. They possess the skill to create screen products and the local knowledge to create these with a social and cultural awareness of the Pacific. This section posits that these people could also be the practitioners to build sustainability by taking these facets of knowledge and building screen industry structures.

One of these structures is locally focused skill building in all levels of crew which is pivotal to ensuring sustainability. If local facilitators continue to be the focus of development, the film industry in the Pacific exists predominantly to service the global screen industry, rather than the interests of the Pacific. This industry directs finance back to the global north, while using the resources of the global south. However, the success of local facilitators within the global industry can create positive feedback that benefits the Pacific. Respondent Tonks mentions local facilitators in Fiji again, however, notes the importance of acknowledging their skill

and their work by giving them roles as Heads of Departments in the screen production process.

> Yeah so, she had been casting quite a bit on films over there and …she was amazing … all the kids that came to my audition she knew all the parents. If she didn't know the parents, she knew someone who knew the parents I wouldn't have had that on my own there, that's the difference. That's what you learn really quickly. You have your on-ground crew and you have them surround you and you be really good to them… They're not just people, like you give them the big jobs… Like Dave was in charge of, he ended up doing locations and ADR, he wasn't assisting them with locations he was… in charge of everything that was going on there. Eileen was in charge of my casting. In the end she was on set chaperoning. She organised the big bus from the Mormon Church, the 18-seater to go around and pick up everyone in the mornings, I mean she was amazing. Her kids came and AD'd on it for me.
>
> **Respondent Nymphadora Tonks, Auckland (Fijian)**

The facilitators to which Respondent Tonks refers were involved in pre-production and the organisation of her shoot ahead of scheduled production: Hotchins, who had assisted with securing locations in the leadup to production, became head of locations; and 'Eileen' who assisted in casting, especially that of child actors. During the shoot Eileen was put in charge of all child cast members. By Tonks' admission, having these people working on the project in pre-production was invaluable to its success. When the project went into production however, these facilitators took on higher-level production roles.

When placed alongside each other both Brown and Tonks' approaches to the function of the local facilitator will render a model that engenders social and cultural legitimacy in Pacific screen. Browns' approach is to cultivate local facilitators to work with offshore productions and pay them at the industry rates of that productions country of origin, and then upskill them in other parts of production, the shoot. This ensures the growth of Indigenous employment and ownership in more production departments, and the social and cultural legitimacy of community participation and buy in as an ultimate outcome. Tonks' approach acknowledges that local facilitators

often bring with them a wealth of skill. To this end, Tonks enlisted their local facilitators into head of department roles, essentially extending the profile of these people, and legitimising their practice. By analysing the role of the producer, as found in interview data in the next section, I will build a case for the importance of local facilitators in the construction of socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry.

Producers

Despite the prevalence of local facilitators, at present, producers are scarce in any Pacific community. I have had multiple conversations within the Pacific screen community about the dire need for more Pacific producers. These discussions happen in transnational communities and in the island Pacific, with differing points of view. This need for producers, occurs for two reasons.

The first lies in the legal ownership of the intellectual property of Pacific screen work. This ownership lies with the producer in mainstream screen industry practices. In contrast, this thesis has recognised the importance, not only of Pacific storytelling, but also of Pacific story sovereignty. That is retaining the legal rights to intellectual property of a screen project, to ensure that these stories are Pacific owned and lead, another facet of ensuring that Pacific screen culture contributes to the canon of Pacific cultural artefacts and also the sustainability of Pacific screen industry.

The second reason to continue cultivating Pacific producers, lies in the importance of a practitioners who are aware of the nuances of Pacific culture and the diversity of Pacific communities. Navigating these complexities, as demonstrated by the pervasiveness of the local facilitator in current screen practice, is made easier, when navigated by a Pacific person. Despite the growth in local facilitators, a shortage of Pacific producers continues to exist. In this section, I will navigate what possibilities avail in upskilling local facilitators to be producers. I will also interrogate empirical data to understand the benefit of Pacific producers to the social and cultural legitimacy of Pacific screen industry.

> where the bottle neck is for us is with producers so we need more people to enable those ideas, find the pathways to make them happen. I'm a producer

> by proxy. I had to be one because otherwise I couldn't make the work that I wanted to make happen. But it's not a job I would say I wanted to do. I mean it's not one I can say I particularly enjoy; I mean I want to direct stuff but you know we need people to be producing, you know that's the thing. We need to find more of those people who want to do that job and have the skillset.
>
> **Respondent Lavender Brown, Auckland (Samoan)**

As illustrated, local facilitators in Pacific countries often come to productions with the foundational skills of a producer. They have strong networks, an ability to rally these networks to facilitate screen production, they are often creatively inclined; and are strong administrators. The role of the producer is much more involved than that of a local facilitator. The producer finds funding to produce all aspects of the work, through creative development, to pre-production, production, post production and distribution. They will source the crew for the shoot and ensure all members are paid. In distribution, they will find the company, broadcaster or appropriate channels to disseminate the project to its audience. A producer could be a logical next step for a local facilitator, especially in the Pacific where someone with robust local networks and knowledge could transfer these assets to fundamentally manage a screen project from beginning to end.

While this section's focus on uncovering pathways to create a pipeline of Pacific producers, also requires an understanding why there is a lack of Pacific producers at present. Auto-ethnographic evidence has demonstrated there is a tendency in creative communities, to evade the administrative work involved in creativity. The Pacific creative community is no different. In my time as a producer, I have tapped Pacific practitioners who I think have the skill and potential to be effective producers. In these conversations I have not encountered a Pacific practitioner who was willing to commit themselves to cultivating the majority of their practice to be producer oriented, choosing to pursue development as writers or directors. Even respondent Brown admits her status as a producer is 'by proxy'; that is, she is a producer by necessity, as there are no other Pacific producers available to undertake the work.

In island-based screen communities, some writer/directors will produce their projects without acknowledging this aspect of their work. In transnational communities,

Pacific writers/directors feel forced to work with non-Pacific producers because of a lack of options in the Pacific community, again being faced with issues of story sovereignty. The consequence is that there is a dearth of Pacific producers available to facilitate an assembly of Pacific projects rising to a superior quality, and with an understanding of social and cultural influences. Where Pacific producers have been present, the effect of projects on the growth in Pacific screen practice is self-evident.

In Aotearoa, Pacific producers have contributed to structural change that has had ongoing effects throughout the region. The creation of staples in Aotearoa's Pacific television programming such as *Tagata Pasifika* (Stehlin, 1987-), *Pacific Beat St* (Wolfgramm, 2004-2007) and *Fresh TV* (McGillis, 2011-) have perpetuated the visibility of Pacific stories and practitioners in Aotearoa. Producers of these works have also created networks of Pacific practitioners, who continue the work of Pacific storytelling and screen production. All of the above shows were primarily or eventually engineered by Pacific production companies and producers. *Tagata Pasifika* through Sunpix, currently directed by Ngaire Fuata (Rotuman) and Stephen Stehlin (Samoan). *Pacific Beat St,* was created by Stan Wolfgramm's (Tongan/Kuki Airani) Drum Productions. *Fresh TV* is produced by the Lisa Taouma (Samoan) directed Tikilounge Productions. These shows all feature in the genealogy of projects such as *Three Wise Cousins* (Vaiaoga-Ioasa, 2015), and *For My Father's Kingdom* (Mafile'o & Tauamiti, 2019).

In Tonga the founding of the Nuku'alofa Film Festival (2015) illustrates the convergence of Pinxit-Gregg's (2021) assertions, of the importance of creative producers in building festivals and key cultural structures. Nuku'alofa Film Festival was initiated by Tongan writer/director/producer Vea Mafile'o, and Samoan director/producer/ cinematographer Jeremiah Tau'amiti. Both Aotearoa based screen practitioners, the two produced a series of short films in Tonga in 2015. In doing so the pair worked with aspiring local practitioners. Because of the local collaboration, they sought opportunities to screen these works to the community, and founded the Nuku'alofa Film Festival. The festival has continued to showcase films since, with the most recent held in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The seeds of advocacy, started by Mafile'o and Tau'amiti, continue to grow through capacity building activities, the production of more local screen content, and the general growth of the annual festival program.

> Nuku'alofa's Film Festival started back in 2015. They came to Tonga to film three myths. Two of them were traditional Tongan and the other one was Samoan, so I volunteered and then after they filmed everything they took it back to NZ and edited it. They wanted to show it to the local community because there were a lot of local people that contributed to the making of the volunteering and bringing their mats and everything. Anyway, so we decided to set up the film festival so that we can show these films and also show four other locally made short films and we opened the film festival in 2015 and we had it ever since then
>
> **Respondent Susan Bones, Sydney (Tongan)**

As a Pacific producer, I can attest to the importance of cultivating these roles in the Pacific screen community. Respondent Chang acknowledges that practitioners do nonspecialised in specific crew roles on Guåhan. In doing so she also identifies that there are no skilled producers, or people who can call themselves producers.

> …in Guam, you don't have a specialised sound person you don't have someone who specialises. Like very few people can call themselves producers
>
> **Cho Chang, Guåhan (CHamoru)**

An important thing to note in respondent Chang's admission, is the recognition that specialisation is also absent on Guåhan, which repeats the findings of Scene Four. Screen practitioners in the Pacific currently trend towards wearing 'multiple hats' and being a 'one-man band'. While this is impressive work and it facilitates the production of Pacific screen work in the short term, I theorise that the prevalence of this practice is not beneficial to the search for sustainability. By this token, specialisation of Pacific producers is focal, as is the specialisation of work force in all crew roles in the region.

> You know I think that's definitely one of the obstacles is finding Pacific Island producers… for us, we want to tell our stories our way. But the problem is, if you want to pitch our stories through our cultural lens right. Sometimes the western idea of a good film or a good story contradicts what we believe in and what we see and feel … don't tell me how to make my film for my people. I'm happy to change it to try and cater for everyone, but don't try and tell me how to make my film. So, producers, is the main obstacle for Pacific island content. And that was mainly because the film commission has this thing, where you can't produce your own films. So, you can't be a producer/director…
>
> **Respondent James Potter Auckland (Samoan)**

Potter discusses the difficulty of finding a Pacific producer as a key obstacle for the production of Pacific screen work, revisiting the issues associated with funding bodies that is interrogated in Scene Five. The general absence of producers in the Pacific screen community, means deficiency in two aspects of a screen production.

The first, is in having advocates for Pacific projects that understand the nuances of culture that these projects stem from. The second is in the administrative obstacles posed by the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC). Applications to the funding body that do not have a dedicated producer are not considered competitive. In the case of respondent Potter, an application they made where the applicants, as writer/directors of the project, also named themselves as producers, was not considered competitive.[21] This is another facet of funding bias that is inherently skewed in a way that does not benefit independent and emerging screen practitioners.

In a similar fashion to the 'audience development' argument that is unpacked in Scene Five, the NZFC also prefers to have producers attached to projects when they approach the commission for funding. This could be at any stage of development including early creative development, when some Pacific projects will be developing the creative idea, and struggling to find a Pacific producer to align with the project. While this study has noted that producers see projects through from the beginning to

[21] Personal communication, Mafile'o, 10 February 2019.

end, Pacific projects often labour to attach Pacific producers, especially where they are concerned with finding a Pacific producer to preserve story sovereignty and cultural competency. Thus, Pacific producers are key supporters of social and cultural legitimacy in Pacific screen.

> Surround yourself with the best producers. That's the thing! You hook up with producers that you trust that you feel safe with.
>
> **Nymphadora Tonks, Auckland (Fijian)**

Respondent Tonks also spoke at length about the importance of local facilitators in her work, naming a Pacific producer when advising about the importance of having good people that engender a feeling of safety. The presence of skilled Pacific producers in Pacific screen practice will usher a screen industry environment where Pacific practice is autonomous and ownership of stories is Pacific. The accessibility of Pacific producers to the industry is crucial to achieving this on a regional scale. Here, I have theorised that in the absence of such practitioners, Pacific screen industry could credibly upskill local facilitators into producer roles, as people who currently retain local and screen industry knowledge and could mobilise and advocate for Pacific screen. The presence of a cohort of producers who could do this, could contribute to the foundations of a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry.

Advocates

This section employs critical analyse to assess the value of advocates on the current status of Pacific screen practice. It focuses on highlighting the value of current and past practitioners in aspiring future generations of Pacific writers, directors, producers and crew; and also inspiring the creation of structures that facilitate the building of screen industry in the Pacific.

Within this study, 54 per cent of respondents acknowledged the importance of the work of advocates to Pacific screen production. Contrary to other enablers of screen

production, advocates or those who publicly support, encourage and recommend work, do not always have a direct effect on its day-to-day operation. Here, they have been identified by many interview respondents, as inspiration for those who came to the industry years later. Through tireless campaigning and entrepreneurship these individuals have encouraged the development and completion of Pacific screen projects.

> Well it has been hard. I think the OG's have kind of paved the way for us. We're in this new era where we can take things and run it each way.
>
> **Respondent Dudley Dursley, Sydney (Samoan)**

Respondent Dursley acknowledges the path that has been lit by generations of Pacific practitioners before him. Dursley speaks specifically about those in Aotearoa, who created staples of Aotearoa Pacific television, such as *Tagata Pasifika*, and successful youth magazine style programs *Pacific Beat St* (Wolfgramm, 2008-12) and *Fresh TV* (McGillis, 2011-) in the early 2000s. The presence of these shows on television proving to young Pacific islanders in Aotearoa, that making a living in the screen industry is accessible to them.

> … well I actually think we've had quite a good run to be honest. But that's because it came at a good time with [a Pacific person] going into the film commission so [they] pushed our feature forward.
>
> **Respondent Lily Potter, Auckland (Tongan/Pakeha)**

Respondent Potter expresses the benefit of having a Pacific person on staff at the NZFC during a period in which they had been able to encourage the progression of the respondent Potter's project, which was funded from development to post production and distribution.

In the same way that having leaders advocate for Pacific screen culture by demonstrating the possibility of it occurring in the Pacific imagination, other forms of advocacy occur in the direct promotion of Pacific projects within government and

funding bodies. At the time in which respondent Potters work was being distributed by NZFC, the NZFC released their Statement of Intent: 2019 – 2023 (New Zealand Film Commission, 2021). The statement cited a mission to 'empower and attract distinctive and diverse screen productions for global audiences' and recognised films such as *Whale Rider* (Caro, 2002)*, Boy* (Waititi, 2010)*, Sione's Wedding* (Graham, 2004)*, Hunt for the Wilderpeople* (Waititi, 2016) and *Waru* (Gardiner et al., 2017) as films with strong cultural elements that have resonated most with audiences over the last 20 years. The statement also declared that it would improve representation and that inclusion was an imperative for the NZFC, which included:

> **creating clearer pathways for communities under-represented in the screen sector, including but not limited to,**
>
> - those living with disabilities
> - screen practitioners from New Zealand's Asian communities
> - Pacific island communities
> - LGBTQI+ communities
>
> (New Zealand Film Commission, 2022)

While the responsibility for these strategic goals cannot be placed squarely on one member of the organisation, NZFC's statement of intent signals a recognition of the importance of Pacific screen content in the topography of Aotearoa screen culture as well as patterns of recognition. I think it is also imperative to note how many respondents quoted in this section are from Aotearoa. The history of Pacific screen practice (both Māori and Pasifika) in Aotearoa, has launched the careers of screen practitioners that are currently producing and distributing work on the world stage. These advocates strove to produce screen work over 40 years, for Aotearoa based Pacific screen practitioners to comment on this inspiration and groundwork in this thesis. Similarities can be drawn with the path the screen industry infrastructure has travelled in Hawai‘i, with the growth of Pacific crew on island, and the development of dedicated screen production courses at the Academy for Creative Media (ACM), University of Hawai‘i.

Advocates in the Pacific screen industry are notable for their altruistic behaviour. Advocacy occurs well outside the confines of the screen production process, where individuals have acted to create spaces for the success of future projects. They have done this by either pushing for projects to receive recognition; or by creating channels for those yet to come. A key observation to arise from this studies' research is that many advocates of Pacific screen have been female.

> The revolution isn't just running out with a gun, it's the arts as well. And if a film I make, causes Māori people to feel stronger about themselves, I'm achieving something worthwhile for the revolution (Merata Mita, in Mita, 2019).

As a screen activist, Māori filmmaker Merata Mita cleared barriers for others to work in screen after her. Mita's work was grounded in Indigenous story sovereignty and the decolonisation of film. She assisted in creating Sundance's Indigenous programs and worked with Pacific Islanders in Communication in Hawai'i. Her influence on Pacific screen practitioners and their prevalence in mainstream screen industry practice has had a robust trickle-down effect.

As a practitioner, Mita was until recently the only Māori woman to direct a feature film on her own (Mita, 1988). While she is still the only Māori woman to solely write and direct a feature film 34 years later, she has paved the way for other Māori and Pacific women to work in screen and tell their stories. This includes the cast of female Māori directors who jointly directed *Waru* (Gardiner et al., 2017) and Briar Grace Smith and Ainslie Gardiner, who jointly directed the film adaptation of Patricia Grace's (1992) book *Cousins*. Anecdotally, Mita's influence was very strong on the film festival circuits that were attended as part of this study. At Sundance 2019, Mita's son, Heperi Mita premiered his documentary, *Merata: How Mum Decolonised the Screen* (Mita 2018), about his mother's life working in Aotearoa media and being vocal about the Māori experience as *tangata whenua*. The film toured Sundance and Berlinale and was signed to international distribution company 'Array' before touring back to the Pacific. I was able to meet the film and its creators again at film festivals in Otaki (Aotearoa), Sydney (Australia), Rarotonga (Kuki Airani) and Tahiti (French Polynesia). Question and answer sessions following screenings of the film during the

film festival circuit, provided compelling evidence of Mita's influence on Pacific practitioners, especially female practitioners that came after her.

> Malo, malo le galue… your Mum was a complete mentor for me … especially around the Springboks tour time but she was such a unicorn to me it was impossible to believe what she did there … she was so ahead of her time. But it wasn't just about seeing your stories on screen, but the idea that it would be a woman making these stories I feel like many of us are part of that legacy and she was a pathway…
>
> **Lisa Taouma, question to Heperi Mita at Q&A screening *of Merata,*Te Kuki Airani Film Festival, 2019 (Rarotonga)**

The space that Mita's work eventually held for women in Pacific screen culture was apparent throughout this study's fieldwork period. Producers Chelsea Winstanley (Māori), Sandra Kailahi (Tongan), Vea Mafile'o (Tongan), Desray Armstrong (Māori), Karin Williams (Kuki Airani), Kerry Warkia (Papua New Guinean), Nicole Naone (Kanaka), Ciara Lacey (Kanaka) all showed work at international festivals or attended international markets to pitch projects for funding. The work they produced also promoted Pacific female screen practitioners. The portmanteau film *Vai* (Arahanga, Aumua, Freshwater, Fuemana, George, Guttenbeil-Likiliki, McCartney, Whippy; 2019) premiered to an imax cinema of 500+ people at Berlinale (February 2019). *Vai's* different perspectives were written and directed completely by female Pacific screen creatives. Half of *Vai's* production team was Kerry Warkia (Papua New Guinea) who directs BSAG Productions with her husband Kiel McNaughton.

Women are the leaders in establishing and directing film festivals across the region. Women directed all the following film festivals: the Native Lens Film Festival in the Solomon Islands launched its inaugural run in November 2019 (directed by Regina and Georgianna Lepping); Nuku'alofa Film Festival, ran for its fifth year in 2019 (directed by Sisi'uno Helu and Vea Mafile'o), PFF also ran its fifth festival in 2020 (directed by Kalo Fainu and Eliorah Malifa); and the established film festival FIFO Tahiti, continued for its 18th year (directed by Mareva Leu).

As mentioned, advocacy does not directly affect the production process and its logistics;. However, the direct influence of advocacy on the movements of screen production in the Pacific is clearly tangible. Whether it be through the production of a film festival or the creation of capacity building programs, advocates have planted seeds for which screen networks and industry can be developed in the region. And as has been demonstrated through the work of the above practitioners from Aotearoa, these advocates can be related to screen production even if they are not directly involved with an individual's career.

Local facilitators and the transition of these facilitators to producer roles are crucial to achieving a socially and culturally legitimate screen industry in the Pacific. These practitioners occupy the space in which screen industry transitions from being external to internal in the Pacific. People with key local knowledge and the skills to manage screen projects of any scale, operating in such a way that incorporates Pacific culture and its norms into the production process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a socially legitimate lens privileges traditional storytelling methods, facilitates an inclusive approach to production and enables community collaboration in screen. Therefore, local facilitators must ensure Pacific screen is socially legitimate to meet community expectations and foster community engagement.

As highlighted in the findings, Pacific storytellers have described the importance of having a Pacific person hold the project's intellectual property as paramount. They also note how language is critical in obtaining cultural legitimacy. The visibility of languages behind and in front of the camera is focal to the representation of the Pacific. Therefore, these two findings suggest that having Pacific producers who are fluent in their local language would significantly enable the success of Pacific screen across the region. Pacific producers can ensure that Pacific stories are not misrepresented or misinterpreted on screen. At present, screen practitioners face difficulties in dealing with funders that may not understand Pacific stories, let alone understand the nuances of Pacific language, thus attempting to control the narrative and its development, further demonstrating the power imbalances between creatives and funders.

Screen practitioners need to navigate socio-cultural norms in the Pacific. In this Scene, I have discussed the real barriers Pacific practitioners face in negotiating social-cultural norms, especially when they conflict with westernised screen norms. Issues such as gender and age, working within traditional hierarchies and chiefs, managing communal and community expectations, and questioning ownership and intellectual property all require skilled and culturally nuanced approaches.

I have also identified Pacific cultural tendencies towards humility as an inhibitor to the growth of Pacific screen industry. Despite their creative talent, Pacific screen practitioners often have a primary job that supplements them financially, allowing their families the safety of a visible career trajectory and steady income. These careers tend to be in more traditional employment. Many of the respondents in this study have primary jobs in more business or managerial roles such as policy-making, administration, and project management. Their creative works become their secondary occupation or 'side-hustle'.

Greater acceptance of the screen industry as a socially and economically viable industry requires sustained action by change-makers. I found these in local facilitators, local producers, and local advocates. I have highlighted how these local change-makers have been able to make gains within their local screen industry and how a regional approach would be beneficial to promoting and sustaining a Pacific screen industry. A regional and collective approach provides strength in numbers. Pacific practitioners can advocate for a socially legitimate screen industry and influence a more culturally sensitive direction to screen production in the region. Having a regional voice will have more influence in facilitating dialogue and negotiating better outcomes with larger overseas industry bodies in the same way that a regional strategy has broadened the Pacific voice in international conversations on climate and security.

Scene Seven: *I'uga* – Conclusions

Introduction

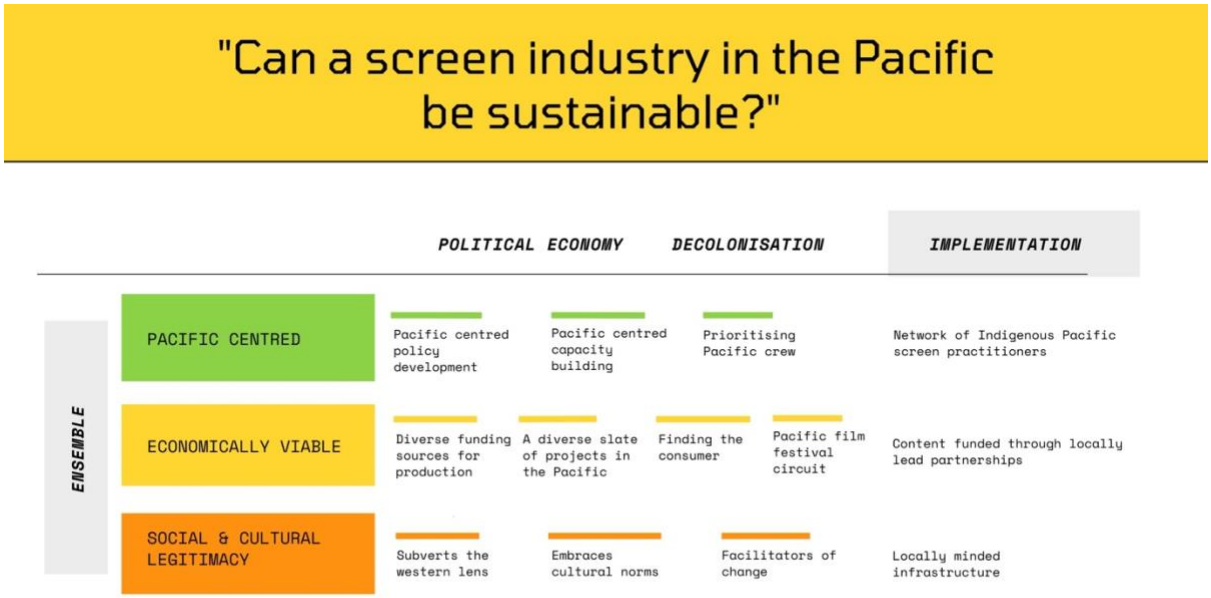
This thesis has sought to understand the impact of global screen industry practices in the Pacific, and how Pacific screen practitioners engage in both the global and local screen industries. Having presented my findings and directives in this thesis, I will now conclude by summarising these and the outcomes I have reached. In different contexts, both the words conclusion and outcome, can be translated to the Samoan word *I'uga,* the title of this scene.

A major focal point of this doctorate has been gathering data that has allowed a greater understanding of these dynamics in the wake of a relative dearth of data collection and analysis. Another focus has been uncovering the current global screen practices that can work to construct or inhibit a sustainable Pacific screen industry in the region. These objectives underline my primary motivation in undertaking this doctorate – a deep-seated desire to ensure Pacific stories are represented authentically on screens in the Pacific and globally, and that Pacific Islanders are the drivers of their own storytelling processes.

Throughout my research, I have aimed to be of service to the Pacific's screen practice and its creative industries. Here, I have facilitated a dialogue that privileges Pacific practitioners in screen discourses, which has not previously occurred. This study represents a critical but missing link that outlines the intersection between the justification, purpose, and rationale for a Pacific centred screen industry with a model on how to create, design and implement through a political economy approach. This study provides empirical evidence as a starting point for further applied research and academic discourse into 'how' a sustainable Pacific screen industry can be developed.

In bridging this gap, I have designed and tested a new conceptual framework introduced in Scene One to appreciate the Pacific nuance of current practice and guide the development of a sustainable screen industry. Based on my findings, I reintroduce the conceptual framework here with the addition of drivers that I consider essential to implementing a sustainable screen industry.

Figure 8. Hollywood in the Pacific - Conceptual Framework with Implementation



The ensemble in Figure 8 above represents the three parts of what I define as fundamental pillars for screen sustainability: Pacific centeredness, economic viability, and social and cultural legitimacy. My research findings based on these three drivers were explored in Scenes Four, Five and Six. In this Scene, I now discuss the implications of these findings and outline what I consider the remaining 'puzzle pieces' in achieving a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. Specifically, I suggest that for a Pacific screen industry to be centred in the Pacific, it requires a network of indigenous Pacific screen practitioners; for a Pacific screen industry to be economically viable, it requires content funded through locally led partnerships; and for a Pacific screen industry to be socially and culturally legitimate, it requires locally minded infrastructure. These are now included in the conceptual framework under 'implementation'.

Screen in the Pacific – why representation and culture matter

In 2010 Landman and Ballard described Pacific screen as 'academically uncharted', and I argue that this remains true. This thesis is situated within a broader discourse of screen in the Pacific. As highlighted in Scene Two, the history of Pacific screen is an underdeveloped character with most literature focussed on various issues of representation – the misrepresentation of Pacific stories and experience and the lack

of Pacific practitioners across the industry in general despite a long history of screen products produced in and about the Pacific. My study adds to this discourse and further supports the assertion that representation matters as a sustainable Pacific screen industry will facilitate Pacific experiences and Pacific stories to be shared authentically by Pacific Islanders.

Pacific communities rarely have agency over their own stories; Pacific film has tended to form a backdrop rather than the story itself (Mawyer, 1998). Furthermore, film in the Pacific has grossly misrepresented the region and its people (Pearson, 2010). Konzett (2017) explores the relationship between popular culture and the politics of identity in the United States by analysing the role of screen in constructing national and state identities and how these identities shift through the changing contexts of colonialism, war, orientalism, militarism, and entertainment. In Konzett's examination of Hawai'i, most of these identities are externally constructed and the representation for Pacific people in the context of screen can change significantly with agency. These findings also align with Pearson's contribution, which analyses the documentary work of Puhipau and Lander and its contribution to Indigenous Hawaiian identity. This thesis interweaves the theme of representation by proposing models for screen sovereignty (Stephens, 2021) in the Pacific to allow authentic and genuine representation and self-representation.

Screen culture and its role in the perpetuation of Pacific culture have received scant scholarly attention. Dick and Doyle (2021) interrogate the experiences of the young production community in Vanuatu, associated with the non-governmental organisation Further Arts. This inquisition uncovers the importance of screen sovereignty and ownership to this community and the contemporary forms of identity and cultural progression that result from their media production processes. This study looks further abroad to the international discussions of digital preservation in Indigenous cultures (Robbins, 2010) and what these models could look like (Harris and Wasilewski, 2004). The debate of screen and its relationship with culture is also understood within the lens of development discourse through the UNESCO's policy to safeguard cultural diversity in the digital era.

The rationale and justification for why a Pacific screen industry is important to help address issues of representation as well as further economic opportunities within the Pacific region are outlined in the Journal of Pacific History special issue, *An Ocean of Images* (Landman and Ballard, 2010) and the landmark *Cinema Pasifika* report (SPC, 2016). What is missing from the literature is *how* to develop a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. Therefore, this thesis makes a significant – and

perhaps overdue – contribution by progressing the academic discourse into Pacific screen's social, economic, and developmental value.

The political economy of screen in the Pacific

In this thesis, I have highlighted the opportunities for developing a sustainable screen industry in the region to enable more contributions for Pacific-led screen products, which will provide additional revenue streams for Pacific livelihoods and economic independence. The economy of Pacific screen is currently missing scholarly discourse. In completing this study and literature review, I have found that this gap in the literature is not through a lack of need. Instead, this gap occurs through a lack of awareness of the need to invest time and financial resources in creating screen products in the Pacific and the economic return these products could have. *Cinema Pasifika* notes this at the outset of reporting. Throsby also alludes to addressing this gap when referring to a broader Pacific creative economy. In Scene Two. I have undertaken to address the absence of discussion around the economic contributions of screen industry in the Pacific, to contextualise this thesis and facilitate discussion of sustainability. Comprehension of this element of Pacific screen practice is focal to an appreciation of the practical importance of Pacific screen industry.

At a global level, this thesis makes two important contributions to the literature on the economics of the screen industry. First, it aids international debates on the exploitation and imbalance of resources between the Global North and Global South in terms of screen production and revenue. In this thesis, I have demonstrated how the current political economy of film directs the distribution of resources and income about the Pacific to the Global North through the examples of Disney's *Moana* and the blockbuster movies *Aquaman* and *Hobbs and Shaw* in Scene Two. Fourth Film has shown its potential to correct the imbalance of resource distribution. I have applied the principles in this thesis to demonstrate how a Pacific centred and Pacific led industry that controls the production and distribution of Pacific films can help to subvert these power imbalances and facilitate a self-determined and viable screen industry in the Pacific.

Second, this thesis provides an important starting point to delve into more of the specifics of the infrastructure and drivers to implement a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. The political economy of screen has been explored in some detail in other regions of the world, including Bollywood in India, Nollywood in Nigeria, Canada, and China. What these regions have in common are large populations and well-established infrastructure to facilitate a screen industry. However, a regional and

political economy approach to screen in the Pacific as applied in my thesis has proven beneficial to help inform a model to develop and implement a sustainable screen industry. These will be explored in more detail in the following Research Findings section in this Scene.

I approached this research from the perspective of a Pacific screen practitioner who has worked extensively in transnational and island-based communities alike. Data collection was undertaken as a participant observer, attending film festivals along the international circuit between 2019 and 2020. As a peer, my proximity to my research participants allowed inclusivity to my research approach. I used a mixed method approach to gathering data, using *talanoa*-style interviews and Pacific auto-ethnography as qualitatively and a regional survey quantitatively. I framed these methods by expanding on the critical friend and *su'ifefiloi* methodological approaches, the critical friend informing my positionality as a practitioner and *su'ifefiloi* informing the transdisciplinary nature of my research.

Research findings

Sustainability as Pacific centred

Given the consistent and continued misrepresentations of the Pacific in global and Pacific screen projects discussed in Scene Two, I argue that a central tenet of sustainability is the ability of a Pacific screen industry to authentically centre, the stories and experiences of Pacific Islanders. I posit that a focal reason for the stalling of other regional discussions around cultural industry, has been the reliance of these industries on external consumption. In these iterations of the conversation, regional cultural industries are focused on developing infrastructure around the commodification of handicrafts and other cultural products that also require the successful development of tourism and import-export agendas to retain ongoing economic gain. While these discussions implicitly seek to benefit the Pacific, they are not centred on the Pacific. In other words, the Pacific is not the producer and consumer of these products. In suggesting the importance of screen industry, I am proposing cultural and creative Pacific products that Pacific practitioners will create and own and eventually consume by Pacific audiences as the primary target to generate income to sustain itself. Furthermore, I suggest that sharing these stories and experiences in specifically Pacific ways requires Pacific and international

governments and screen communities to build enabling frameworks, capacity and opportunities.

With respect to policy and regulatory frameworks in support of a Pacific centred screen industry, I find that there is scope to expand these further across the region. I mapped the region's existing policy and screen infrastructure (Figure 5, Scene Four) and found a significant dearth of supporting screen 'scaffolding'. Policy is more often in the form of offshore project regulation rather than in the establishment of bodies (including ministries) for the arts and culture that actively support funding generation and screen operations. Of the 22 Pacific countries surveyed, only eight had an identified national film body. This number, however, includes Australia and Aotearoa, bringing the total number of local film bodies in the island Pacific to six.

Many of my research informants were adamant that Pacific governments needed to play a stronger role in supporting Pacific screen. Respondent Weasley's comments are illustrative:

> … in order for an industry to develop yes you need government but it comes in various forms, tax breaks um you know allowing companies to come in and film here to build your base and skill base, but the components are that they must use X amount of local crew. You know it's actually about having the right heads in the room at the time when those decisions are made … When it comes to people on the ground that are actually able to do things, there's plenty of us that are on the ground being able to do things and many of us can make a short film or go in and come up with wonderful creative ideas. It's sadly the separation between the acknowledgement of our government to recognise that the creative arts is a viable money-making career building industry, which is quite bizarre, because they're prepared to go to the pictures and watch movies and all of those sorts of things but they don't make the connection that you can do that stuff yourself...
>
> **Respondent Ginny Weasley, Rarotonga (Kuki Airani)**

While many respondents raised limited policy and infrastructure as challenges, others considered that this also offered opportunities. In the absence of clear regulations, Pacific screen practitioners felt freer to run their projects as they liked,

and as best they could. Some respondents also clarified that Pacific transnational communities enjoy the relatively stronger functionality of bodies such as Screen Australia and the New Zealand Film Commission. US transnational communities in US territories benefit from the primarily privatised Hollywood model of screen production. The US Motion Picture Association represents the five major film studios in the country, and thus are the leading advocate of the 'film, television and streaming' (or broadly, the screen) industry worldwide.

I presented Film Fiji and the National Film Institute of PNG as case studies of how national screen bodies could and should work in more countries across the Pacific, including Samoa, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Tonga. While neither organisation operates at the required level to sustain industry or progress culture, they both indicate an awareness of screen industry and the importance of engaging with it economically and culturally. Film Fiji also emphasises programmatic possibilities available through such bodies in the Pacific, with events such as the Film Fiji Kula Awards. Compared with Screen Australia and the New Zealand Film Commission, these bodies are also symbolic of the many opportunities for organisational development in the Pacific. The establishment of national bodies would support nationally-appropriate policy development, taking into account the specificities of each country's context. The regulation of the screen industry through policy would also set standards for pay rates and practice for Pacific practitioners, to create space for career development in screen production, currently missing in the Pacific context. A regional screen association would also serve policy and infrastructure. Although this study acknowledges the benefit of national peak bodies in the Pacific, comprehending the topographic and geographic challenges of smaller island states such as Tokelau and Tuvalu infers the impossibility of establishing national bodies in every individual Pacific Island nation. The construction of a regional body, could effectively account for these gaps and ensure regional representation. To this end, the pooling of economic resources contributes to the diversity of available funding for Pacific projects; and a regional approach to engagement with the global screen industry. Existent bodies such as SPC, the Council for Pacific Arts and Culture or the Pacific Islands Forum would be well placed to house such an association. Membership to this association could follow similar guidelines to that defined as the Pacific in Scene One of this thesis. A

regional body will engage in policy development around screen industry, and disseminate annual funding for short and feature films and documentaries. To do so, this body will resource funds from member countries and be creative to find multiple and diverse sources of income. This body will be influenced by international peak bodies that operate with similar decolonial centres, Respondent Bell suggested that a regional Pacific screen industry could be modelled on other Indigenous associations, rather than 'mainstream' bodies:

> Well, you know if you look at other Indigenous territories for example, look at [the] Sami [peoples]. They have been quite successful in setting up a film industry, if you will. They've got a Sami International Film Commission, they've got government funding from various bodies in Norway, they've now started this Arctic Indigenous Film Fund with partners from Canada, Scandinavia, you know around the Arctic region. I'm very interested in that model. And I would like to talk more about ... whether it might be possible to get partners from around the region to put money into a Pacific Indigenous Film Fund and try to develop skills and resources and collaboration across the Pacific. I think it probably makes more sense for us in the Pacific to look to other Indigenous screen models than to look to a mainstream model. I'm always quite conscious that when you're working inside the mainstream you are really…. it's a colonial framework. And you're always going to be marginalised or considered within that sort of framework – with their ideas and philosophies about what makes a 'success'.
>
> **Respondent Katie Bell, Auckland (Kuki Airani)**

I also considered the extent to which existing screen practice has built the capacity of Pacific screen practitioners. For the industry to be sustainable in the Pacific, it requires a strong, sustainable cadre of local practitioners whose skills are developed in their own regional and local contexts. All respondents in this study acknowledged training and mentoring as a key enabler of their screen work. Despite this, only half of that pool acknowledged access to a skilled local workforce and how enabling this was, to the completion of their work. I used examples of transnational screen practice in the island Pacific, to highlight industry development practices that sought

sustainability, but required more infrastructural and financial support to achieve their goals. I found that the Pacific currently operates at a deficit in terms of training and mentoring opportunities. Though opportunities for formal education exist, they do not currently produce graduates with employable levels of skill. Informal programs, both regional and international, are introducing aspiring practitioners to screen production, without the continuity to cultivate skill through ongoing tuition. Furthermore, these programs do not provide a pipeline to an existent screen industry to allow further on the job training and skills development. Lastly, capacity building programs implemented by development organisations in the Pacific have largely been piecemeal and short-term, jeopardising the sustainability and financial stability of practitioners, the development of screen networks and screen practice more generally in the Pacific.

There is an opportunity in the Pacific to utilise institutions that are already training people in screen production, and reinvigorate these programs to ensure quality graduates. This would require policy development around the qualifications that constitute a qualified member of a production crew, internationally. This would also require industry funding from governments to improve the quality of these institutions and the resources used to train potential practitioners. Research towards this doctorate unearthed promising opportunities worthy of further investigation around international scholarships to support aspiring Pacific screen practitioners. At present, the Pacific produces a specific number of scholarship recipients at undergraduate and postgraduate level each year. These scholarships are currently not broadly awarded for screen production or creative industries. Screen production however, is a skill that can be taken back to the Pacific and credibly applied to the day-to-day business of government departments and agencies, as well as big business. A key example of this is the prevalence of telecommunications advertising and the quality of this work in the island Pacific. Respondents to interviews also noted the work they had produced for Pacific governments during election years.

In order to build Pacific centred screen industry, this research finds that strategic measures should be developed to ensure a specified number of local and Indigenous crew are employed on all regional productions. This measure ensures that Indigenous practitioners earn screen credits to create sustainable careers and continue to develop industry in the region. Unionisation can also be explored through

policy development, with the continued growth of workforce capacity in the island Pacific. There is huge potential for an abundance of screen work produced in the Pacific from both local and international projects. Half of all respondents believed that the existence of locally sourced crew was a key enabler of their screen work, with those in Hawai'i noting the substantial contribution of local Indigenous crew to big budget international productions as well as smaller independent projects. With this in mind, some of my respondents alluded to the facilitative benefits of international productions to screen practice in the island Pacific. Other respondents viewed big budget international projects as a hindrance to the work of independent Pacific practitioners. This dynamic, places a burden on small Pacific productions to schedule the logistics of their projects to recruit their desired crew according to down periods in large scale productions.

Lastly, I discovered that the very emerging nature of Pacific screen has cultivated a trend in Pacific screen practice of performing multiple roles simultaneously during production. The lack of sustainability in this practice typifies a broken business model. It does not promote capacity building in potential practitioners and it has crew members performing three to four times the amount of work they would work otherwise. In growing the pool of Pacific crew, I am also suggesting the prioritisation of this community on any regional productions to continue to grow skill and workforce.

Sustainability as economic viability

Globally, the screen industry is worth billions, although the majority of this revenue contributes to a few already well-established economies. Moreover, screen revenues generated from projects implemented in the region tend to flow back to those established economies, rather than the Pacific (Elmer & Gasher, 2005; Pendakur, 1990). In addition to being extractive, this practice precludes an opportunity to build Pacific economies which are themselves still in a phase of development. Throsby (2015) acknowledged the economic value of cultural industries – such as the screen industry – to the Pacific. The question is, to what extent can that industry support already stressed economies and be economically viable. Economic viability is imperative in achieving sustainability in Pacific screen industry. In order for Pacific

screen industry and its workforce to continue working in this space, economic return needs to be made on the regions screen products. To this end, the global example of screen industry has demonstrated its propensity for expenditure. While this level of price and expense is not expected of a Pacific screen industry, there is a keen acknowledgement of the need for economic activity to achieve sustainability for Pacific screen industry and practice.

I define the economic viability of the screen industry in terms of its ability to generate profit from its work, employ workers in ongoing careers and produce high quality screen products. My consideration of the economic viability of Pacific screen began with an analysis of the funding sources available in the Pacific to support screen projects and the capacity of the very few national – and regional - film bodies in the Pacific to offer funding in the manner that it is distributed in Australia and Aotearoa. This funding model represents a fundamental barrier to sustainability. Sources of funding for screen production in the Pacific are scant. Outside of peak bodies such as those identified in a Pacific centred screen industry, specialist organisations such as the Hawai'i based Pacific Islanders in Communication cater mostly to practitioners in US territories and are not limited to practitioners of Pacific heritage. Another category consists of development organisations such as the Commonwealth Foundation, or branches of the United Nations. Given the competitive nature of these funds, many of my respondents in the island Pacific self-funded their work. Interestingly, and considering the severe lack of funding available in the island Pacific, Pacific practitioners in transnational communities and access to funding still indicated a preference for self-funding, to avoid government bureaucracy and the bias of funding bodies towards a western frame of artistic excellence.

I found that practitioners in the island Pacific do not have access to government funding for their screen projects, but do have access to development funding contingent on the agendas of development organisations. These agendas influence the themes and stylistic approaches of screen work emerging from the Pacific. I have also demonstrated that the current funding streams conditionally available in the Pacific are also not conducive to sustainability of Pacific screen. These cannot substitute dedicated funding for screen production. I have found a distinct need for diversified funding of Pacific screen projects, from government, industry and private sector organisations, as well as development organisations.

This research has uncovered a need for long-term funding of feature films, documentaries and short films. Once established, funding of feature films and feature documentaries would be awarded every two or three years to allow time for fundraising in governments. Should national Pacific governments collectively agree to participate in policy development for regional screening, pooling of resources would contribute to such fundraising. In addition to funding, I considered that an economically viable screen industry would be one that facilitated local and offshore projects. In screen practice, story ideas are the beginning of job creation in so many departments in a production. As underlined in Scene Five, these ideas and concepts are akin to small businesses. A high volume of these stories, from multiple local and international sources will enable the creation of jobs on a large slate of screen projects. Offshore commercial film and television projects are becoming a more regular occurrence in the region, offering financial injections to national economies. Local regional practice is growing, as evidenced in the responses to this research. The ongoing slate, that will develop from the combination of many projects, will facilitate and perpetuate economic viability by providing continuous employment to a community of practitioners and small businesses, and sustain a schedule of commercial screen products, to commodify and generate profit.

Another key element of economic viability is demand. I found that while there is a definite audience for Pacific content both in and out of the region, as well as through its transnational communities, there is also a need to expand and develop those audiences. The creation of a film festival circuit across the Pacific has deliberately brought Pacific content to Pacific audiences, increasing demand. As presented in Scene Five, the Pacific film festival circuit is now a prevalent feature of the industry, showing throughout the region. There are Pacific led film festivals in Australia, Aotearoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Guåhan, Kuki Airani, Fiji, Tahiti, and Hawai‘i - with the addition of the FestPAC Films, which happens every four years, in a different part of the Pacific. While the Pacific film festivals in this circuit generally operate as individual entities, these entities are aware of and currently communicate with each other, with a view to eventually working together on projects to elevate screen practice in the region. To this end Pacific film festivals hold a unique space to develop and present work, and create opportunities for Pacific screen communities

to profit from their work.

My research uncovered the centrality of film festivals to industry development. Not only do film festivals develop audience and create financial profit, they build pipelines for future audience, future practitioners and future work to be made. In the Pacific film festival circuit, there is also a clear distribution pathway that looks inward to the Pacific and its interests, but also connects back out to the international industry, exploring bigger opportunities for Pacific screen.

Sustainability as social and cultural legitimacy

The Pacific is rich in unique stories and unique methods of storytelling. A Pacific screen industry also needs to contribute to the progression and dissemination of Pacific culture for it to be sustainable. The social and cultural legitimacy of a Pacific screen industry is important because it spotlights those stories and methods of storytelling; it privileges Pacific voices in a sea of dominant Western perspectives. It also suggests to Pacific audiences that our stories should be shared in the same space as mainstream and popular screen work. In some senses, this is not as hard to achieve practically as perhaps the requirements to centre the industry in Pacific-specific policies and infrastructure, or render it economically viable. Nonetheless, my research has uncovered challenges as well as opportunities to social and cultural legitimacy.

A regional screen industry that actively works to decolonise screen practice and subvert the western lens of screen industry is one of three tenets of social and cultural legitimacy. I found that even in Pacific screen projects, western expectations of the process and the content dominate. Screen projects are funded with the expectation that (usually non-Pacific) producers will have final say over the scripts and the production process. My research shows that Pacific practitioners find these expectations onerous, but also detrimental to the authenticity and ownership of their projects. Traditional story telling mechanisms (often in the form of linear narratives) are privileged over Pacific methods of storytelling which tend to be more inclusive. To subvert the western lens of global screen industry practice, Scene Six looked at the decolonisation of creative development processes. This could include the traditional model of the writers' room. Scene Six also investigated the collective ways

in which Pacific screen practitioners are now writing their scripts and structuring their stories, to stylistically address alternatives to the westernised three-act structure. These alternatives were sought to supplement Pacific ways of communicating their stories and eventuated in screen projects such as *Vai* or *Cousins.*

This decolonial principle is also applied to production styles and production culture in Scene Six. Decolonising production culture is focused on removing the rigidity and hierarchical nature of crew roles that are prevalent in western screen practice, and can occur with something as small as crew and local villagers sharing a meal together during breaks in filming. This act was proposed by a respondent to this research, as a rebalancing of powers in screen culture as it occurs in the island Pacific.

Despite offshore projects travelling to the Pacific in need of its landscapes as locations, the financial status of many offshore productions and the lack of understanding around screen practice in much of the Pacific, creates a power dynamic that currently sits outside the Pacific. Creating small opportunities to dismantle these structures and build knowledge of screen practice, should also set Pacific communities up to contribute to or push back on offshore projects in such a way that will encourage social and cultural legitimacy over time. Auto-ethnographic evidence has pointed to on-set methodologies in Pacific practitioners that encourage community on the job training, community-based production practice and actively engaging Pacific practitioners at all levels.

To understand the ways in which Pacific screen practice embraces cultural norms, Scene Six interrogated cultural nuances in both the island Pacific and in transnational Pacific communities. In the island Pacific respondents to this research discussed key parts of village culture that either facilitated or challenged screen production. This included linguistic or even gender-based challenges. Language is key in obtaining cultural legitimacy in Pacific screen industry. The visibility of Pacific languages both behind and in front of the camera is important for the authentic representation of the Pacific, but also for the efficiency of production practices. An example of this was identified by a respondent to this study, noting the difficulties they encountered directing their crew in English (as crew that was flown in from overseas), and cast in Tongan (having been cast locally). This social and cultural

legitimacy, achieved through language, preserves sustainability of Pacific screen industry, by creating new and unique contributions to the global screen canon, demand for Pacific language in this context and production processes owned completely by Pacific practitioners.

Scene Six unpacked how transnational and island-based Pacific communities and cultures may not currently look at screen careers as viable and how practitioners currently navigate this cultural block to continue in their practice. Pacific practitioners often have a primary job that supplements them financially and allows their families the safety of a visible career trajectory and/or steady income.

Finally, Scene Six, investigates the significance of advocates, producers and local facilitators in Pacific screen industry as facilitators of change. Such practitioners are viewed in line with research that posits the importance of creative producers in developing creative industry practice (Pinxit, 2021). This thesis views these practitioners as those having the transferrable skill not only to produce screen work but to create versatile opportunities and programs for industry development

> I think that more of the regions need producers... I think that the producer is able to take on a lot of the organisational work, is able to take on a lot of the financial gathering, the producer is able to be an outside eye to look at the content and be able to speak truthfully about it … I think that more of the Pacific islands need producers, and I actually think there's a lot of talent there in terms of the producing realm. You just have to really understand what it is to do that work and know what that work is. I think that once you do, they're the ones that really create the space and the environment for those things to get made
>
> **Respondent Endra Dumbledore, Auckland (PNG)**

Scene Two posits that a Pacific screen industry must not extract from, or misrepresent the region's stories and culture. Scene Five investigated the ways in which development agendas could do this. As external organisations with opinions and projected outcomes that are aligned with their external countries, funding that comes from these agendas affect the genre and themes of work coming out of the

Pacific. Effectively, the persona of the region that is then received internationally could be manipulated by this agenda, especially if these pools of funding, are the only financial resources available to Pacific screen practitioners.

Scene Two detailed ways in which current Pacific screen projects offered new and contemporary tools to maintain culture in the Pacific. It also explored ways in which the great pool of stories and culture in the region contribute to the continuation of the industry. As such, this research offers the promise that a sustainable Pacific screen industry is uniquely placed to contribute to cultural maintenance, in conjunction with its focal role in the elevation of Pacific representation, and the economic contribution of screen to the region. By analysing and comparing the work of *The Coconet TV* and *Nihi! Kids* in Scene Two, this thesis posits that investing in a screen industry that creates contemporary interpretations of culture, is beneficial to it's the cultures continuation. This theory does not rely on the development of tenuous policy around cultural tourism, rather the creation of policy around an industry that does not rely completely on external consumption to sustain. By definition, such an industry would create more efficient and reliable opportunities for creative development in the region. Scene Two demonstrates how screen industry advocates for and contributes to the preservation of culture, underwriting its sustainability. The work that is currently being produced by Pacific screen practitioners, is steeped in a desire to preserve and perpetuate culture, both tangible and intangible. The documentation and incorporation of culture into the wider scope of Pacific screen and its stories highlights a large pool of opportunity for content that needs to be produced in the Pacific. This research identifies the opportunity for sustainment of Pacific culture and the creation of social and cultural legitimacy through the sea of stories to be explored and documented by Pacific screen. These factors also hold promise for the creation of business, development of screen economy and enhanced chances for employment in the region.

Achieving sustainability

This research's findings about the current state of screen industry in the region have led me to conclude that there are three critical indicators of a sustainable Pacific screen industry.

A network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners

A network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners is the first step towards a sustainable regional screen industry, and is an indicator of a Pacific centred screen industry. I have found that a Pacific centred industry is built on effective policy development, capacity and workforce development, which includes the prioritisation of local Indigenous crew on all regionally based screen productions. I have found that by building on these roadblocks, a Pacific centred screen industry will result in, and also be propelled by a network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners.I found a case study for this theory in transnational Pacific practitioners. Auckland based and Pacific run Tikilounge Productions produces content all over the Pacific. Through this production work, Tikilounge has engaged and cultivated a network of producers, camera operators and crew all over the Pacific. This network extends to Australia, the United States, the French Pacific, Samoa, Kuki Airani, Tonga, Fiji and Guåhan, and can be tapped for any production work that is needed for Tikilounge Productions products. These include television show *Fresh* and online platform *The Coconet TV.* To further support the importance of a network to the sustainability of Pacific screen industry, Tikilounge also supports capacity building activities in the region, by running workshops and on set attachments for aspiring practitioners, that have resulted in the growth of screen production networks in the island Pacific and the development of skills in aspiring practitioners.

I have suggested ways to eventually build a screen workforce in the Pacific. In its early stages, this workforce supplements the immediate needs of pre-production, production and post-production, but in future iterations of the industry, this would also include the already burgeoning community of festival producers, commissioners and curators of Pacific screen work.

A network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners would create the structures to train and build capacity in prospective practitioners, enable the creation of work through funding, and ensure accessibility to quality production equipment. Such a network could support policy development that includes quotas around the number of local Indigenous crew to be employed on all projects shooting in the region and allow refinement of the nascent Pacific film festival circuit. The network of Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners would be symptomatic of an emerging regional screen

industry that has a clear understanding of the Pacific and its nuances at the forefront of its development.

Achieving economic viability through locally led, partnership funded content

Having investigated the economic viability of Pacific screen practice, I consider that a key strategy to achieve sustainability is to fund content through locally led partnerships. Empirical data presented in Scene Five points to a region truly lacking in funding opportunities for local screen content. Funding streams that do exist occur most commonly in the form of development funding, which does not currently allow sustainability. The three sub-categories that I have found could facilitate economic viability of a Pacific screen industry are a diversity of funding sources, a diverse slate of projects in the Pacific and the development of audience, or locating of the consumer. Understanding these needs for economic viability have pointed to the implementation of locally led funding partnerships as an indicator of an economically viable and sustainable Pacific screen industry.

The lack of availability of funding for screen production in the Pacific highlights a region in need of more sources of funding that are procured from a diversity of backgrounds. This diversity is desired to ensure a diversity of agendas. Given the history of development agendas and funding in the Pacific, it is in the interest of economic viability and Pacific centredness, that Pacific practitioners access funding from many different avenues, while also creating a large and varied slate of work to turn profit from. This diversified slate will ensure there is an ongoing cycle of projects to employ crew and to be distributed as commodities at the other side of the production process.

In order to develop a canon of work from this slate, national governments and regional bodies should prescribe a standard number of projects to be funded. An example would be for national governments to annually fund between one and three television shows. In the initial stages of industry development, these television shows could serve as case studies in Pacific Island countries, of Pacific screen projects that offer opportunities for commercial profit through advertising sales, and audience development, where Pacific audiences are watching content other than news media or talk shows that reflect Pacific opinions, themes and discourse.

The development of audience rounds out these sub-categories of economic viability, by pointing this study to the consumers of these commodities and 'small businesses', as they have been described in other parts of this research. Pacific audiences have not been deeply analysed or researched as yet. As a result, the patterns of behaviour and popularity in Pacific audiences has not yet been documented. I found that understanding the quirks and interests of the Pacific audiences is vital to appreciating the ways that Pacific audiences can be engaged on a multi-faceted canon of content, to somewhat ensure a return on investment for Pacific projects.

Acquiring partnerships for the purposes of funding Pacific content is important both as an implementation tool and an indicator of an economically viable Pacific screen industry. I have found that there is a key need for Pacific governments to subscribe to the economic possibility in Pacific screen industry and invest in funding as such. To this end, Pacific governments could and should lead partnership discussions with existent development organisations in the Pacific and other potential sources of funding (both publicly and privately sourced), to ensure that a specified number of narrative and factual Pacific projects will be funded each year. Creating locally led partnerships for funding pathways are not only beneficial to practitioners, they are beneficial to the industry at large. These funding pathways should avail themselves to projects that communicate Pacific identity, Pacific culture and Pacific agendas. This cultivating of sustainability works by facilitating content that is funded internally in the Pacific for both consumption in the Pacific and further abroad. The dividends could be paid back to these partnerships in acknowledgement. A cut of any profit made could be another means of acknowledgement.

Ensuring Pacific legitimacy through locally minded infrastructure

In Scene Two, the value of sustainable Pacific screen industry to the continuation of Pacific culture is examined. Here the innovation of screen practice and digital media in the exploration and continuation of culture is substantiated both in scholarly literature and in the demonstrations of Pacific work. A Pacific screen industry is aptly positioned to contribute to cultural maintenance.

Scene Six closely scrutinised the significance of three sub-categories in the creation of socially and culturally legitimate screen industry: subversion of the western lens,

embracing of cultural norms; and the cultivation of advocates of Pacific screen in local facilitators and producers. The implementation of these sub-categories is a locally minded infrastructure that embraces and initiates the search for social and cultural legitimacy. Locally minded infrastructure is key in the recognition of processes that subvert traditional and western practices, to elevate a Pacific style of screen practice, based on the experiences of Pacific practitioners, working in the region and in transnational communities.

Scene Six uncovered the interdependencies of a socially and culturally legitimate Pacific screen industry. These were also in keeping with the findings of Scene's Four and Five. Developing locally minded infrastructure is congruent with the ideals of a Pacific centred and economically viable Pacific screen industry. It ensures Pacific led policy development and a Pacific workforce. It also encourages adherence to a Pacific way of producing. By actively embracing cultural norms in the region, Pacific screen engages with its cultural nuances, and acknowledges an inherent need to accept the regions diversity. Embracing cultural norms also means including cultural quirks into production planning. The cultivation of local facilitators and producers is focal to the development of locally minded infrastructure, as these are the architects and catalysts for change. Lastly, a screen industry that subverts the western lens of the mainstream is focal to achieving social and cultural legitimacy.

Conclusion

This research has documented the changing role of film and television in the Pacific, and identified the factors necessary to support a more sustainable screen industry in the Pacific. As such this thesis makes an innovative contribution to the canon of literature on Pacific film and film practices in the Pacific. By answering the question of whether screen industry in the Pacific can be sustainable, this thesis hopes to create agency for the region to represent itself authentically.

This research highlights the challenges and victories of Pacific practitioners in developing, producing and distributing their work. Documenting these challenges and victories will bring future practitioners and networks the information to navigate these complexities, and build a growing slate of Pacific projects, both external and

locally based. In its application, this study does not attempt to solve any challenges to current screen industry practice. This research simply recognises the necessary avenues to developing a Pacific screen industry.

Having gathered and presented this data, I remain optimistic that a screen industry in the Pacific can be sustainable, especially with the structural support to ensure the mobilisation of Pacific screen practice. To recap, a sustainable Pacific screen industry can be realised in a network of skilled Indigenous Pacific screen practitioners, or an available workforce; in a slate of work that has been funded through locally led partnerships; and the creation of locally minded infrastructure. Pacific governments and interested stakeholders must develop policy that enables the importing of screen production equipment to the Pacific, fund screen production, and provide opportunities to monetise Pacific screen projects in a socially and culturally legitimate fashion.

A fundamental criticism of global screen industry practice is its general tendency to cultivate unsustainable production practices. Yet a sustainable Pacific screen industry will contribute to the continued growth and success of economies in the region. Furthermore, engaging in the development of Pacific screen industry offers opportunities to create sustainable career pathways for aspiring screen practitioners in Pacific Island countries and alternative pathways for economic development at both a national and regional level.

When this discussion of sustainability in screen industry at large was raised it was centred around screen industry practice works: as an industry that takes from its resources and workforce quite ruthlessly without giving much back in return. By working to subvert the western lens of screen industry and promote a Pacific centre, this thesis attempts to decolonise the ways in which the Pacific has been portrayed on screen and attempts to decolonise screen practice for the Pacific. I anticipate that this study will be a catalyst for further academic pursuits in Pacific screen practice and Pacific screen economy to further aid in developing a sustainable screen industry.

Having reviewed the findings of this research, as outlined in Scenes Four, Five and Six, I have been able to answer my key research question: that is ‘can a screen industry in the Pacific be sustainable?’ Analysis of this study’s empirical data informs

me that the current state of Pacific screen is not sustainable, in fact it is not at all an industry. Using the findings of this research however, I have found that a regional screen industry can be sustainable, with the provision of time and the creation of structures as indicated above. The ensemble of a sustainable Pacific screen industry (Pacific centred, economically viable and socially and culturally legitimate) has been informed by the data gathered in this study. I have found that the indicators laid out in this scene, are fuelled by structures that facilitate sustainability. They are also critical contributors to developing a sustainable screen industry in the Pacific.

Glossary of Terms

Film Glossary

360 virtual reality	Audio-visual simulation of an altered environment that surrounds the user in all directions
Acquired	Bought, licensed, or otherwise secured with a commercial arrangement
Actor	Someone who acts in films, television shows and other screen projects
Animation	Visual medium produced from static drawings. Can be feature length or short
Audience	The assembled spectators of listeners for a screen project
Bollywood	Indian screen industry
Box office revenue	The total revenue generated through movie ticket sales
Cast	The collective performers in a production
Casting	Hiring of key and background actors suitable for a particular role in a film
Cinema of China	Chinese screen industry
Commissioning	The process of briefing program suppliers of audience needs and selecting suitable proposals
Content	What is being presented to the audience, or what any screen project is about on the surface
Cottage industry	A business of manufacturing activity carried out in people's homes
Creative economy	Knowledge based economic activities upon which the 'creative industries' are based

Creative industries	Activities ranging from traditional folk art, cultural festivals, books, paintings, music and performing arts to design film, television and radio
Crew	The collective of individuals involved with the technical aspect of a production
Cultural industries	Industries which produce and distribute cultural goods or services
Demand	Increased request for content from consumers and users
Departments of production	Groups within a film shoot which specialise in a specific aspect of production
Digital applications	A computer program created to carry out or facilitate a task on a computing device
Director	A person who controls the making of a film and supervises the actors and technical crew
Director of Photography	The person responsible with creating the look of a project
Distribution	Consists of making a film or television project available to the public
Documentary	Video based on or re-creating an actual event, era, life story. Contains no fictional elements. Can be both feature length or short form
Editing	The cutting together and assembly of a finished film
Editor	Assembles footage creatively to make finished screen works
Factual	Usually documentary based screen content
Feature film	The main motion picture in a movie program. Also known as a 'feature'. Runs for more than 40 minutes
Film festival	An organised event at which films are shown. Can be extended to other screen formats

Film festival circuit	A series of festivals relevant to the film industry
First Assistant Director	Directly in charge of all departments of production, ensuring cast and crew work to schedule
Funder	A person or organisation who provides money for a particular purpose
Funding body	An organisation or department that provides funds
Hollywood	American screen industry
Independent	Screen projects that are mainly produced by people, usually without any involvement from major production companies
Intangible cultural heritage	Practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of the cultural heritage
Key creatives	Writer/s, director/s and producer/s on a screen project
Location	The places or properties used to film. Can be exterior or interior. Can be a real location or in a studio
Mainstream	Ideas, attitudes, or activities that are shared by most people and regarded as normal or conventional
Marketing	The business of promoting and selling products or services, including advertising
Narrative	A spoken or written account of connected events; a story
Narrative film	A film that tells a (usually) fictional story. Can be both feature length or short form
Online streaming	Refers to any media content – live or recorded – delivered to computers and mobile devices via the internet and played back in real time
Policy maker	A person responsible for or involved in formulating policies, regulatory frameworks and legislation especially in politics

Post-production	The stage after production when filming is over and the editing of visual and audio materials begins
Practitioners	People with the skill and intention to work in screen industry
Pre-production	The planning stage of a production after it has received sufficient funding to start filming
Presenter	Synonymous with curation, the person who picks films to be shown at film festivals and other special events
Producer	Chief of a film's production
Production	A film viewed in terms of its making
Production Company	A business that produces content, sometimes in a variety of mediums. Most often used to refer to film production companies
Production Schedule	A plan that every screen project follows to make sure that video production goes smoothly
Project/s	A film viewed logistically
Scene	A unit of action or a segment of a story in a play, motion picture, or television show
Representation	Includes having a diversity of characters on screen projects to ensure inclusivity
Set	Scenery and props as arranged for shooting of a film
Shoot	An instance of filming
Short film	Defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits
Showrunner	Individual who has primary creative control and management of a television show
'Smart technology'	Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology

Sound design	Creating the audio for film, television, advertising, music, and other productions
Story sovereignty	The absence of external influence on Indigenous cinema
Streaming services	A service that sends video, music etc., over the internet so that people can listen or watch it immediately
Tablets	A computer that is intermediate in size between a laptop and a smartphone
Talk show	A television program genre structured around the act of spontaneous conversation
Television	The field of television production and broadcasting, or similar transmission programming
Visual effects	Describes imagery created, manipulated, or enhanced for any film, or other moving media, that does not take place during live-action shooting
Web series	A series of scripted or non-scripted videos, in episodic form, released on the internet
Writer	A person who writes a script

Samoan Glossary

Amataga	Beginning
Atafa	Frigate bird
Atualoa	Centipede
Falelalaga	Weaver
Gafataulima	Weaving of genealogy
I'uga	Outcomes
Malu	Protection
Ola ni	many (colloquial)
Su'ifefiloi	Samoan practice of sewing different parts together
Tatau	Tattoo

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Appendix A – Eliorah Malifa Pacific related projects 2018 to 2022

Pasifika Film Fest (2018) (Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane)
Pasifika Film Fest 48 Hour Film Challenge (2018) (Sydney)
Pasifika Film Fest 48 Hour Film Challenge (2019) (Salt Lake City)
Native Advisor, Pacific, Berlinale (2019) (Berlin)
Pacific Noir Incubator Program (2019) (Sydney)
Executive Producer, *A Viral Series* (2019) (Sydney)
Native Lens/Pasifika Film Fest 48 Hour Film Challenge (2019) (Honiara)
Assistant Producer, *An Gumupu I Chankleta* (2019) (Guåhan)
Artist/Curator, *Te Whainga – A Culture Lab on Civility* (2019) (Auckland)
Producer, *Untitled by Gabriel Satiu* (2020) (Sydney)
For My Father's Kingdom Australian screenings (2020) (Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra)
Film Independent: Creative & Pitching Workshops (2020) (Sydney/Los Angeles)
Pasifika Film Fest: Island Hop (2020) (Sydney/Canberra/Melbourne/Honiara/Port Vila/Port Moresby/East New Britain/Auckland/Suva/Salt Lake City)
Pacific Wayfinder podcast (2020) (Canberra)
Producer, *Breaking Bread* pilot (2020) (Sydney)
Producer, *Parramatta* pilot (2020) (Sydney)
Producer, *Deity* pilot (2020) (Sydney)
Producer, *Pacific Lockdown* (2021) (Canberra)
Producer, *Kev & Keli Can't Go Home* creative development (2021) (Sydney)
Producer, *Urchin* short film (2021) (Sydney)
Production Manager, *Pasifika Drift* short film (2021) (Sydney)
Producer, *Before 8am* pre-production (2021) (Sydney)
Producer, *Wave Riders* creative development (2021) (Brisbane)
Producer, *Pacific Misfits* creative development (2021) (Guåhan)
Producer, *Before 8am* pre-production (2022) (Sydney)

Appendix B – Interview questionnaires

Questions to Stakeholders

- Date:
- Base city:
- Ethnicity:
- Organisation:
- Role:
- What is the role of your organisation in the Pacific?
- Does your organisation do any work in the creative industries or filmmaking specifically? If so, what?
- Do you think there is scope to have a film industry in the Pacific? Please describe your answer.

Supplementary questions

- If we are able to create a film and television industry in the Pacific, do you think it could contribute to economic growth?
- If we are able to create policy around a Pacific film and television industry, how long do you think it would take for such a thing to be sustainable?
- What are logistical obstacles you can describe in filmmaking in the region?
- Are there any theoretical obstacles you can describe for filmmaking in the region?
- What infrastructure do you think is vitally important for a Pacific film industry?

Questions to filmmakers

- Date:
- Base city:
- Ethnicity:
- What was your most recent film?
- What was your role on that film?
- Could you describe any other experience you have?
- Do you currently have any other films submitted to film festivals?
- Do you currently have any other films accepted into film festivals?
- Do you have any experience with film distribution?
- Why do you consider yourself a filmmaker or why do you want to be a filmmaker? What has lead you to filmmaking?
- How often do you have the opportunity to work with other Pacific filmmakers or practitioners?
- What do you consider to be a Pacific film?
- Have you made a film in a Pacific island? if so, describe the process.

Supplementary questions

- What are the logistical obstacles of shooting in the Pacific?
- What are the logistical enablers shooting in the Pacific?
- Are there any other general obstacles shooting in the Pacific?
- Are there any other general enablers shooting in the Pacific?

- Have you made a film outside of the Pacific islands? If so, please describe the process.
- What are the general logistical obstacles you experience in filmmaking?
- What have been the enablers or catalysts for your work?
- What infrastructure do you think is vitally important for a Pacific film industry?
- Do you think a film industry in the Pacific is necessary?