

“[THEY] DANCED, AND, THEN, ... IT WAS OUR TURN TO DANCE”:
PERFORMATIVE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY BETWEEN TUVALU AND TAIWAN

BY

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted before to any institution for assessment purposes. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no materials that have been written or published by other people. However, I have acknowledged all sources and have cited these in the References section. Any queries should be directed to Jess.Marinaccio@vuw.ac.nz.

This thesis contains five publishable papers for which I was the sole researcher and primary author. At the moment, part of Chapter 3 has been published by *The Contemporary Pacific*, and part of Chapter 2, part of Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 are currently or will soon be under review by ANU Press, *Pacific Studies*, *Router: A Journal of Cultural Studies*, and *International Journal of Cultural Policy*.

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Abstract

Taiwan (the Republic of China, ROC) contains vibrant communities of Pacific diplomats and students from Taiwan's allies—as of August 2019, this included Tuvalu, Nauru, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau—and sometimes non-allies like Papua New Guinea. These communities are overlooked in both Pacific Studies and International Relations (IR) research. While working as an interpreter for the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan, I interacted with Pacific and Taiwanese diplomatic communities and witnessed how the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments attempted to communicate culture through performative/dance projects (i.e., performative cultural diplomacy). These performative engagements challenge IR analysis of Asia in the Pacific, which sees Pacific-Taiwan diplomacy as primarily determined by competition between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Instead, these engagements demonstrate how participants in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy, the majority of whom are not diplomats, carry with them multiple ideas and identities; consider their actions based on diverse contexts; and assign varying levels of importance to diplomacy, Tuvalu, and Taiwan.

Consequently, in this thesis, I adopt a Pacific Studies research framework that emphasizes indigenous epistemologies, comparativity, interdisciplinarity, and a critical empowerment rationale to examine three topics: (1) Tuvaluan, Pacific, and Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy; (2) the Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomatic relationship and its underlying assumptions; and (3) how Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy both reflects and complicates diplomatic conceptions and assumptions.

After introducing my research questions and structure in Chapter 1, in Chapter 2, I outline conceptions of diplomacy explicated by Pacific diplomats in Taiwan; Tuvaluan diplomats, officials, and traditional leaders in Tuvalu and Taiwan; and Taiwanese diplomats/officials in the same locations. I demonstrate how Tuvaluan/Pacific ideas of diplomacy often diverge from those held by Taiwanese diplomats/officials while also highlighting disparities among Tuvaluan and other Pacific views. In Chapter 3, I sketch discursive histories of Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy. I map how Tuvalu and Taiwan have characterized each other since establishing relations and trace the complex routes that structure how they currently imagine their diplomatic partner. Chapter 3 also shows how discursive histories both dovetail with and challenge diplomatic conceptions outlined in Chapter 2. Subsequently, in Chapters 4 to 6, I

bring three Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects into conversation with conceptual and discursive trends from Chapters 2 and 3. Here, I emphasize the voices of diplomats, officials, planners, performers, and audience members who engage with projects and underscore tensions that arise among participants *and* between participants and diplomats, officials, and audience members from their diplomatic partner. I also consider diplomatic conceptions, discourses, and assumptions discussed earlier in the thesis from the perspectives of project participants and observers to show how performative cultural diplomacy influences and illuminates diplomatic relationships.

In the Conclusion, I explore the theoretical and practical applications of this research. For theoretical applications, I discuss how a Pacific Studies research framework and Performance/Dance Studies create new possibilities for IR research. I also show how this thesis provides an interface for rethinking Taiwan's positionality, especially Taiwan's connections to and distance from the Pacific. For practical applications, I make recommendations for the future implementation of diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| APCD | Asia-Pacific Culture Day |
| BLIA | Buddha's Light International Association |
| CIP | Council of Indigenous Peoples (Taiwan) |
| CSMU | Chung Shan Medical University |
| DCM | Deputy Chief of Mission |
| DPP | Democratic Progressive Party (Taiwan) |
| DS | Diplomatic Studies |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| FESTPAC | Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture |
| FISDT | Formosa Indigenous Song and Dance Troupe |
| GIPP | Global Indigenous Peoples Performing Arts Festival |
| GoT | Government of Tuvalu |
| IR | International Relations |
| KMT | Nationalist Party (Taiwan) |
| LY | Legislative Yuan (Taiwan) |
| LYG | <i>Legislative Yuan Gazette</i> |
| MFATTEL | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment & Labor (Tuvalu) |
| MHARD | Ministry of Home Affairs & Rural Development (Tuvalu) |
| MOFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan) |
| NCCU | National Chengchi University |
| NDAT | National Dance and Arts Theatre (Tuvalu) |
| NYIFF | Nan Ying International Folklore Festival |
| OP | Office of the President (Taiwan) |
| PNA | Parties to the Nauru Agreement |

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| PNG | Papua New Guinea |
| PRC | People's Republic of China; China |
| Taiwan | Republic of China; ROC |
| TATST | The Association of Tuvalu Students in Taiwan |
| TE | <i>Tuvalu Echoes</i> |
| TNS | <i>Tuvalu News Sheet</i> |
| TYT | Tuvalu Youth Troupe |
| UDN | <i>United Daily News</i> |
| YAs | Youth Ambassadors |

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Prologue

I was raised on the east coast of the United States, but a deep interest in Mandarin Chinese, which I studied in high school and university, prompted me to move to Taiwan (the Republic of China, ROC) when I was 22. Supported by a generous scholarship from Taiwan's Ministry of Education, I completed a Master's in Chinese Literature at National Taiwan University; at the time, I focused on modern poetry. When I moved to Taiwan, I also carried with me a great passion for performance. Growing up, when I was not in school, I was always singing, dancing, and/or acting, skills that later evolved into amateur work as a director and stage manager. Directing and stage managing were always aspects of performance at which I felt particularly adept.

In my Master's program, I was constantly working with top academics in Chinese Literature, some of whom were not fluent in English. This gave me my first opportunity to work as a Mandarin-English translator, a career path I pursued after I graduated in 2011 and decided to stay in Taiwan. It was because of this career choice and my ongoing search for new translation clients that I met the Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan. He had arrived in 2013 to open the country's newest diplomatic office, the Embassy of Tuvalu in Taiwan. I was quickly hired by the ambassador, who had no permanent Chinese-speaking staff at the time. My experiences at the embassy directly challenged many of the assumptions I had developed when living in the United States about how embassies could and/or should function, what diplomacy meant, and how expatriate communities operated. At the same time, my extensive background with performance meant that I was always overjoyed when the embassy participated in performance-based events but also that I paid special attention to these events and often understood them in ways people with no performance background could not.

When working for the Tuvalu Embassy, I was particularly struck by one idea: contingency is a concept we are accustomed to in our daily lives but that is often overlooked in records of official events, where structural teleology is privileged. This is especially true when we talk about government institutions. However, in my experience with the embassy, contingency was rule rather than exception. With this contingency came diplomats with complex

identities, multivocal “non-diplomatic” groups who participated in diplomatic action, and socio-cultural contexts that radiated from and intertwined with diplomatic action. These phenomena are now key to my understandings of diplomacy.

Two examples underscore the importance of contingency, multivocality, complexity, and context to my experience with diplomacy. As a Mandarin-English interpreter for the Tuvalu Embassy, I spent most of my time accompanying the diplomats at the embassy: the ambassador and first secretary. The contingent identity of the first secretary is critical here. She was not a career diplomat but was assigned to her post because she was the ambassador’s wife (it is considered pragmatic to send husband and wife pairs to man Tuvalu’s diplomatic missions to reduce relocation costs). Because the first secretary was not a career diplomat, she was extremely aware of the ephemeral nature of her official role and fiercely sustained her other more long-term identities and interests. While the ambassador communicated official government policy, telling Taiwanese officials Tuvalu was small and relied on Taiwanese aid, the first secretary would plan how to best save her salary to build a preschool in Tuvalu’s capital. She would also negotiate from afar the operations of her small business or teach the embassy driver and I how to weave ano, or “Tuvaluan balls.” Yet, the first secretary’s “non-diplomatic” interests also affected how we conducted diplomacy. Consider, for example, the embassy’s cultural diplomacy—defined here as “the deployment of aspects of [the] state’s culture in support of its foreign policy goals” (Mark, 2010, p. 66). Through the first secretary’s influence, ano-weaving became the theme for an entire year of embassy-led cultural diplomacy projects, culminating in a workshop at a Taiwanese community college. This to me is the heart of contingency. There was “no structural reason” why these events should have occurred, but their occurrence became integral to Tuvaluan diplomacy (see Clifford, 2009, p. 240).

In Taiwan, Tuvalu’s cultural diplomacy through performance even more clearly highlights multivocality and complexity, as well as socio-cultural contexts. Although the Tuvalu Embassy sometimes invites performing groups based in Tuvalu to perform in Taiwan, when performance opportunities are short-term, the embassy asks Tuvaluan students on scholarship in Taiwan to provide performances. Students thus become extensions of Tuvalu’s diplomatic mechanisms in Taiwan, or unofficial diplomats. Yet, students design their own performances for events and performances transform as the composition of student groups change and in response to performances by other Pacific groups, performances by troupes from Tuvalu, ideas of personal and national identity, and current events. For example, during a festival in

fall 2017, rather than representing their countries separately, the Tuvaluan and I-Kiribati students in Taiwan presented a joint performance to honor two students who had passed away that summer (9/24b, 10/12, 10/14, 10/16, 10/22, and 11/10b Interviews¹). During the performance, it was difficult to determine which performative/dance forms were from Tuvalu and which from Kiribati. To students, enacting unified commemoration was more important than representing distinct national identities, which would have been more appropriate from a diplomatic perspective. Clearly, performers (amateur or professional) act as unofficial diplomats appearing in performances at the Tuvalu Embassy's behest. However, they also carry with them varied ideas and identities and consider their actions based on socio-cultural contexts. Through cooperation in Tuvalu's diplomatic projects, these ideas, identities, and contexts are then articulated to Tuvaluan diplomacy in Taiwan, incorporated into the fragmented elements we see as "unified" diplomatic action (see Clifford, 2003, p. 45). This thesis identifies these fragments to reconfigure our understandings of Tuvalu, Taiwan, and their diplomacy.

Tuvalu, Taiwan, and a General Argument

On 19th September 1979, Tuvalu, a Pacific Island nation north of Fiji, and Taiwan, an archipelago off the southeast coast of China that is of contested independence, established diplomatic relations (*United Daily News*, 1979, September 20). Tuvalu is geographically composed of nine islands. However, two of these islands, Niutao and Niulakita, are seen as representing the same community, and, thus, Tuvaluan citizens refer to Tuvalu as having eight islands. Because each island maintains a distinct identity, Tuvaluans express affiliation with their island community or the nation as a whole depending on their global positioning and the communities with whom they interact. For its part, Taiwan is composed of at least 22 islands or archipelagoes; these are claimed by the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) as part of its territory, but Taiwan functions as an independent nation despite limited international recognition. Taiwan is also described as a multicultural society with four officially recognized groups. Three of these groups are ethnically Han Chinese and one

¹ Interviews, which were all completed between 2017 and 2018, have been coded by the date on which they were conducted due to the confidentiality requirements of some participants. This is in line with guidelines for in-text referencing of interviews found in the *Sixth Edition Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, which was used for formatting this thesis.

represents the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, who belong to the same broad Austronesian language group as Tuvalu (Blundell, 2011; Brown, 2004; Damm, 2012).²

Tuvalu is currently one of four Pacific nations (i.e., Tuvalu, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, and Palau) that maintain official relations with Taiwan instead of the PRC.³ Yet, since Tuvalu and Taiwan formed relations in 1979, scholarship on Taiwan has described Tuvalu as merely one of Taiwan's limited number of allies⁴ (Hu, 2015; J. Yang, 2011), and even volumes on Pacific-Taiwan-PRC diplomacy neglect Tuvalu (see Wesley-Smith & Porter, 2010). For its part, research on Tuvalu rarely emphasizes Taiwan or diplomacy, and recent scholarship focuses predominantly on climate change (see Goldsmith, 2016).

In this thesis, I adopt a Pacific Studies perspective to examine cultural diplomacy enacted between Tuvalu and Taiwan through performance/dance (referred to below as performative⁵ cultural diplomacy). I focus on government-sponsored projects that use cultural performance/dance as a conduit for diplomacy and, in doing so, mobilize students, performers/dancers, directors, cultural consultants, lighting and sound specialists, audience members, and various other participants necessary to completing projects. My arguments are twofold: (1) From an academic, government, and even media perspective, the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship is posited as a straightforward example of diplomacy motivated by Taiwan's competition with the PRC or Tuvalu's attempts to derive benefits from Taiwan (D'Arcy, 2016, pp. 46-49; Topo, 2014; Wesley-Smith, 2013, 2014, 2016a). However, performative cultural diplomacy reveals that Tuvaluan and Taiwanese citizens travel to and perform in their diplomatic partner every year. Therefore, the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship is far from straightforward and currently encompasses multiple cultural interactions (K. M. Teaiwa, 2014b, pp. 75-76, 90-92). (2) The cultural interactions extending from what appears a

² This description refers to official discourse on the 四大族群, or "Four Ethnic Groups," where Taiwan is characterized as composed of Holo, Hakka, and Mainlander peoples (all Han) and indigenous populations (Suaiyung, 2011, p. 36; L.-j. Wang, 2004, pp. 304-305, 314-316).

³ During my research in Taiwan in 2017 and 2018, Tuvalu, Nauru, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, then Taiwan's six Pacific allies, were represented in Taiwan through embassies. In September 2019, after I completed my thesis, Solomon Islands and Kiribati broke relations with Taiwan and no longer have offices there. However, I still include the views of Solomon Islands and Kiribati diplomats in this thesis because their status as allies who have recently broken ties makes their perspectives particularly valuable to this research.

⁴ In much diplomatic discourse, an alliance refers to "a treaty entered into by two or more states to engage in cooperative military action," and not all countries with diplomatic relations are allies (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012). However, in research on Taiwan and the PRC, ally is commonly used to refer to nations that recognize Taiwan or the PRC (Hu, 2015; Powles, 2016; J. Yang, 2011).

⁵ Throughout this thesis, the terms performative and performativity describe concrete ideas of performance/dance in cultural diplomacy. They do not reference performance theory or Butler's concepts of performativity and gender.

straightforward diplomatic relationship vividly demonstrate Tuvalu and Taiwan's complex understandings of themselves and how they should engage with other countries and cultures. These interactions further reveal tangible and personal connections that already exist between the two countries. Yet, they also evince fault lines that emerge due to disparate understandings of "commonly understood" concepts, such as indigeneity, the relationship between performance/dance and culture, and the significance of cultural diplomacy. Because of these disparate understandings, Tuvalu and Taiwan sometimes make different meanings with their interactions—engagements are significant for one country but this significance is never conveyed to the other or a different significance is conveyed altogether.

Hence, in this thesis, I use performative cultural diplomacy case studies to sketch the Tuvaluan community in Taiwan and map policies surrounding the implementation of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy. This contributes to scholarship on Pacific peoples in diaspora and demonstrates the varied socio-cultural factors that inform how performative cultural diplomacy is conducted in Tuvaluan and Taiwanese settings. Furthermore, the Pacific Studies perspective I adopt acknowledges the politics of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. However, it also transcends these politics to consider the socio-cultural significance of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy and the critical issue of Taiwan's place in Oceania (Hau'ofa, 2008, p. 53), especially as it relates to indigeneity.

The following Introduction is divided into two sections to highlight the conceptual and practical tools that structure this thesis and elucidate the arguments discussed above. In the first section, I provide an overview of the theoretical foundations for the thesis; I examine the research gaps, justification, framework, and questions guiding the project while also explaining major themes. In the second, I discuss how the framework and questions delineated in the first section were addressed; I describe the case studies at the core of this research, introduce research methods, and sketch a general outline of thesis structure.

A Theoretical Overview of the Research

Research gaps

University of Hawai'i academic Terence Wesley-Smith (1995, 2016b) has outlined three rationales that motivate Pacific research: the "pragmatic rationale" embodied in "the need to

know about the Pacific Islands places with which ... metropolitan countries have to deal”; the “laboratory rationale,” which “values the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders primarily as objects for study”; and the “empowerment rationale,” which is “grounded in indigenous experience and ways of knowing” (Wesley-Smith, 2016b, pp. 157-159). The empowerment rationale is now adopted in Pacific Studies programs at institutions including Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Hawai‘i. However, my initial approach to Pacific research was influenced by studies on International Relations (IR), diplomacy, and Taiwan and the PRC—it pivoted toward the pragmatic. Wesley-Smith (2016b) notes that the “pragmatic rationale for Pacific studies has, no doubt, received a boost as a result of the rise of China in Oceania” (p. 157), and recent works on the PRC in the Pacific (which inevitably include Taiwan, the PRC’s “rival” in the region) are couched in pragmatic terms (Powles, 2016; J. Yang, 2011). Fortunately, engagement with (1) foundational writing in Pacific Studies as it relates to diplomacy and geopolitics, and (2) research on diplomacy in the Pacific revealed several research gaps. This led me to abandon pragmatism in favor of an empowering focus that “[incorporates] multiple voices into ... narratives” (Wesley-Smith, 1995, p. 128).

Foundational writing in Pacific Studies

My research motivations originated in the tensions I discovered between my experiences at the Tuvalu Embassy and the writings of Tongan scholar Epeli Hau‘ofa, whose works, especially the canonical essay “Our Sea of Islands,” are critical to Pacific Studies scholarship (Clifford, 2009, pp. 239-241; Diaz & Kauanui, 2001, p. 317). Hau‘ofa’s writings have importantly “challenged ... belittlement [discourse]” on the Pacific and “[inspired] countless artists, scholars, and students” (K. M. Teaiwa, 2014b, pp. 70-73). As a result, overarching themes in Hau‘ofa’s work are now central to Pacific Studies. Yet, Hau‘ofa’s writings also demand in-depth and critical engagement so that his theorizing can be unpacked and built on. Such engagement reveals nuances that should be clarified to strengthen the overall Pacific Studies project.

First, for instance, in “Our Sea of Islands,” Hau‘ofa (2008) contends that two distinct levels of operation exist in the Pacific: “national governments and regional and international diplomacy ... that have taken the Pacific ... into dependency on powerful nations” and “ordinary people, peasants and proletarians, who ... tend to plan and make decisions about their lives independently” (p. 27). However, this contention was inconsistent with my experiences of Tuvaluan diplomacy in Taiwan, where fluidity and complexity intertwined the

“operations” of diplomats and “ordinary people” and highlighted the contingent nature of identity and status. My experiences demonstrate what Sissons (1998) has called a “seductive” but perhaps misleading “binarism” in Hau‘ofa’s work (p. 166).

Second, in “The Ocean in Us,” Hau‘ofa (2008) argues that “Pacific Ocean islands ... which are adjacent to the Asian mainland, do not have oceanic cultures and are therefore not part of Oceania” (p. 53). This led me to further contemplate the positioning of Taiwan—a Pacific Ocean island adjacent to the Asian mainland—from a Pacific Studies perspective. Aside from its geographic location in the Pacific, since at least 2000, Taiwan has repositioned itself as oceanic;⁶ this repositioning has consistently centered on Taiwan’s indigenous peoples and their linguistic and cultural ties to nations included in Pacific Studies (Blundell, 2011; Everington, 2017, September 6). Why, then, might Hau‘ofa (2008) deem it necessary to classify Taiwan (and other Asian mainland-adjacent islands) as not possessing oceanic cultures and outside of Oceania?

Through analysis of Hau‘ofa’s writings, I realized (1) the potential to further investigate diplomacy and its meanings in the Pacific, as well as the complexities masked by seeing diplomacy as one-dimensional diplomats separated from other actors, and (2) the possibilities inherent in more deeply considering diplomatic relationships between Taiwan and its Pacific allies. Hau‘ofa’s writings on oceanic culture and Oceania suggest that he carries certain assumptions about “Pacific Ocean islands ... adjacent to the Asian mainland.” What assumptions, then, might inform diplomatic relationships between Taiwan and Pacific nations and how do assumptions affect relationships? How might understanding these assumptions move us beyond existing regional schemas and encourage us to “rethink ... the limits ... of our prevailing cartographies” (Diaz, 2011, p. 24)?

Current research on diplomacy in the Pacific

Instead of clarifying the issues outlined above, current research on diplomacy in the Pacific amplifies gaps. This is clear from (1) recent analysis of Pacific diplomacy and (2) the growing body of research on the PRC (and Taiwan) in the Pacific.

From the perspective of Pacific diplomacy, Fry and Tarte’s (2015) collection *The New Pacific Diplomacy* foregrounds Pacific agency in diplomatic action. The major argument of the work is that a “paradigm shift” in Pacific diplomacy beginning in 2009 gave rise to “a heightened Pacific voice in global affairs,” an “emphasis on Pacific Island control of the

⁶ See Y. Cao, 2000; Ministry of Education, ROC, Taiwan, 2010, December 29; W.-h. Wang, 2015.

diplomatic agenda, ... [and] appeal to regional identity” (p. 3). Yet, major issues with this work are similar to those found in Hau‘ofa (2008) because Pacific diplomacy is seen as complex only at the *international* level and complexities at the national level or within single projects are overlooked. Furthermore, Fry, Tarte, and their contributors (2015) tend to accept the term diplomacy at face value without interrogating what diplomacy means (and to whom) or how varied understandings of diplomacy might influence diplomatic action.

For research on Taiwan and the “rise of China” in the Pacific, scholars have adopted two conflicting narratives. The first, a de-powering analysis, characterizes in-fighting between Taiwan and the PRC as driving diplomatic action, with Pacific nations allotted little agency in alliance building (Atkinson, 2007; D’Arcy, 2016, pp. 46-49). The second forwards an empowering Pacific analysis in which Pacific nations are subjective agents that ally with Taiwan or the PRC based on their own interests.⁷ Nevertheless, a common theme in both frameworks is a de-centering of Taiwan, where Taiwan’s only interest in the Pacific is “to compete with China for diplomatic recognition” (Topo, 2014, p. 54; see also Glowczewski & Henry, 2007). Although for different reasons than those motivating Hau‘ofa (2008), such research similarly neglects nuance in Pacific-Taiwan relationships (focusing instead on Pacific-PRC ties or, simply, the PRC). Contextualized analysis of assumptions and layers of historical, pragmatic, and symbolic meaning inherent in interconnections between the Pacific and Taiwan is absent (K. M. Teaiwa, 2014b, pp. 75-76, 90-92).

Moreover, in both research trajectories addressed above, discussion of cultural diplomacy, specifically performative cultural diplomacy, is lacking. In highlighting “global agendas that are impacting Pacific societies” (Fry & Tarte, 2015, p. 3), *The New Pacific Diplomacy* overlooks less visible but still crucial areas of Pacific diplomacy, including performative cultural diplomacy. Additionally, writing on this topic as it relates to the PRC (and Taiwan) fixates mainly on cultural diplomacy through education.⁸ This phenomenon, combined with my knowledge of Tuvalu’s performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan and Taiwan’s projects in Tuvalu (and the broader Pacific), signaled a further possibility for analysis. In exploring Pacific-Taiwan relations, how can performative cultural diplomacy be used as a method to (1) illustrate what diplomacy means in a Pacific setting while also highlighting complexity, contingency, and context in Pacific-Taiwan diplomacy and (2) reflect and deconstruct assumptions inherent in Pacific-Taiwan relations?

⁷ See Kabutaulaka, 2010, p. 148; Wesley-Smith, 2016a; Wesley-Smith & Porter, 2010, pp. 2, 22.

⁸ See Hartig, 2012; Heng, 2010, pp. 284-285; H. Wang & Lu, 2008, pp. 439-440, 444-445.

Research justification

One issue evident in the above discussion is that the research gaps I refer to center on the Pacific and Taiwan, not Tuvalu and Taiwan, the focus of this thesis. This issue was also apparent when I conducted interviews for my research because interviewees sometimes struggled to understand my interest in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. One interviewee, who was born and raised in Taiwan and of indigenous Pinuyumayan descent, best expressed this concern when he asked, “And why do you think there is a special connection between Tuvalu and Taiwan?” (9/30 Translated Interview [Mandarin]). Interestingly, this question was mainly posed by interviewees from Taiwan and never by those from Tuvalu—the Taiwan in my project title seemed natural but the Tuvalu inevitably raised questions like “Taiwan, yes, of course, but why Tuvalu?” Still, for some interviewees in Taiwan, especially anthropologists and indigenous peoples, my use of the term cultural diplomacy seemed to offer some relief in explaining the Tuvalu-Taiwan pairing. If I was investigating indigenous or Austronesian-language ties between Tuvalu and Taiwan, then my topic was more sensible than it first appeared (Blundell, 2011; P.-y. Guo, 2017; Mona, 2007). However, this relief dissipated when I explained that I was not focusing on Tuvalu’s interactions with Taiwan’s indigenous peoples but on performative cultural interactions between the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments.

Personally, I also sometimes find the Tuvalu-Taiwan pairing tenuous. When Taiwan conducts performative cultural diplomacy projects that include Tuvalu, they are rarely directed only at Tuvalu and are instead targeted at a combination of Taiwan’s Pacific allies (and other non-allied friendly countries like Fiji). Given this, when I write about Taiwan’s projects in Tuvalu, I tend to use the phrase Tuvalu/Pacific.⁹ I have never used Taiwan/Asia or Taiwan/East Asia when writing about Tuvalu’s projects in Taiwan. Yet, the reasons for this are clear when we consider disparities in understandings and uses of performative cultural diplomacy by the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments. Taiwan has established embassies in each of its Pacific allies and has been officially and systematically engaged in performative cultural diplomacy since 2008 at the very latest (Liau, 2012, p. 115). By contrast, for countries typically identified as Asian, Tuvalu has only established an embassy in Taiwan. Furthermore, although Tuvalu has engaged in domestic cultural diplomacy since at least

⁹ In this thesis, I sometimes adopt phrases like Tuvalu/Taiwan’s Pacific allies or Tuvalu/Pacific allies. The meaning of these phrases is fairly straightforward. However, I also use Tuvalu(an)/Pacific or Tuvalu(an)/the Pacific. I do this when I refer to Taiwan’s interactions with allied and non-allied Pacific nations or when I discuss Taiwan’s conceptions of itself in the Pacific region as mediated through imaginings of Tuvalu.

1976, with performance/dance factoring heavily in cultural exchange (see Government of Tuvalu, 2012; 10/14 and 10/19 Interviews), the government has more rarely implemented performative cultural diplomacy abroad.¹⁰ From a financial perspective as well, Taiwan self-funds projects throughout the Pacific. Conversely, Tuvalu's main performative cultural diplomacy is conducted at festivals and expos funded by host organizations or in foreign countries where Tuvaluan diplomatic representation and a large Tuvaluan community allow for government-sanctioned but locally planned performances (11/10b, 5/16, and 5/20 Interviews).¹¹ Compared to its activities in other Asian countries, Tuvalu's methods of conducting performative cultural diplomacy are only fully expressed in Taiwan.

Given this, my project traces disparities of understanding at different levels of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy that make a comparison between the two nations appear meaningless at first, but, on further analysis, reveal multiple fault lines in Pacific-Taiwan diplomacy. In charting these fault lines, we see why, from a Taiwanese perspective, Tuvalu seems a mysterious choice for the "other" focus of this research despite Taiwan's active engagement in performative cultural diplomacy throughout the Pacific. The fact that Tuvalu is not the "natural" Pacific focus for research on Taiwan's performative cultural diplomacy also inevitably draws into conversation other Pacific places that seem more obvious choices. This demonstrates how Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy is mediated by varying understandings of what the Pacific is as well as what it means to be indigenous in/to the Pacific. Accordingly, although about Tuvalu and Taiwan, this thesis constantly references ideas of the Pacific as a region and contributes to understandings of topics in Pacific Studies. Particularly, I look at how diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy are conceptualized by "Pacific nations" and how continent-adjacent "Asian nations" have built or are building themselves into the region in various ways.

A Pacific Studies research framework

Because Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy draws our attention to the Pacific region at large and due to Taiwan's geographic and linguistic location as a Pacific-Asia border-zone (Blundell, 2011), I adopt concepts in Pacific Studies as the main research

¹⁰ See 5/16 and 6/1 Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 5; Government of Tuvalu, 2012, pp. 1-2, 8; South Pacific Tourism Organization, 2014, pp. 4-8, 15-17.

¹¹ A major exception is the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture for which Tuvalu funds its own participation (6/1 Interview).

framework for this thesis. By engaging with cultural performance/dance to overcome simplistic understandings of Pacific-Taiwan relations, my research also reflects recent moves to link cultural diplomacy with Cultural Studies (Clarke, 2016). This even further recommends the adoption of a Pacific Studies framework. Majorly influenced by Cultural Studies, Pacific Studies highlights “the constructed [and] contested nature of ... cultures and ... identities” and discusses identity and culture as always in the process of formation (Diaz & Kauanui, 2001, p. 324; see also Clifford, 2003, pp. 45-49). Additionally, Pacific Studies as practiced at Victoria University of Wellington adopts articulation theory from Cultural Studies, analyzing “any socio-cultural ensemble that presents ... as a whole [as] actually a set of historical connections and disconnections” (Clifford, 2003, p. 45).¹² These ideas are similar to arguments in cultural diplomacy research that all actors “negotiate the meaning of the cultural products they encounter” (Clarke, 2016, p. 156) and that all projects are actually composed of fragments that only look like socio-cultural wholes.

Although T. Teaiwa (2001) identifies the origins of Pacific Studies in “amateur ethnographies from ... the seventeenth century [and] orientalist-type scholarship” (p. 348), Pacific Studies traces its main roots to World War II and the Cold War. This is because, during these periods, countries like the United States and Australia developed pragmatic interests in Pacific nations (T. Teaiwa, 2001, p. 348; Wesley-Smith, 1995). However, with the end of the Cold War and intellectual challenges from post-colonialism, postmodernism, Cultural Studies, and other fields, Pacific Studies (along with other area studies) was challenged to demonstrate increased reflexivity and a “coherent conceptual basis” (Goss & Wesley-Smith, 2010, pp. xiv-xv).

As mentioned above, in 1995, Wesley-Smith identified three rationales possibly motivating research on the Pacific: pragmatic, laboratory, and empowerment. Adoption of these rationales is still “pluralistic” (Wesley-Smith, 2016b, pp. 155-160), but empowerment is now a major trajectory. In 2010, Victoria University of Wellington academic Teresia Teaiwa built on Wesley-Smith’s work to prescribe that empowerment-type “Pacific Studies shall be interdisciplinary, account for indigenous ways of knowing, and involve comparative analysis” (p. 116). In this vein, current Pacific Studies, especially as practiced at Victoria University of Wellington, emphasizes interdisciplinarity, comparativity, indigenous worldviews, creativity, and reflexivity. It also adopts articulation and multi-sited ethnography

¹² See Clifford, 2001; Henderson, 2011; T. Teaiwa, 2005, 2017b.

as major methods (K. M. Teaiwa, 2014b, p. 68; Wesley-Smith, 2016b). However, in 2017, T. Teaiwa also critiqued the empowerment rationale outlined by Wesley-Smith, recommending a new “critical empowerment rationale.” This rationale recognizes that, “[while] discourses of anticolonialism and indigenous empowerment are fashionable in Pacific studies, ... Pacific studies students [and scholars] need to be able to critically evaluate all forms and sources of power, including indigenous ones, and indeed, their own” (2017a, p. 269).

In this thesis, I adopt a Pacific Studies framework based on T. Teaiwa’s (2010) tenets of accounting for indigenous ways of knowing, interdisciplinarity, and comparativity, as well as her 2017 critical empowerment rationale. I foreground attention to *indigenous ways of knowing* by exploring conceptions of diplomacy expressed by Tuvaluan and other Pacific diplomats in Taiwan and incorporating, where possible, reflections on diplomatic practice by Taiwan’s indigenous peoples.¹³ I supplement this discussion by examining local ways of knowing conveyed by non-indigenous Taiwanese diplomats in Tuvalu and other Taiwanese officials and citizens. Concepts of cultural representation, performance/dance, and aesthetics communicated by performative cultural diplomacy participants are also considered.

Comparativity is highlighted by juxtaposing assumptions underpinning the Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomatic relationship, evaluating how the interests of performative cultural diplomacy participants overlap and/or diverge, and comparing different participant conceptions of diplomacy and aesthetics. *Interdisciplinarity* is realized through overarching theoretical concerns as I use a Pacific Studies approach in dialogue with Performance/Dance Studies to expand IR and identify how Taiwan might be interwoven into the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. Finally, the entire project subscribes to a *critical empowerment rationale* in two modes. First, I seek to de-Westernize concepts of diplomacy. Second, similar to Fry’s (1997a) discussion of “Australian framings of the Pacific Islands” (p. 336), I hope to demystify unexamined ideas underlying Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. Accordingly, I critically examine the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments and analyze how the agency of performative cultural diplomacy participants enables them to challenge assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations but also sometimes reinforces these ideas.

¹³ In Chapters 2 and 7, I discuss problems with ubiquitously applying the terms indigenous and indigeneity when considering nations like Tuvalu, which are not currently colonized and where citizens do not identify as indigenous, and Taiwan, which is a settler colony with populations actively identifying as indigenous.

Research questions and themes

Using the aforementioned Pacific Studies framework, I developed the following questions to guide my research. Below, I identify two main research questions and six sub-questions. I subsequently outline major themes—or reoccurring motifs—that emerged in answering these questions.

Research questions

The main questions directing this thesis are as follows:

1. What are Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, how do conceptions of diplomacy as expressed by non-Tuvaluan Pacific diplomats contradict or bolster these conceptions, and how do these conceptions compare with those expressed by Taiwanese diplomats in Tuvalu or other Taiwanese officials?
2. What is the diplomatic relationship between Tuvalu and Taiwan and what assumptions is it predicated on?

To complicate answers to the first two questions, I examine the experiences of performative cultural diplomacy participants and the complexities evident in performative cultural diplomacy projects. Consequently, I ask:

3. How can a focus on performative cultural diplomacy highlight Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics while simultaneously evincing the complex communities involved in Tuvaluan diplomacy, especially in Taiwan?
4. How can a focus on performative cultural diplomacy similarly highlight conceptions of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics held in Taiwan while also demonstrating disparate understandings of relations with Tuvalu/the Pacific, especially concerning ideas of indigeneity?
5. How does a focus on performative cultural diplomacy reflect, overcome, or complicate assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations?
6. How can focusing on the experiences of participants in performative cultural diplomacy projects reflect inherent complexities and underscore the importance in Pacific Studies of “[incorporating] multiple voices into ... narratives” (Wesley-Smith, 1995, p. 128)?

Finally, I contemplate the following theoretical questions in the concluding chapter. These questions inform my research and highlight the strengths of my proposed Pacific Studies framework:

7. How can using Pacific Studies to focus on the stories of performative cultural diplomacy participants expand conceptions of IR beyond the narrow analyses sometimes found in international politics research (Salesa, 2016, p. 127)?
8. What is the potential for future collaboration between Pacific and Taiwan Studies?

Research themes

To answer the questions outlined above, I explore the various ideas of diplomacy that inform Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, as well as cultural, social, political, and historical assumptions undergirding the relationship. I also analyze three Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects to reflect on Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy and how it is currently expressed through performance/dance. Although I adopted similar methods when writing the chapters in this thesis, they appear to revolve around distinct concerns. Consequently, here, I map the main themes that emerged when I answered research questions. These themes form unifying motifs running throughout this thesis:

1. Tuvaluan, Pacific, and Taiwanese understandings of diplomacy, as well as conceptualization, acceptance, and implementation of culture as a mode of diplomacy, are disparate, especially between Tuvalu/the Pacific and Taiwan. These disparities are key to understanding how performative cultural diplomacy is expressed by Tuvalu and Taiwan.
2. The cultural, social, and political understandings Tuvalu and Taiwan hold of themselves are the most potent force in performative cultural diplomacy. These understandings create socio-cultural/socio-political protocols for implementing projects that are distinct and the importance of which may not be understood in target cultures. Simultaneously, anxiety over cultural, social, and political understandings of self and the necessity of upholding protocols in performative cultural diplomacy leads to projects that are more inward- than outward-looking.
3. Although Tuvalu and Taiwan both accept performance/dance as a means of showing culture and effectively promoting cross-cultural understanding, the two countries do not see performance/dance as showing culture in the same way. For example, regardless of what Tuvalu chooses to present in Taiwanese performative contexts, participants in all projects agree that Tuvaluan *fatele* represents/is Tuvaluan culture. Participants in

Taiwanese projects have no sense that a certain dance type directly communicates Taiwanese culture. Thus, varied Tuvaluan and Taiwanese ideas of performance/dance, its ties to culture, and *how* it is effective in forming cross-cultural understanding show that socio-cultural/socio-political contexts must be considered when analyzing Tuvalu-Taiwan relations and performative cultural diplomacy.

4. Tuvalu and Taiwan maintain distinct understandings of indigeneity and its importance in performative cultural diplomacy, with indigeneity forming a salient concept in Taiwanese society and performative cultural diplomacy that is then assumed to have immediate resonance throughout the Pacific. In discussing this theme, I reference terms like Austronesian, Pacific or oceanic, and indigenous to demonstrate how Taiwanese society conflates these concepts. That is, in Taiwan, a nation including people who speak Austronesian languages is seen as equivalent to a nation in the Pacific or Oceania and a nation with citizens who immediately recognize themselves as indigenous (see Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, 2017; 11/29 and 3/1 Interviews). Conversely, Pacific or Oceania is a more meaningful concept for Tuvalu (and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan), and recognition of concepts like Austronesian or indigenous varies from person to person and depending on a country's history and ethnic or cultural composition (10/12, 10/14, and 10/19 Interviews).

Given the research gaps, justification, framework, questions, and themes outlined above, in the next section, I discuss how I conducted my research and outline how this thesis is organized.

A Practical Overview of the Research

In this section, I first introduce three case studies that form the core of this thesis. I begin by discussing case studies to clarify the scope of my project and demonstrate the benefits of using performative cultural diplomacy to examine Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. I further note other official and unofficial performative cultural diplomacy projects that encompass and contextualize case studies and that are critical to analysis conducted in the thesis.

Subsequently, I explain the methods adopted in my research, which are tied to a basic understanding of case studies. I conclude with a chapter outline.

Case studies

Aside from assessing conceptions of diplomacy and discursive histories critical to Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, in this thesis, I also focus on three performative cultural diplomacy projects conducted between 2009 and 2018. Two of these case studies center on Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy; they are projects planned either entirely in Taiwan or by Tuvalu's central government in the capital Funafuti. The single Taiwan case study I analyze is a project that has been planned both locally in Tuvalu and under central government control in Taiwan's capital Taipei. (For the utility of case-study methods in fields like Pacific Studies, see Flyvbjerg, 2011; H. Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017.)

Tuvalu case studies

For Tuvalu, I examine two projects: (1) Participation of the Tuvalu Embassy and The Association of Tuvalu Students in Taiwan (TATST) in the 2013-2016 Asia-Pacific Culture Day (APCD), which is hosted by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Taipei.¹⁴ (2) Participation of the Tuvalu Youth Troupe (TYT) in the 2014 Nan Ying International Folklore Festival (NYIFF), which is hosted by Tainan City Government in southern Taiwan, and a second performance funded by the Cyuanhua Temple Association, which is in central Taiwan.

For the first case study, Taiwan's MOFA sponsored the first APCD in Taipei from 28th to 29th September 2013 to "showcase the diversity and richness of Asia-Pacific cultures" (*Taiwan Today*, 2013, September 30). The APCD was inspired by the Asian Culture Day, which was held in Taipei in 2012, but developing an *Asia-Pacific Culture Day* only became practical after the Tuvalu and Kiribati Embassies were established in Taipei in 2013 and all six of Taiwan's Pacific allies at that time had official diplomatic representation in Taiwan.¹⁵

The APCD is hosted every year in September, October, or November over one weekend. During 2013 and 2014, it was held in the outdoor venue of Huashan Park after which it moved indoors to Taipei Main Station, where it has been held from 2015 to present. Countries defined as being in the Pacific-Asia region and that have an embassy or representative office in Taiwan are invited by MOFA to participate in the event. They are allotted a booth space where they can represent their country as they choose; they are also

¹⁴ Although TATST participated in the 2017 APCD when I was in Taiwan, because they performed together with Kiribati (see the prologue to this chapter), I do not discuss that performance in this thesis. Because the 2018 performance occurred after I had left Taiwan and completed interviews for this research, it is also not discussed.

¹⁵ See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2013, March 14-a; *Epoch Times*, 2013, May 31.

given the opportunity to present one to two 20-minute cultural performances on the festival main stage. Representative offices such as those for New Zealand and South Korea sometimes invite performing groups from their home countries to participate (*The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December). However, performances from Pacific allies are organized by students from those countries who are studying in Taiwan under Taiwan-government scholarships.

Consequently, while funded and organized by Taiwan's MOFA, the APCD is a case of Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan because the Tuvalu Embassy controls the design of its booth at the event and how (or whether) a performance is conducted. Yet, the embassy typically gives TATST—Tuvalu's student organization in Taiwan—free rein to plan performances, and performances also depend on the fluctuating resources available to the embassy and TATST in a given year (e.g., the continuously changing Tuvaluan student population). Because of this, examining the APCD presents an opportunity to understand how Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy is conducted at the local level in Taiwan. It also shows how non-government actors (mainly students), their understandings of links between culture and performance/dance, and their opinions of how Tuvalu should be represented through performance/dance influence Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy. Simultaneously, we can see how Taiwan's aesthetic considerations intervene in the APCD and TATST performances.

To balance the local nature of Tuvalu's participation in the APCD and its relative freedom from direct control by Tuvalu's central government, I consider a supplementary case study: participation of the TYT in the 2014 NYIFF and a solo performance after the festival (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, October 18). The NYIFF, "which was first held in 1996[,] is a biennial festival [hosted in Tainan] mainly ... to [preserve] intangible cultural heritages of nations all over the world and [provide] an opportunity for international cultural exchange" (Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, 2013, p. 1). From a structural perspective, the NYIFF runs for 10 days in October and includes at least three performance types. That is, four- to seven-minute performances for the opening and closing ceremonies where every performing group participates; 20-minute performances troupes present in locations throughout Tainan in combination with one to three other groups; and "Local Life & Cultural [Experiences]" where groups interact with and perform for "host families, schools or ... performance groups" (Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, 2013, p. 2). During the 2014 festival (held from 3rd to 12th October), the TYT participated in at least eight

performances and five “Local Life & Cultural [Experiences]” (Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, 2018). The day after the NYIFF concluded, on 13th October, the TYT also presented a 60-minute performance, “The Sights and Sounds of Tuvalu: An Evening of Dancing with the Tuvalu Youth Troupe,” which was co-hosted by the Cyuanhua Temple Association and the Tuvalu Embassy in central Taiwan. The performance was held to thank the association for partially funding TYT participation at the NYIFF and was paid for by the association.¹⁶

Although the TYT’s travel to Taiwan was financed by Taiwan’s MOFA and Tainan City Government, with supplementary funding provided by the Cyuanhua Temple Association, the Tuvalu government ultimately decided to send the TYT to Taiwan. The troupe was also selected and trained in Tuvalu through a government initiative and traveled to Taiwan with two government officials (Tuvalu’s tourism officer and youth officer). Because the TYT was more directly connected to Tuvalu’s central government than TATST, I examine selection and planning processes for the troupe to determine how performative cultural diplomacy is understood in the central government. I explore how official ideas of diplomacy, culture, and national representation intersect with and are potentially mediated by a Tuvaluan performing group. Furthermore, the experiences of the TYT demonstrate how Tuvaluan conceptions of performance/dance and culture transcend geographic and resource gaps because the TYT and TATST hold similar ideas about how performance/dance represents culture. When in Taiwan, the TYT was also exposed to an aesthetic environment comparable to that in which TATST performs every year. I discuss the effects of this environment on TYT ideas of performance/dance and representation.

Taiwan case study

For Taiwan’s performative cultural diplomacy, I examine a single case study that embodies characteristics found in TATST and TYT projects: the Taiwan Youth Ambassadors (YA) program, in which groups of Taiwanese students traveled to Tuvalu and held performances there from 2009 to 2012 and again in 2014 and 2016.¹⁷ The YA program was inaugurated by Taiwan’s MOFA in 2009 under then President Ma Ying-jeou’s viable diplomacy policy (see

¹⁶ See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, October 8, 2014, October 18, 2015, March 3.

¹⁷ Although the YA project continued into 2018, in 2017, it included only Southeast Asian countries, which were the focus of the 2016 New Southbound Policy inaugurated under newly elected President Tsai Ing-wen (9/24a, 9/26, and 10/6b Interviews; Executive Yuan, ROC, Taiwan, 2016, September 5; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC, Taiwan [MOFA], 2017). The program was modified in 2018 to include Pacific allies, and the YAs performed in Tuvalu. However, because the 2018 performance differed strikingly from 2014 and 2016 performances, I do not focus on that performance in this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Chapter 5 for further discussion) (11/8 and 12/13 Interviews). At first, the program was directed only at Taiwan's Pacific allies (11/8, 11/10a, and 12/13 Interviews), and groups of Taiwanese students were sent through their universities to each of these allies for "diplomacy, education, and culture" exchange (MOFA, 2009, June 26). YAs who visited Tuvalu in 2009 conducted a two-/three-week summer camp that included song and dance exchange with Tuvaluan students, culminating in a joint performance (12/13 Interview). From 2010 to 2013, the YA program expanded and student groups traveled to between 21 and 38 allied and non-allied countries each year.¹⁸ During this period, YA groups visited Tuvalu from 2010 to 2012 and the format of the program was similar to that in 2009. MOFA exercised little control over program content, and universities and student groups were relatively autonomous (9/28, 11/10a, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/13 Interviews).

By 2013, however, Taiwanese media outlets reported that YA groups with little knowledge of Taiwan's indigenous cultures had been using the song, performance/dance, and dress of indigenous peoples during performative exchange. Simultaneously, activists in Taiwan began protesting the careless manner in which YAs were representing indigenous cultures abroad (He, 2013, August 12; 11/8, 12/6, and 12/19a Interviews). Consequently, beginning from 2014, the format of the YA program shifted dramatically. Students no longer visited countries through their universities and instead participated in a general audition during which they were selected by MOFA according to their language or performative/dance skills.

Subsequently, successful applicants trained for six weeks under MOFA supervision and learned a standardized 90-minute performance meant to comprehensively represent Taiwan's multiple cultures. YA groups were then dispatched to several countries in a single region to perform (MOFA, 2014, October 27; Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c). This second iteration of the YA program visited Tuvalu as part of the Asia-Pacific 1 Group in 2014 and the Asia-Pacific Group in 2016.

Although not identical to Tuvalu's TATST/TYT projects, the two versions of the YA program evince similar overarching phenomena. For example, the 2009-2012 iteration of the YA program to Tuvalu, which received little government oversight and included performances partially determined by resources available in Funafuti, is comparable to how TATST operates at the APCD. By contrast, the 2014 and 2016 iteration of the YA program, which entailed a performing group selected by the Taiwan government and performative

¹⁸ See MOFA, 2010, September 29, 2011, May 26, 2012, September 24, 2013, June 25.

representation of Taiwan's culture(s) closely monitored by MOFA, parallels TYT participation at the NYIFF. For this reason, examining the YA program in conversation with the TATST/TYT projects provides an opportunity to consider how Tuvalu and Taiwan conceptualize performative cultural diplomacy, cultural representation, and connections between culture and performance/dance. It also shows that ideas of how culture can or should be "properly" communicated differ both within and between Tuvaluan and Taiwanese societies. Furthermore, the perspectives of non-government actors and audience members who participate in or attend performances highlight socio-cultural contexts encompassing and exerting pressure on official projects.

Adjacent performative/dance events

Despite my focus on TATST, TYT, and YA case studies, a number of other performative cultural diplomacy projects surround and contextualize these cases. For example, during the first iteration of the YA project, then President Ma Ying-jeou visited all of Taiwan's Pacific allies in 2010 accompanied by the Formosa Indigenous Song and Dance Troupe (D. Chang, 2010, August 1; 11/24 Interview). Subsequently, hand puppetry troupes from Taiwan visited Pacific allies in 2011, while the National Kite Association visited in 2012 (MOFA, 2011, November 25; *The China Post*, 2012, August 14); in the same year, indigenous Amis singer-songwriter Suming and his band performed in Palau, Kiribati, and Fiji (*Taiwan Today*, 2012, November 19). At the time, these projects were all arranged by Taiwan's MOFA, but tracing the trajectories performing groups followed after their official Pacific visits reveals that some have continued exchange in the Pacific but rarely through official channels and seldom with Taiwan's Pacific allies (11/10c, 11/24, and 12/19b Interviews). The network of indigenous performing groups we find when more closely examining projects also provides background for controversy over indigenous representation in the YA program.

For Tuvalu, the TYT trip to Taiwan exists in the context of government-organized Tuvaluan groups who have performed in other nations including Japan, the PRC, South Korea, Kazakhstan, and Pacific countries/territories that host the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture.¹⁹ For TATST, APCD performances suggest a broader context where Tuvaluan students in Taiwan have performed their own or other cultures at private events, universities, and commercial venues (10/9 and 11/10b Interviews). This context also includes Tuvaluan

¹⁹ See 4/28, 5/2, 5/11a, 5/16, 5/22b, 5/23, 5/24a, and 6/1 Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4-5.

communities in countries like Fiji and New Zealand who have similarly performed/danced Tuvalu for diplomatic purposes (4/15 and 5/20 Interviews).

Thus, when I discuss case studies, adjacent performative/dance events form an introduction or coda. These sections delineate the cultural, social, political, and performative/dance conditions in which case-study projects exist and that affect these projects and how diplomats, officials, planners, performers, and other participants engage with them. These interludes also enhance our understandings of performative/dance networks in Tuvalu and Taiwan and the status accorded to these networks by the government and society at large.

Methods

To answer my research questions about conceptions of diplomacy and the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship and then reconsider these questions using the case studies outlined above, I adopted three methods: (1) archival/document-based research geared toward gathering primary sources on Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy projects; (2) semi-structured interviews with diplomats/officials and participants in performative cultural diplomacy case studies, and questionnaires or semi-structured interviews with audience members who attended case-study performances; and (3) performance analysis for filmed and live versions of case-study projects. I conducted preliminary archival/document-based research and partial performance analysis in the first year of my PhD. Subsequently, I completed semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and further archival and performance analysis during six months of research in Taiwan (16th September 2017 to 22nd March 2018) and six and a half months in Tuvalu (12th April 2018 to 18th September 2018 and 3rd to 31st January 2019).²⁰ The methods I adopted are outlined below:

Archival/Document-based research

During this project, I gathered primary sources that document the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship, map the history and content of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy,

²⁰ Conducting interviews and performance analysis also entailed participant observation, where I attended rehearsals or other events preceding, following, or encompassing interviews and performative cultural diplomacy projects (see Chou, 2014; Churchward, 2015; Kihleng, 2015). For example, I assisted TATST during the 2017 APCD and the YAs during their 2018 visit to Funafuti and also performed during diplomatic events in Tuvalu. However, I did not adopt participant observation as a sustained method. Instead, I used it as a temporary strategy to strengthen my understanding of interviews and case studies.

and demonstrate how performative cultural diplomacy projects are planned and received.

These sources can be categorized as follows:

1. Taiwanese leadership statements on Tuvalu (and the broader Pacific region) from the end of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan in 1945 to present;
2. Tuvaluan leadership statements on Taiwan from independence in 1978 to present;
3. Public reports from Taiwan's Legislature, MOFA, Ministry of Culture, Council of Indigenous Peoples, Ministry of Education, city and county governments, and universities, and from Tuvalu's Parliament; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment & Labor; Ministry of Home Affairs & Rural Development; Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports; and relevant Pacific regional agencies;
4. Social media content from the Taiwan Embassy in Tuvalu (as well as Taiwan's embassies or former embassies in Nauru, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau) and the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan (as well as the Embassies or former Embassies of Nauru, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau in Taiwan);
5. Taiwanese news coverage, popular documentaries, and popular books about Tuvalu and vice versa;
6. Recordings of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy case studies and social media posts where participants or audience members reflected on these projects;
7. Performance programs, exhibition explanations, CDs, DVDs, and other primary sources provided by performing groups, government organizations, or other institutions during my research in Tuvalu and Taiwan.

Materials were collected during the year preceding my research in Tuvalu and Taiwan and informed how I selected interview participants and the questions I posed during interviews. However, I also continued archival/document-based research while in Tuvalu and Taiwan to access information not readily available outside the two countries or because interview participants recommended new materials (10/20b and 11/9 Interviews). When in Tuvalu and Taiwan, I gathered information mainly at Tuvalu's National Library & Archives and Taiwan's National Taiwan University Library, National Central Library, Academia Historica, and Academia Sinica's Institute of Modern History Archives.

Semi-structured interviews and audience questionnaires/interviews

Semi-structured interviews

While in Tuvalu and Taiwan, I conducted semi-structured interviews with diplomats/officials and participants in performative cultural diplomacy case studies. Although I intended to use oral-history interviews for performers and shorter semi-structured interviews for diplomats/officials (see Chou, 2014; Kihleng, 2015; McNamara, 2009; Yow, 2005), I ultimately adopted a semi-structured format for all interviews. Interviews ranged between one and three hour(s)²¹ and allowed me to achieve more breadth in surveying opinions on diplomacy, performative cultural diplomacy, performance/dance, and case studies than oral-history interviews. An oral-history format would have provided more in-depth understandings of individual participants but would also have required targeting a smaller number of people. However, the semi-structured interviews I adopted were influenced by oral-history techniques outlined in Yow (2005) and oral-history workshops conducted at New Zealand's Alexander Turnbull Library (see Fyfe & Manson, 1989). Given this, I typically asked interviewees about their early lives and experiences, which was beneficial to contextualizing their views on diplomacy and case studies.

The interviews I conducted centered on the following groups:

1. Members of TATST, especially planners and performers for the 2013-2016 APCD. Here, I interviewed students who had arrived in Taiwan in 2009 and every subsequent year until 2016. As a result, TATST interviewees had all participated in the APCD but had different understandings of the event based on when they arrived in Taiwan;
2. Taiwanese students who had participated in the YA program, specifically those who traveled to Tuvalu from 2009 to 2016, and stage managers, choreographers, directors, and consultants who planned large-scale performances featured during the second iteration of the project (2014-2016);
3. Tuvaluan youth who participated in the TYT and Tuvaluan officials involved in planning TYT performances and leading the troupe to Taiwan;
4. Tuvaluan and Taiwanese officials, as well as representatives from non-government institutions, who were involved in APCD, YA, and NYIFF programs,²² and officials who planned other Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects;

²¹ Some interviews were under an hour, but this was rare.

²² MOFA officials involved with the APCD were approached for interviews but declined because they felt the interview topic was somewhat sensitive. However, because MOFA organizers for the YA program, which is considerably more controversial than the APCD, accepted interview invitations, it is difficult to determine why APCD interview requests were declined.

5. Pacific diplomats posted to Taiwan and Taiwanese diplomats posted to Tuvalu. I consulted diplomats about their conceptions of diplomacy, performative cultural diplomacy, and their country's relationship with Taiwan/Tuvalu;
6. Members of Taiwanese performing groups who had traveled to Tuvalu/Pacific allies for government-sponsored projects and members of Tuvaluan groups who had traveled to Asia (and other regions) for official purposes;
7. Non-Tuvaluan Pacific citizens in Taiwan who had experience with performance/dance or their country's participation in performative cultural diplomacy.

I developed a basic schedule for interviews and contacted potential interviewees before departing for Tuvalu/Taiwan. Nevertheless, snowball sampling was important when interviewing TATST, TYT, and YA participants and when locating members of Tuvaluan/Taiwanese performing groups involved in non-case-study projects (Churchward, 2015, p. 59). This was especially true because many performing groups did not have consistent membership or changed names and organizational structures fairly rapidly.

I ultimately completed 104 semi-structured interviews with 119 diplomats/officials, performative cultural diplomacy participants, and other relevant people. I conducted most interviews in Mandarin or English, but, if interviewees requested that another language be used (usually Tuvaluan), I conducted interviews in that language with the help of a translator. I transcribed and abstracted all interviews myself, and I provided recordings, transcripts, and/or abstracts of interviews to all participants who requested them. Interviewees were also able to make corrections or ask that certain parts of their interviews not be reproduced. For transcription methods, I adopted a verbatim approach where I transcribed all speech in an interview recording except for filler words and repetitions that made the text difficult to understand. I chose this method to retain the different speech patterns and styles of interviewees. When translating Mandarin transcripts into English for citation purposes, I also used a verbatim approach.

Audience questionnaires and interviews

Clarke (2016), in reading cultural diplomacy through a Cultural Studies lens, argues that, aside from those planning cultural diplomacy projects, audiences “can [also] be regarded as making meaning with [the] cultural products” of cultural diplomacy (p. 154). In this sense, “whether the meanings audiences make with cultural products line up with the meanings policy-makers seek to project” is never predetermined (p. 156). Consequently, aside from

considering participants in TATST, TYT, and YA case studies, in this research, I also contemplate how audiences constitute the ultimate actors in performative cultural diplomacy—they determine whether projects are “successful” and indicate the extent to which cross-cultural understanding can be cultivated in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations.

Because the 2017 APCD and the 2018 YA program occurred while I was in Taiwan and Tuvalu, respectively, I distributed anonymous paper questionnaires to gather information on audience response at the two events. I collected 41 questionnaires after the 2017 TATST performance at the APCD and 94 questionnaires after the 2018 YA performance (see Chapter 6 for discussion of questionnaire format). However, two students from the Tuvaluan and I-Kiribati communities in Taiwan passed away in 2017 and Taiwan experienced a change of government in 2016 (9/24a, 9/24b, 10/12, 10/14, 10/16, 10/22, 11/9, and 11/10b Interviews). As a result, the 2017 TATST performance and the 2018 YA performance were significantly different from TATST/YA performances I analyze in this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 6). Therefore, I used blog and newspaper reviews on past TATST performances to supplement 2017 questionnaire data. For the YA project, I interviewed Tuvaluans about their impressions of previous YA visits to buttress 2018 questionnaire findings.²³ I also adopted a similar method for TYT participation in the NYIFF, which occurred in 2014 before my project began. Because the TYT performed during the NYIFF and a later event hosted by the Cyuanhua Temple Association and the Tuvalu Embassy, I interviewed representatives from those events/organizations about their opinions of TYT performances and their observations of general audience response. I also asked TATST members and other Tuvaluans who had seen TYT performances to discuss their impressions of these events.

Performance analysis

In the following chapters, I only briefly discuss performative/dance techniques and content for TATST, TYT, and YA case studies. However, thoroughly evaluating all case-study performances was critical to conducting constructive interviews and assessing how case studies demonstrate domestic socio-cultural phenomena and divergent cross-cultural ideas of exchange.

When analyzing performances, I adopted methods posited by Ness (1992), K. M. Teaiwa (2012), and Pavis (2003). From a broad perspective, Ness’s (1992) method of interweaving

²³ Because Taiwan’s population is larger than Tuvalu’s, identifying audience members who had attended previous APCDs was difficult, and I did not conduct follow-up interviews.

participant observation from performative/dance events with performer interviews is a model for my own analytical approach. More specifically, K. M. Teaiwa's (2012) performance analysis, where moving bodies are understood in "[combination] with other kinds of knowledge about history, politics, culture, and society" (p. 73), provides a clear analytical directive. Here, performance analysis is grounded not simply in comprehensive descriptions of performance content and interview findings but also in a broader context that necessitates the archival/document-based research conducted for this project.

From a theoretical standpoint, I adopt Pavis's (2003) concept of vectorization, or the idea that "signs ... form parts of networks, within which each sign only has meaning through the dynamic that relates it to other signs" (p. 17). I especially foreground his corollary argument that, in performance analysis, "one should take into account those sequences when text and stage move out of sync" (p. 22). In this thesis, "text" does not necessarily refer to "script," but can indicate any statement (written or verbal) about the intention or reception of a performative cultural diplomacy project that "[moves] out of sync" with the "stage" (or performance). In my own analysis, vectorization is particularly evident when official statements on a case-study performance align with performances themselves but diverge from interview content, or when performances and interviews both appear at odds with official statements. Moments where "texts" seem at disjuncture with performance are rich analytical nodes in which my integration of archival/document-based research, interviews and questionnaires, and performance analysis demonstrates its greatest strengths.

Chapter outline

Given the theoretical and practical overviews presented above, the chapters constituting this thesis are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chapter 1, I first sketch the experiences and general arguments on which my research is based. Subsequently, I clarify the concepts and methods underpinning this thesis. I provide an overview of the research gaps, justification, framework, questions, and themes guiding the project and outline case studies and methods adopted when conducting this research.

Chapter 2: Rethinking Diplomacy and its Cultural, Social, and Political Contexts: The Diplomacies of Tuvalu, Taiwan's Other Pacific Partners, and Taiwan

In Chapter 2, I first reflect on research about diplomacy and Pacific-Asia IR. I then use interviews with Tuvaluan and Taiwanese diplomats/officials, as well as other Pacific diplomats in Taiwan, to outline cultural, social, and political contexts for diplomacy. Specifically, I analyze interviews with Pacific diplomats in Taiwan, discussing how diplomats link meanings of diplomacy to socio-cultural protocols in their countries. I emphasize three main ideas diplomats used to explain diplomacy: bartering/exchange, building/maintaining friendships, and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships. I next consider how interviews with Tuvaluan diplomats/officials center on themes similar to those outlined by other Pacific diplomats, but I also examine the alofa, or “giving of gifts,” which is crucial to Tuvaluan diplomacy in various contexts. I demonstrate how the alofa converges with Pacific ideals while also underscoring key concepts in Tuvaluan diplomacy: communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality. In the second half of the chapter, I discuss how Taiwanese diplomats/officials contemplate diplomacy, particularly how Taiwan’s competition with the PRC creates negative conceptions of official diplomacy. Because Taiwan sees diplomatic allies as always about to sever ties *and* of low quality, Taiwanese ideas of diplomacy clash with Tuvaluan/Pacific conceptions. I illustrate this by analyzing tensions in Taiwan’s presidential visits to Tuvalu/Pacific allies. Finally, I discuss a facet of Taiwan’s diplomacy unique to Tuvalu/the Pacific: Austronesian diplomacy. I explore how Taiwan uses linguistic similarities between indigenous and Pacific peoples to strengthen diplomatic ties. However, I also show that Austronesian diplomacy is multiply understood in Taiwan and the Pacific and sometimes amplifies negative conceptions of Pacific allies in Taiwan.

Chapter 3: Reframing Diplomatic Relationships: Discursive Histories and Underlying Assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan Relations

In Chapter 3, I use archival/document-based research and media analysis to examine official and popular discourse in the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship. For official discourse, I show how early official rhetoric on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations is characterized by narratives and trans-local engagements. These narratives and engagements reflect fragmented understandings of diplomacy at the time but also sometimes structured how Tuvalu and Taiwan identified themselves. In discussing official discourse from 2000 to present, I trace the hardening of this identification process, where Tuvalu and Taiwan use discourse about each other to characterize themselves in various contexts. Here, I also indicate thematic confluences apparent in official discursive histories. For example, Tuvalu has consistently articulated

Taiwan to discourse on fisheries transgressions that unifies Tuvalu and the Pacific region in mutual protest. For its part, Taiwan has regularly included Tuvalu in official discourse on its relationship to the Pacific, and discussions of whether Taiwan is superior or equal to the Pacific are a recurring motif. In the second half of the chapter, I examine Tuvaluan and Taiwanese popular discourse. I show that, while disparities exist between official Tuvaluan efforts to construct Taiwan and a popular tendency away from such constructions, Taiwan's official and popular discourse rely on continuously defining Tuvalu. Thus, although Tuvaluans are aware of Taiwan's presence *in* Tuvalu and view this presence positively, Taiwan's news media actively structures understandings of Tuvalu as an *international entity*. These understandings are ethnocentric and demonstrate preoccupation with climate change and Taiwanese sovereignty. Throughout Chapter 3, I also show how diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2 connect to and diverge from discourse in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. Furthermore, I demonstrate that, when combined with Chapter 2, Chapter 3 helps explain assumptions underlying performative cultural diplomacy projects discussed in Chapters 4 to 6, as well as how these projects might overturn or complicate assumptions.

Chapter 4: Culture Performed?: Fatele, Siva, Fakaseasea/Fakanau, and Tuvalu's Performative Cultural Diplomacy in Taiwan

In Chapter 4, I begin by discussing current research that suggests the importance of considering diplomatic contingency/complexity, Performance/Dance Studies, and performative cultural diplomacy when examining diplomacy and assumptions underlying diplomatic relationships. I then analyze interviews and archival information relevant to TATST and TYT performances in Taiwan, highlighting internal and external tensions conspicuous in these performances. I first discuss the importance to Tuvalu of the performative/dance form *fatele* (which is linked to the *alofa* discussed in Chapter 2), especially as it relates to domestic diplomacy and cultural representation. I then map performance protocols adopted by TATST at the 2013-2016 APCD and by the TYT at the 2014 NYIFF. I sketch internal tension in TATST/TYT performances that emerges because Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers all hope to perform *fatele* in Taiwan but disagree over how *fatele* should be presented. I next examine external tension in performances, outlining how the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments espouse similar official discourse on the APCD/NYIFF but contrast sharply when imagining how this discourse should be realized. I also explore recent changes in how Tuvaluan officials develop international performing groups that show new similarities with Taiwanese discourse on

successful performative cultural diplomacy. Finally, I tie case-study analysis to conceptions of diplomacy from Chapter 2 and assumptions from Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: Programming Performance?: Re-Presenting Taiwan's Culture(s) and Taiwan's Performative Cultural Diplomacy in Tuvalu

In Chapter 5, I analyze performances and interviews relevant to Taiwan's YA program, focusing on how the program was enacted from 2009 to 2016. I first introduce the general policy considerations that gave rise to the YA project in Taiwan. I then consider how performance/dance factored differently in the 2009-2013 and 2014-2016 versions of the program and how the 2009-2013 version may have enabled more direct performative exchange between YAs and their Tuvaluan counterparts. Subsequently, I demonstrate that, although the 2014-2016 project mobilized infinitely more resources than the 2009-2013 program, it was more of a domestic conversation than a foundation for exchange because it emphasized "properly" representing Taiwan's culture(s) and developing "professional" performances. Based on interviews with YAs, however, I also show that Tuvalu exerted its own pressure on the 2014-2016 project, which left deep impressions on Taiwanese participants and led to direct interactions with Tuvaluan society. Additionally, I consider whether assumptions outlined in Chapter 3 affected YAs who traveled to Tuvalu and how the program may have changed assumptions. Finally, I outline controversies surrounding indigenous representation in the YA project to reflect on the broader adoption of indigenous performance in Taiwan's diplomacy with Tuvalu and other Pacific allies. I conclude by analyzing how the YA program evinces Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy and phenomena in Taiwan's Austronesian diplomacy discussed in Chapter 2 and look at convergences and divergences with Chapter 4.

Chapter 6: Reinforcing, Complicating, or Overcoming Assumptions?: Audience Reception and Tuvalu-Taiwan Performative Cultural Diplomacy

In Chapter 6, I outline phenomena in audience response for the three case studies examined in this thesis. I look at how contexts and assumptions discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 affect audiences and how processes in audience meaning-making compare to those for performative cultural diplomacy participants described in Chapters 4 and 5. I first show that TATST, TYT, and YA participants believed that their performances did not create audience understanding but did elicit curiosity, encouraging audiences to engage in self-learning about Tuvalu/Taiwan. I next examine Taiwanese audience reactions to TATST/TYT performances.

I analyze how general audiences understood TATST performances and then consider how specialized audiences (e.g., VIP guests, special-interest news reporters, and tour guides) received the TYT and sometimes used institutional agendas to interpret performances. When analyzing Tuvaluan reception for YA performances, I outline general-audience response, use interviews to examine lasting impressions of performances, and explore how Taiwan's "professionalism" discourse hindered understandings of performance content. For specialized audience members (e.g., Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists), I demonstrate how these audiences interpreted performances using holistic assessments of the YA program. I conclude by discussing different ideas of what makes performative cultural diplomacy successful. I also consider which audience types found performances effective and whether performative cultural diplomacy reinforces, complicates, or overcomes assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Reconceptualizing International Relations, Taiwan, and the Practice of Performative Cultural Diplomacy

In the Conclusion, I summarize major findings and then adopt a Pacific Studies perspective to reassess IR and the place of Taiwan in the Pacific. I first explore how Pacific Studies and Performance/Dance Studies expand IR research. These fields encourage us to consider indigenous/local epistemologies and diplomatic contingency/complexity and reveal interactions between Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific that belie generalizations in research on Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations. Subsequently, I discuss Taiwan's place in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. I contemplate phenomena that evince both Taiwan's connections to and distance from the Pacific and consider whether Taiwan can be included in Pacific Studies. I conclude by outlining policy recommendations for diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy I developed using diplomatic conceptions and case studies discussed in this thesis.

Chapter 2:

Rethinking Diplomacy and its Cultural, Social, and Political Contexts: The Diplomacies of Tuvalu, Taiwan's Other Pacific Partners, and Taiwan

Tuvalu language, it's very limited. Some of the English words, it's very hard to get a [Tuvaluan] word. If you try to get a word, you [are] just explaining and a lot, but for a word for that, [an] English word, it's hard. Diplomacy. It's very hard ... (11/10b Interview)

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine interviews with Tuvaluan and Taiwanese diplomats/officials, as well as other Pacific diplomats in Taiwan, to outline cultural, social, and political contexts encompassing and influencing the term diplomacy. I first consider research on diplomacy and Pacific-Asia International Relations (IR) to demonstrate how highlighting different ideas of diplomacy expands understandings of foreign affairs. I then focus on interviews with non-Tuvaluan Pacific diplomats in Taiwan, discussing how these diplomats link meanings of diplomacy to socio-cultural protocols in their countries. I emphasize three main ideas interviewees used to explain diplomacy: bartering/exchange, building/maintaining friendships, and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships. Subsequently, I consider how Tuvalu's diplomacy centers on themes similar to those outlined by other Pacific diplomats, but I also examine the alofa, or "giving of gifts," which is crucial to Tuvaluan diplomacy at intra-island, inter-island, and international levels. I demonstrate how the alofa converges with diplomatic ideals expressed by other Pacific diplomats while also underscoring concepts key to Tuvaluan diplomacy: communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality.

In the second half of the chapter, I discuss how Taiwanese diplomats/officials contemplate diplomacy, specifically how Taiwan's competition with the PRC creates negative conceptions of diplomacy. Because Taiwan sees diplomatic allies as always on the verge of severing ties but also considers allies low quality and requiring "improvement," Taiwanese

ideas of diplomacy clash with Tuvaluan/Pacific conceptions. I use Taiwan's presidential visits to Tuvalu and other Pacific allies to illustrate this tension. Finally, I explore a facet of Taiwan's diplomacy unique to Tuvalu/the Pacific: Austronesian diplomacy. I describe how Taiwan has used linguistic similarities between Pacific peoples and indigenous peoples in Taiwan to strengthen Pacific-Taiwan diplomatic ties. However, I also show that Austronesian diplomacy is multiply understood in Taiwan and the Pacific and sometimes amplifies Taiwan's negative conceptions of Pacific allies.

Current Research on Diplomacy and its Cultural, Social, and Political Contexts

In discussing New Zealand's foreign policy in the Pacific, T. Teaiwa (2012) aptly explains that "[the] popular impression of foreign affairs and international relations conjures an image of men—and a few women—in suits signing treaties or shaking hands over important political and economic agreements" (p. 241). Descriptions of diplomacy proffered in dictionaries and handbooks confirm this impression. Diplomacy is defined as the "principal means by which states communicate with each other," "the communications system of the international society," and "any attempt to promote international negotiations" (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012). As noted in Chapter 1, diplomacy is often narrowly delineated and is predicated on imaginings of an international society that, if at odds on policy, has at least agreed on how official communication should occur.

Yet, many scholars of Diplomatic Studies (DS) and IR now contest the assumption that diplomacy is simply the "means by which states communicate with each other" (Adler-Nissen, 2015, pp. 22-23; Sharp, 2003, pp. 857-858). These academics contend that accepted ideas of diplomacy are inherently Eurocentric or Western (Henrikson, 2005, p. 370; McConnell, Moreau, & Dittmer, 2012, p. 804)²⁴ and argue that the Eurocentric origins and assumptions of diplomacy reinforce intellectual colonization when they "become the norm to which others conform" (McConnell, Moreau, & Dittmer, 2012, p. 806). Accordingly, academics advocate for a broadening of the term diplomacy, seeing it as culturally specific and constituted of "lived practices" (Neumann, 2002, p. 628). Recent studies assert that "conventional approaches to diplomacy ... are not able to account for either the rich history or current complexity of the diplomatic world" (Constantinou, 2006, p. 352) and that "what

²⁴ See Constantinou, 2013, p. 142; Marsden, Ibañez-Tirado, & Henig, 2016, p. 14; Neumann, 2002, pp. 638-639.

one knows in diplomacy and what one makes of that knowledge depends on what one understands diplomacy to be” (Constantinou, 2013, p. 144). Consequently, although imposed Eurocentric ideas may dominate diplomatic thought, cultural, social, and political understandings also determine how diplomacy is perceived and how the definitions held by various actors and nations differ (see Marsden, Ibañez-Tirado, & Henig, 2016). Importantly, this idea dovetails with emphasis on indigenous/local epistemologies highlighted in the Pacific Studies research framework outlined in Chapter 1.

However, despite trends toward critically examining diplomacy’s Eurocentric foundations, research on Pacific and Asian diplomacies has failed to investigate what diplomacy means in these regions. For example, and as suggested in Chapter 1, in *The New Pacific Diplomacy*, editors Fry and Tarte (2015) do not complicate the phrase Pacific diplomacy. They refer to it instead as

[The] diplomacy pursued by Pacific states in global forums, or in multilateral arenas in which the Pacific bloc is negotiating with just one external power[;] the diplomatic activity concerned with establishing the diplomatic institutions in which regional diplomacy is carried out and a Pacific joint position is negotiated[; and] the accepted principles, norms and practices which underpin regional diplomacy (p. 5)

Additionally, chapters in the edited volume largely overlook cultural, social, and political understandings of diplomacy that signal how members in the “Pacific bloc” conceptualize diplomacy differently from each other and the “external [powers]” with which they negotiate.

Taiwan, like other Asian locales, is beset by similar conceptual lacuna. Thus, in examining diplomacy and soft power in Taiwan, Rawnsley (2012) argues that “[de-Westernisation] is important since much of the early work on soft power was based on an implicit cultural exceptionalism[,] the union of universal with American and ultimately ‘right’ values” (p. 125). Although academics have pointed out that the PRC, Japan, and Taiwan adopt conceptions of foreign aid, soft power, and cultural diplomacy different from those in the West,²⁵ nuanced discussion of how diplomacy itself accrues multiple meanings is lacking.

Yet, as suggested by recent work in DS/IR and by Pacific Studies research frameworks, examining cultural, social, and political contexts is critical to understanding Pacific and Asian diplomacies. While we typically think diplomatic conflicts are created by differing national interests or negotiating positions, the histories, cultures, and socio-political contexts of

²⁵ See Edney, 2012; Heng, 2010; Varrall, 2014; H. Wang & Lu, 2008; W. Zhang, 2010.

countries (or regions) may also engender ideas of diplomacy that are fundamentally different and that cause tension in diplomatic engagements. Lazrus (2015) adopted the Cultural Theory of Risk in identifying how people on Nanumea (one of Tuvalu's eight islands) conceptualize climate change. Her argument that the distinct worldviews of Nanumeans, national planners, and international agencies might cause conflict in adaptation planning recommends a similar discussion of how Taiwanese, Tuvaluan, and other Pacific ideas of diplomacy reflect distinct epistemologies (see also Neumann, 2011, p. 302).

Consequently, in the remainder of this chapter, I consider the following question: What are Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, how do conceptions of diplomacy expressed by non-Tuvaluan Pacific diplomats in Taiwan bolster or contradict these conceptions, and how do these conceptions compare with those expressed by Taiwanese diplomats/officials? Below, I first outline themes in socio-cultural understandings of diplomacy that emerged during interviews with Pacific diplomats in Taiwan before discussing conceptions of diplomacy expressed by Tuvaluan diplomats/officials. Subsequently, I focus on socio-political²⁶ conceptions of diplomacy conveyed by Taiwanese diplomats/officials and consider how the precarious nature of Taiwan's diplomatic alliances shapes imaginings of diplomacy. I then examine how indigeneity is integrated into Taiwanese ideas of Pacific relations through Taiwan's Austronesian diplomacy. I outline contested understandings of Austronesian diplomacy in Taiwan and for Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomats and citizens.

The Socio-Cultural Contexts of Pacific Diplomacies in Taiwan: Bartering/Exchange, Building Friendships, and Reinforcing Inter-Island Relationships

During my research in Taiwan in 2017 and 2018, Tuvalu, Nauru, Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, then Taiwan's six allies in the Pacific, were represented in Taiwan through embassies, while Papua New Guinea (PNG), which is not an ally, was unofficially represented through a trade office (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC, Taiwan [MOFA], 2018a, 2018b). In September 2019, Solomon Islands and Kiribati broke relations with Taiwan and no longer have offices there. However, I still include the views of Solomon

²⁶ I use socio-cultural to describe Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomatic conceptions and socio-political to describe Taiwanese conceptions because the societies of Taiwan, Tuvalu, and other Pacific nations all inform diplomatic ideas. However, Taiwan's current political situation overrides cultural conceptions of diplomacy, whereas Tuvaluan and other Pacific officials clearly emphasize ties between diplomacy and culture.

Islands and Kiribati diplomats in this chapter and comment in the Conclusion to this thesis on how these views may have influenced decisions to leave Taiwan.

For this section of the research, I conducted interviews with the Palau, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands ambassadors to Taiwan; the deputy chief of mission (DCM) for the Marshall Islands; and the trade representative for PNG. The Nauru Embassy declined to participate in the interview process. I also interviewed former and current Tuvalu ambassadors to Taiwan, as well as several Tuvaluan officials; their interviews are discussed in the next section.

Here, I examine socio-cultural concepts of diplomacy discussed during interviews with Solomon Islands, PNG, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats in Taiwan. It is important to note that, because Pacific diplomats in Taiwan meet as an official group to discuss common concerns and arrange joint communication with the Taiwan government, they clearly see themselves as having related goals (10/20a and 11/10b Interviews).

Accordingly, the socio-cultural ideas that inform how these Pacific diplomats envision diplomacy provide context for understanding how Tuvalu sees diplomacy. They also show how scholarship on unified Pacific foreign affairs (see Fry & Tarte, 2015) is complicated by the varied socio-cultural conceptions that shape diplomacy in different Pacific places.

During interviews with Pacific diplomats, most interviewees initially discussed diplomacy in general terms that reflected the Eurocentric foundations of diplomacy described in the previous section (10/12, 10/20a, 11/21, and 12/4 Interviews). In these cases, diplomacy was seen as something that required training and as removed from society and culture. As a result, the Solomon Islands ambassador noted difficulty when describing the socio-cultural contexts of diplomacy:

[You] are schooled through certain thoughts too.... [So], it's also influenced me that I perceive things, and ... to be honest, I struggle sometimes to try and go back and really get a good hold on what I traditionally would believe had worked for me ... Cause I can tell you what my official role is, I can spell it out for you very clear. And it will be what you have heard from ambassador from Kiribati. From Tuvalu. (10/20a Interview)

However, because diplomacy is also a relatively new term in many Pacific nations with no direct translation (10/12, 11/10b, and 12/4 Interviews), when asked how they might explain diplomacy in their native languages, diplomats adopted socio-cultural protocols specific to their countries or cultures. Below, I outline three main ideas diplomats used to explain

diplomacy: bartering/exchange, building/maintaining friendships, and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships.²⁷

“[For] us, diplomacy is not making friends with others”:

Bartering/Exchange systems in Solomon Islands and PNG

During their interviews, the Solomon Islands ambassador and PNG trade representative explained that, in socio-cultural frameworks familiar to them, diplomacy was not a method of building friendships. Instead, it was a means of developing strategic relationships that extended pathways for mobility.²⁸

For example, the Solomon Islands ambassador posited that his tribe from Langa Langa would think of diplomacy as *usina*, or “bartering”:

My tribe ... we're regarded as the group ... which makes this shell monies and which is used widely now throughout the Solomons as a currency for traditional transactions.... And so, for us, diplomacy is not making friends with others, it's building relationships that can safeguard our interests and our tribal identity. So, we're very protective about our own group, you know? So, we often are not generous.... So, I suppose for us, diplomacy is sizing people—others enough to be able to realize that, yes, I have something to gain from it that I can then engage with you.... So, for me, then, diplomacy is [cautious].... So, the word that we use is *usina*. *Usina* is like bartering.... [People] come to our tribe on Langa Langa, in our artificial island—because we don't live on the mainland, people have to paddle out to get to us. And that, to us, gives us a lot of opportunities. If they're enemies, we'll sink their canoes So, *usina* to us becomes a ceremonial gathering [before] we go to trade—barter our shell money That *usina* is the end part of a ceremony, but, then, it's the beginning of relationship-building because ... once we find someone who's a very trusted partner, we will tend to stay with them. (10/20a Interview)

For the Solomon Islands ambassador, diplomatic alliances are not friendship but a cautious and mutually beneficial negotiation process.

²⁷ When diplomats discuss conceptions of diplomacy, their explanations may not reflect the opinions of all people in their country. However, their views do indicate differing ideas of diplomacy and warrant examination.

²⁸ The specious and racialized history of Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian sub-divisions in the Pacific is unquestionable (Tcherkézoff, 2003). Nevertheless, it is notable that conceptions of diplomacy overlap in nations typically identified as Melanesian (i.e., Solomon Islands and PNG).

Similarly, the PNG trade representative described diplomacy as trade, exchange, and bartering, seeing it as similar to the Moka exchange system practiced in his region of PNG:

[Diplomacy] is about making the connections and making the relations, so, I mean, we have had that.... [Generally], it's referred to as exchange, or the definition ... that we refer to is it's the name that is given traditionally as Moka, or it's ... sort of a traditional exchange that is done[. It's] common in the Highlands where I come from. You know, in it, traditionally, you tie pigs, make feasts and festivals, and then comes singing, dancing, cultural dancing, and then sharing food, and that's the mode of diplomacy that traditionally has been practiced.... [Like,] my grandfather, for example, he was limited, he was restricted in his movements ... [So,] he was dictated in terms of where, which tribe he can marry, or if he had to travel, see people, which people he can deal with. Yeah, but that boundaries would be extended ... by that exchange system So, ... to define diplomacy in the traditional background, it is exchange.... [And,] when that exchange took place, it opened pathways for relations, and then ... you know, it also was a means of making peace. (11/21 Interview)

To the PNG representative, exchange through the Moka system is equivalent to diplomacy because it overcomes obstacles to movement. In contrast to the Solomon Islands ambassador, the representative did not emphasize being shrewd or cautious in considering optimal exchange partners. He did, however, similarly highlight the importance of a tangible exchange of goods and the phenomenon of being isolated until exchange had occurred. The representative also underscored how exchange could initiate peace, which presupposes a general state of affairs characterized by enmity rather than tacit friendship.

Yet, Solomon Islands and PNG explanations of diplomacy as bartering/exchange differed rather sharply from ideas highlighted by Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats, who saw diplomacy as building/maintaining friendships or properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships. The Solomon Islands ambassador even suggested this potential tension, explaining that

[There's] a popular term we use in Solomon Islands, which is the name of a song: "Walkabout Long Chinatown." Walkabout is like you're just walking around happily, and, you know, you're gonna run into so many good things. [The] thing at the end is always happiness to you and joy. And I think ... that's what tends to make life flow in

the smaller islands. You know, in Tuvalu, in Kiribati, Nauru, and Niue, etc. (10/20a Interview)

“[Our] word for ‘diplomatic allies’ ... is jimjera, [which] literally translates to ‘friendship’ ”: Building/Maintaining friendships in the Marshall Islands

In her interview, the Marshall Islands DCM repeatedly referenced the status of culture in the Marshall Islands, highlighting how culture has molded Marshallese ideas of governance and foreign policy:

[We] value greatly the opportunity to share with other countries ... what our cultural values are, and what we value and why we value them.... [It’s] written in the Preamble of the Constitution. It’s also in the foreign policy. It’s in the development agenda. It’s very—we value our culture (12/4 Interview)

[The] culture, we call it manit, is enshrined in our Constitution and in everything, every living document that the government operates under (12/4 Interview)

However, when linking socio-cultural contexts to diplomacy, the DCM outlined understandings that diverged from ideas of bartering/exchange conveyed by Solomon Islands and PNG diplomats. The DCM not only explained that “our word for ‘diplomatic allies’ or ‘diplomatic relationships’ ... is jimjera, [which] literally translates to ‘friendship’,” she also provided a translation of diplomacy rooted in concepts of congeniality:

There’s not a word for “diplomacy,” but ... , in Marshallese, if I loosely translated it, it’s “interacting with your friends or maintaining your friendships ... with ... friends from outside the borders.” (12/4 Interview)

The DCM further outlined how diplomatic-type friendships might be optimally cultivated:

I think it’s just ... respecting people for, I mean, their differences, embracing their differences, and then also understanding the similarities and building on those [similarities.] [Understanding] the culture, why they value what they value. (12/4 Interview)

Here, the DCM uses the term friendship to convey what diplomacy means in Marshallese and emphasizes that friendships are built through cultural understanding, especially the promotion

of similar cultural values. The Solomon Islands and PNG focus on using tangible exchange to initiate relationships or on being shrewd in selecting partners is absent; more weight is given to seeing allies as unconditional friends and then using culture to develop friendships.

“[If the people] visit another village, ... it’s a big thing, ... the chiefs have to be involved”: Properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships in Kiribati and Palau

For the Kiribati ambassador, divergent colonial legacies distanced Kiribati’s diplomatic practices from those of Palau and the Marshall Islands:

[In] the Pacific, even between ourselves, there might be differences. Like, for example, myself, Tuvalu, Nauru, we would be very different in our approach from Palau, Marshalls, who I think they are more aggressive in their history with the U.S.... So, we would be more quiet, more reserved (10/12 Interview)

Yet, the Palau and Kiribati ambassadors outlined similar socio-cultural conceptions for diplomacy, and their discussions also overlapped with ideas expressed by the Marshall Islands DCM. That is, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats all emphasized the importance of friendship to conceptions of diplomacy. However, whereas the Marshall Islands DCM directly referenced friendship when translating diplomacy, the Palau and Kiribati ambassadors saw diplomacy more as the cultural knowledge required to build/reinforce inter-island relationships. Specifically, the Kiribati ambassador understood diplomacy as culture, tradition, and manners, as well as protocols necessary when discussing issues in an island in Kiribati that was not one’s native island. The Palau ambassador similarly understood diplomacy as the cultural protocols needed when traveling to islands in Palau that were not one’s own or between Palau and its traditional partners Guam and Yap:

Kiribati ambassador: I would say that diplomacy would fall under te katei. Te katei can also mean culture, can mean tradition[.] So, it can mean manners, you know? ... [For] example, if I come and I’m from one island, and I come trying to ... propose changes to people from another island, you have to have the proper—to impart yourself properly and that could be diplomacy, but ... , for us, it would fall under te katei. (10/12 Interview)

Palau ambassador: I don't think there's one word for diplomacy.... But we do have a word for if Palau goes and visits Guam or Yap [But] not—more on cultural exchange It would mean that, for example, if one island in Palau ... [goes] and [visits] another village, ... it's a big thing, you know—the chiefs have to be involved So, it's like diplomacy, but at the local level. But that, we have one word for it. And when you say it, it means—you automatically understand, “Oh.” It's more than just dancing and eating, you know? People have to talk (3/1 Interview)

Rather than understanding diplomacy as bartering/exchange, the Palau ambassador also explained that observing inter-island protocols is crucial to conceptions of diplomacy because it ensures that due care and concern is extended to travelers. Emphasis rests on guaranteeing that proper attention is paid to visitors rather than on guaranteeing that the visitor and the visited extract mutual benefits:

[Culturally], if, and, traditionally, if I went from one island to another—before, I remember when I was in high school and [there was a] school trip, my grandfather would write a letter to the chief in that village, you know. And I would carry the letter there and, “Oh. This is my child. In May, she's coming. And, so, I would be very happy if her welfare is well taken care of.” And, sometimes, when you go to the village, ... if there's a storm and you get stuck there, people are—when you go there, they feed you in the morning, noon, and night. So, the chiefs have to be told that ... and, when you go, even though you're just a school student, they come and welcome you.... It's all said and it's all pre-planned from generation to generation. So, when you go, you know, it's just automatic. [Interviewer: ... Is that something that you think carries over into how ... the Government of Palau (thinks) about relationships with other countries? Like, that sort of a feeling of—] Of closer ties and friendship? Probably. (3/1 Interview)

This description is significant to Tuvaluan ideas of diplomacy discussed in the next section. It also dovetails with concepts of customary visits in other Pacific settings, such as Samoan practices of malaga (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009; Salesa, 2003).

In the examples outlined above, Pacific diplomats in Taiwan situate diplomacy in socio-cultural contexts they see as approximating internationally accepted ideas of diplomacy but that also shape how they uniquely conceptualize diplomacy. Additionally, interviewees saw diverging contexts and systems as best communicating the significance of diplomacy in their

countries. This is apparent when comparing views from the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau with those from Solomon Islands and PNG. Notably also, for Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats, conceptions of diplomacy that center on building friendships and the protocols of reinforcing inter-island relationships differ quite significantly from Taiwanese ideas of diplomacy. This tension is examined in the fifth section of this chapter.

The Socio-Cultural Contexts of Tuvaluan Diplomacy: Communication/Cooperation, Non-Confrontation, Hospitality, and the Alofa

From a Tuvaluan perspective, socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy, which shape understandings of the term and its practices, also exist. For this section of the research, I conducted interviews with the former and current resident Tuvalu ambassadors to Taiwan; the assistant secretary responsible for foreign affairs at Tuvalu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment & Labor (MFATTEL); MFATTEL's Asia desk officer; other relevant officials; and Tuvalu's island leaders²⁹. These interviews demonstrated that, although Tuvaluan diplomats/officials do not ascribe to the Solomon Islands concept of bartering, they do highlight diplomatic conceptions similar to those communicated by diplomats from the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Palau, and PNG. That is, for Tuvalu, building/maintaining friendships, properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships, and exchange are integral to imaginings of diplomacy. However, like diplomats from the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, Tuvaluan diplomats/officials focused less on links between exchange and diplomacy and saw diplomacy more as building/maintaining friendships and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships. Critically, communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality were also key to Tuvalu's diplomatic conceptions.

Consequently, in this section, I first outline ideas of diplomacy described by Tuvaluan interviewees. I demonstrate that, like other Pacific diplomats, Tuvaluan diplomats/officials maintain both internationally accepted and socio-cultural ideas of diplomacy. Subsequently, I examine the Tuvaluan alofa to illustrate how building/maintaining friendships, properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships, and exchange, as well as communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality, constitute Tuvaluan

²⁹ Although Tuvalu's eight islands are represented in the central government, each island also has its own government where island leaders are either elected or selected from certain family lines.

diplomacy. Finally, I discuss how connections between the alofa and Tuvalu's socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy have led to its current use in international diplomatic settings.

Based on interviews and participant observation, I see two performative/dance forms as critical to Tuvalu's diplomacy: the alofa and fatele. In Chapter 4, I discuss fatele as it relates to Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan. In this chapter, I focus on the alofa because it includes fatele in its structure and because, unlike fatele, which is a performative/dance form sometimes used for diplomatic purposes, the alofa is a self-contained diplomatic protocol first practiced in Tuvalu and then adopted in Tuvalu's international diplomacy.

“[That’s] what I want for our foreign service: ... to keep your Tuvaluan-ness, but to be also firm”: General and socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy in Tuvalu

Similar to other Pacific diplomats in Taiwan, when discussing diplomacy, Tuvaluan diplomats/officials would first describe internationally accepted ideas of diplomacy like those outlined in the second section of this chapter. These discussions typically highlighted vague understandings of what diplomacy entailed. For example, the first resident Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan emphasized his lack of “formal” (or Western) training in diplomacy and linked this to challenges he encountered during his first diplomatic posting:

I was not trained to become a diplomat, which I supposed to be somebody who should know things about diplomacy. [But] the new things that I learned [in Suva] was—in particular, which was a challenge to me, was the ability to know how to negotiate things.... But it's not easy ... [Particularly] from the aspect of diplomacy, or keeping yourself, you know—you have to be diplomatic. (5/20 Interview; see also 11/10b Interview)

If not ambiguously defined as “[being] diplomatic” or “[knowing] things about diplomacy,” here, understandings of diplomacy centered on the importance of negotiation.

However, when I asked the MFATTEL assistant secretary for foreign affairs and former government personnel about conceptions of diplomacy, they tied them directly to socio-cultural contexts. For example, interviewees explained that when translating diplomacy into Tuvaluan, they would use the term “sokotaki” (“cooperation” or “communication”) or the

phrase “sokotakiiga mo niisi fenua mai tua” (“the art of communicating in a manner that every, all parties understand each other and respect each other without offending”) (10/19 and 4/20 Interviews). One former government employee even explained that, while he would translate diplomacy as “sokotaki” (to him, “cooperation”), he did not think there was a Tuvaluan term for negotiation (10/19 Interview), a practice the former ambassador to Taiwan saw as key to international diplomatic work. This underscores the significance of cooperation and communication to Tuvaluan socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy. Yet, it also suggests that ideas of negotiation indicated in the Solomon Islands concept of bartering are not as relevant.

Furthermore, the MFATTEL assistant secretary for foreign affairs highlighted what she saw as a disparity between Tuvaluan culture and international diplomatic practice:

[We] are very laid-back. [So,] that’s kind of ok, but, in a diplomatic field, you can’t be laid-back.... We are also very nice, hospitable, and sometimes that can be taken as weakness So, sometimes, people might think that we are letting people walk over us, but it’s just because it’s in our blood to treat you nice when you come. Like, to feed you a whole buffet.... So, that’s what I want to get across. Our being nice is not that we are weak, it’s just that we have to be nice to you.... [Because] Tuvaluans by tradition or nature, we are not very confrontational.... [So, that’s] what I want for our foreign service: to be nice, to keep your Tuvaluan-ness, but to be also firm. (4/20 Interview)

Accordingly, maintaining Tuvaluan socio-cultural values in diplomacy entails communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality (see also Besnier, 2000, pp. 24-26). These ideals have been officially emphasized since 1986 when the Tuvalu Constitution was revised to foreground “special Tuvalu values ... of interdependence[,] consensus rather than confrontation,” and “courtesy” (*Tuvalu Echoes*, 1986, October 9-a, 1986, November 6).³⁰ Notably, these values, especially non-confrontation and hospitality, are similar to suggestions by the Marshall Islands DCM that diplomacy is equivalent to the building/maintaining of friendships but again diverge from ideas of bartering expressed by the Solomon Islands ambassador.

Finally, discussions with island leaders in Tuvalu also indicated that properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships is crucial to diplomatic imaginings,

³⁰ See also Leupena, 1988, October 1, p. 1.

underscoring similarities to views expressed by the Palau and Kiribati ambassadors. As the former Ulu Alik, or “head chief,” for the island of Vaitupu³¹ explained,

In our custom, we [Tuvalu’s eight islands and the central government] are the same.... If [the central government does] not ask—if they come [to Vaitupu], no one will bother them.... They have to let us know first they are willing to come.... They do not come here and walk up, then want to eat and die here. We have to look after them. (5/3a Interview; see also 5/9b Interview)

Here, the former Ulu Alik suggests that relationships between Tuvalu’s individual islands and the central government are diplomatic ones because all parties are equal and must communicate to maintain relationships. He also expresses ideas that dovetail with those articulated by the Palau and Kiribati ambassadors: observing protocols and showing proper care and hospitality to visitors is more important than ensuring that the visitor and the visited extract benefits from one another.

Interviews with Tuvaluan diplomats/officials and island leaders show the socio-cultural conceptions populating Tuvaluan understandings of diplomacy. The discussion above also evinces not only divergences between Tuvaluan ideas of diplomacy and those expressed by the Solomon Islands ambassador but also similarities with ideas conveyed by Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats.³² In the following sub-sections, I discuss the alofa, a practice that exemplifies Tuvaluan diplomatic conceptions at the domestic and international levels. I examine how the alofa conveys ideas similar to those articulated by diplomats from the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Palau, and PNG; demonstrates Tuvaluan diplomatic conceptions outlined above; and highlights layers of reciprocity, symbolism, and performativity key to enacting Tuvaluan diplomacy. Finally, I describe how the Tuvalu government currently uses the alofa to strategically assert the value of Tuvaluan culture in international diplomatic settings.

“[That’s] what the alofa means. It ... reinforces our ties”: Tuvalu’s socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy and the alofa

The alofa, translated by interviewees as the “giving of gifts,” “the love,” or “your kindness” (4/20 and 5/20 Interviews; see also Besnier, 1995, pp. 98-99), is a Tuvaluan practice in which

³¹ After I left Tuvalu, the Ulu Alik I interviewed was replaced. Thus, I refer to him as the former Ulu Alik.

³² Links between Tuvaluan and PNG conceptions of diplomacy are addressed in the next sub-section.

a collection of people recognized as a self-contained group gathers gifts (e.g., food, clothing, or handicrafts) and presents them to another self-contained group. In the alofa, gift-givers travel to the location of recipients; stand at some distance from recipients; and perform a modified version of fatele, a significant Tuvaluan performative/dance form (see Chapter 4). As each fatele ends, the givers move closer to the recipients, and members of the gift-giving group may begin to present gifts as fatele continues. After all fatele conclude and givers are in close proximity to recipients, a small gift is presented by one giver to one recipient (4/20 and 5/9a Interviews; Brady, 1970, pp. 219-220). After each small gift is presented, one of the gift-givers makes a speech, and, after these speeches end, recipients make speeches in return (see also Noricks, 1981, pp. 73-74).

In Tuvalu, the alofa is performed between various groups for a variety of reasons and using a range of gifts. As the former Ulu Aliko for Vaitupu noted, because Vaitupu is split into two sides,³³ if one side goes fishing, it might present its surplus catch to the other side as an alofa. The other side would then return the alofa, and “[that] can go from the morning ‘til the night.... They give anything. [They] show their happiness” (5/3a Interview; see also Noricks, 1981, pp. 73-74). Furthermore, because communities from Tuvalu’s eight islands are all represented on the capital Funafuti, on Funafuti, the alofa can be presented from one island community to another, from one district of Funafuti to another,³⁴ or from one district of Funafuti to an island community. It is typically made with gifts of food or clothing. For example, the former ambassador to Taiwan explained that when the Nanumaga island community constructed its ahiga, or “meeting house,” in Funafuti, island communities like Niutao and districts of Funafuti like Lofeagai all presented an alofa (5/20 Interview; see also 5/9a Interview). Groups that present an alofa can also become quite specific: during construction of the Nanumaga ahiga, single extended families from Nanumaga, as well as people from Vaitupu with relatives from Nanumaga, all presented an alofa.

Additionally, the alofa is performed for important visitors traveling from Funafuti to Tuvalu’s outer islands and for foreign dignitaries visiting Tuvalu (10/13, 4/20, 5/20, 5/21, and 7/28 Interviews). In these cases, instead of food or clothing, gifts of handicrafts including large

³³ All Tuvaluan islands are divided into two (or more) ituala/feitu, or “village sides.” This facilitates the division of labor during feasts and important occasions as well as competition during fatele, sports, and other activities (5/3a and 5/9b Interviews; A. F. Chambers, 1983, p. 28; K. S. Chambers, 1984, p. 59; Government of Tuvalu [GoT], 2012, p. 31; Noricks, 1981, p. 67).

³⁴ Fongafale, the Funafuti islet where most people live, is split into four districts from north to south: Lofeagai, Fakaifou, Vaiaku, and Kavatoetoe.

mats, small mats, fans, and necklaces are given.³⁵ The former Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan and the Asia desk officer for MFATTEL explained the motivation for this type of alofa as follows:

Former Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan: [It's] a symbol [that] we are happy to give the gift to you, and we are—you know, because you are a visitor, you are going to leave us soon, and, hopefully, these gifts will be kept as good memory of our selves in Tuvalu, and make you to remember Tuvalu. (5/20 Interview)

Asia desk officer: [Is] it a diplomatic way of exchanging gifts? ... [Because], for us, it's really the—it's part of culture.... So, what we always do is we always provide them with something that will remind them of what Tuvalu is and their experience with Tuvalu, and by that, we always present gifts (5/21 Interview)

In Tuvalu, the frequent and multilevel practice of the alofa highlights diplomatic concepts of communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality outlined in the previous subsection. In other words, the alofa strengthens inter-group relationships through positive reinforcement that underscores the concern of one group for another. It also exemplifies how building friendships and properly maintaining intra-island, inter-island, and international relationships, concepts similar to those expressed by Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats, characterize Tuvalu's diplomatic practice (see A. F. Chambers, 1983, pp. 83-84, 179).³⁶

Yet, the alofa is also significant because of the symbolic, performative, and reciprocal characteristics it entails. These characteristics further illustrate how the alofa typifies diplomatic protocol in Tuvalu and show links between the alofa and socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy. They also reveal that Tuvalu's diplomatic conceptions overlap with ideas of exchange outlined by the PNG trade representative.

From the level of the symbolic and performative, interviewees noted that the alofa is emblematic of friendship, hospitality, and the joy of giving (5/20 and 7/28 Interviews). They

³⁵ See GoT, 2012, p. 33, 2018, p. 5. A. F. Chambers (1983) notes that alofa for important visitors sometimes include food gifts (pp. 119-120).

³⁶ The alofa's significance is further evidenced by frequent reporting on alofa presentations in Tuvaluan newspapers. See *Fenui*, 2015, January 26-b, 2015, March 2; *The Lali: Sounds of Motulu*, 1989, November 11, 1994, September; *Tuvalu Echoes*, 1986, July, 1991, February 15-b; *Tuvalu News Sheet*, 1976, August 26, 1982, October 28.

also observed that the alofa's performative aspects, especially fatele and speeches, are highly symbolic and where diplomatic communication is most effectively achieved:

Interviewee 1: Yeah. The alofa comes with a fatele....

Interviewee 2: But the words, they are also saying a lot of things....

Interviewee 1: [We] go, and we sing fatele that reflects to anything to do with developing a friendship. (5/20 Interview)

[When] we went to the alofa [to Funafuti], at the end of our—well, we had the speeches from our Nanumaga side. At the end, the last speaker ... made a very good speech He was just reiterating the fact that, once upon a time, back in 1982, there was a friendship that was established between Nanumaga and Funafuti.... I mean, it was so diplomatic too, eh? [When] we came back from the alofa, we really praised [him] for reminding us of that time, and—which can be very instrumental to keep the momentum or to keep the friendship—there's no, I don't think there's any negotiations here. It was just, after he made the speech, and then, I'm sure the Funafuti people are reading that.... So, that's one thing that I think ... is part of the negotiation skill, but it's not ... it's just a reminding of the history and that reminds them that the friendship is still there. It should be there. It must be there, and they, in return, they should also do something. So, they came back for another alofa that morning, and the alofa to us is very meaningful because they brought in all local food, eh? I think they didn't bring anything that they bought from the shop. (5/20 Interview)

Henry (2011) asserts that performance/dance is a “political strategy” that is only fully appreciated through its “symbolic value,” which “[conveys] messages that must remain unspoken [to enact] effective social interaction and delicate political negotiation and persuasion” (pp. 180, 190). The symbolic nature of the fatele, speeches, and even gifts presented during an alofa highlights attempts to both achieve “effective social interaction” and engage in “persuasion.” Simultaneously, the alofa's symbolism and performativity underline ideas of communication and non-confrontation, or non-confrontational communication, integral to Tuvalu's socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy.

For reciprocity, interviewees noted that presenting an alofa was significant to friendship-building because it initiated lasting relationships. This is because Tuvaluans expect that once an alofa has been presented it will at some point be returned, triggering an eternal alofa process:

I think returning an alofa, ... like, in Tuvalu, fakafoki the alofa—I think it’s a symbol of showing that you are happy.... [It’s] a symbol. It symbolizes friendship because if you perform an alofa, and then they never come back, then you know something must be funny here. (5/20 Interview)

[So], now, ... they have to come back with an alofa.... [Because] we are not an individualistic society. We’re a community. So, it reinforces the fact that you have to help your neighbor no matter what.... Because we are still very communal.... So, that’s what the alofa means. It just reinforces our ties So, it really helps also with easing of tensions. (4/20 Interview; see also Besnier, 1995, pp. 162-163)

The reciprocal nature of the alofa illustrates how its symbolism and performativity, as well as its embodiment of communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality, contribute to building friendships and the expectation that friendships will be maintained through continuous affirmation of care and concern (see A. F. Chambers, 1983, p. 104; Noricks, 1981, pp. 44-45). These characteristics not only dovetail with Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau conceptions of diplomacy as friendship-/relationship-building but also overlap with PNG ideas of exchange because the alofa is based on the continual transfer of goods. From an international perspective, the alofa’s reciprocity, symbolism, and performativity are consistent with the hope expressed by Tuvaluan interviewees that handicrafts given to foreign guests during an alofa remind them of Tuvalu, thereby encouraging long-term relationships. Interestingly, because the alofa is a culturally unique method of engaging distinct groups, Tuvaluan diplomats/officials have also begun to appropriate it as a strategic cultural protocol abroad. In this way, Tuvaluan culture and diplomatic conceptions are inserted into Eurocentric frameworks for diplomacy.

“[It’s] also a strategic way for us to show our culture”: The alofa and Tuvalu’s international diplomacy

After the 8th Polynesian Leaders Group Summit, which was hosted in Funafuti in June 2018, *Radio New Zealand* reported that

The government of Tuvalu made [a] presentation last week in Pago Pago[, American Samoa] to the incoming chair of the 9th ... Summit [Tuvalu’s High Commissioner to Fiji Temate] Melitiana explained that the gifts are presented in the traditional Tuvaluan way called the “Alofa” ceremony, which conveys the strong message of

love, affection, appreciation, respect and affirmation of special relations and connections—which he believe [*sic*] do exist between Tuvalu and American Samoa. (2018, July 16)

In the previous sub-section, I described types of alofa enacted in Tuvalu. However, the quote above indicates that the alofa is now also used as a protocol in Tuvalu's diplomacy abroad.

According to Tuvaluan officials, the government deliberately uses the alofa in international settings to ensure that the country's cultural values are represented in foreign diplomatic contexts. As the MFATTEL assistant secretary for foreign affairs explained,

[Whenever] we travel with our dignitaries, especially our current prime minister, ... we actually have to perform.... So, we've done an alofa for the U.S. Secret Service many times in New York after the [UN General Assembly] cause—and that's also how we carry our message across. It's not just hospitality[,] it's also a strategic way for us to show our culture.... So, we did that with another delegation in Morocco when we went for COP23.... And the [Moroccan] protocol, she cried. She was so emotional.... [It] also makes us feel proud because other delegations don't have that because they're so serious. And ... it also enforces the fact that Tuvaluans are very relaxed and friendly (4/20 Interview; see also 4/26b Interview)

Here, the alofa becomes a strategic cultural protocol, or a strategic form of performative cultural diplomacy, when enacted abroad. It is used not only to show foreign governments how Tuvaluans conduct diplomacy at a cultural level but also to distinguish Tuvalu from other delegations at international events. Furthermore, the symbolic and communicative aspects of the alofa are particularly active when it moves abroad because international alofa are “not just hospitality” and convey a specific message to those for whom they are performed.

To summarize, the alofa reflects the Tuvaluan socio-cultural contexts in which diplomacy is practiced and understood. It evinces the significance in Tuvaluan diplomacy of communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality, as well as the symbolism, performativity, and reciprocity critical to enacting these ideals. It also shows similarities between Tuvalu's diplomatic ideals and concepts of building friendships, reinforcing inter-island relationships, and exchange expressed by some Pacific diplomats in Taiwan. However, the alofa is now also strategically inserted into international or Eurocentric diplomatic settings to demonstrate the positive aspects of Tuvalu's socio-cultural values and challenge

expectations of what diplomatic protocol is. Consequently, Tuvaluan diplomatic conceptions and practices not only differ from internationally accepted ideas, but the Tuvalu government is also aware of this divergence and works to assert how its own protocols are valuable to the international system.

In the next section, I move from Tuvaluan and other Pacific socio-cultural concepts of diplomacy to the socio-political phenomena motivating Taiwan's diplomacy. I examine how diplomacy as outlined by Tuvaluan/Pacific interviewees, especially ideas of building friendships, reinforcing relationships, and hospitality, is difficult for the Taiwan government to reciprocate. This is because Taiwan holds negative views on the permanence and value of diplomatic relationships given that it must compete with the PRC for allies. I discuss how this situation creates tension in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations, most notably when the friendship and hospitality proffered by Tuvalu and other Pacific allies is seen as not being returned by Taiwan.

The Socio-Political Contexts of Taiwanese Diplomacy: The PRC, Diplomatic (Dis)Loyalty, and the Quality of Diplomatic Allies

For this section of the research, I conducted interviews with the current Taiwan ambassador to Tuvalu; officials from Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Culture, and Council of Indigenous Peoples; and current or former city and county officials. When discussing diplomacy, Taiwanese diplomats/officials expressed the same internationally accepted ideas of diplomacy as Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomats. However, again like Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomats, the Taiwan ambassador to Tuvalu also emphasized the importance of culture to enhancing diplomatic ties (4/25a Interview).

Yet, the context that has most distinctly influenced Taiwanese understandings of diplomacy is not cultural values but, rather, Taiwan's diplomatic competition with the PRC. Below, I examine how the PRC's growing international influence and the pressure this exerts on Taiwan's diplomacy has led Taiwanese diplomats, officials, and citizens to understand diplomatic allies as inevitably disloyal, low quality, and needing "improvement." These ideas are not as apparent in Taiwan's current diplomatic representation in Tuvalu, which has distinguished itself for cultural sensitivity (4/20, 4/26b, and 5/21 Interviews). Nevertheless, at the end of this section, I discuss Taiwan's presidential visits to Tuvalu and other Pacific allies to illustrate how Taiwan's ideas of diplomacy conflict with Tuvaluan/Pacific conceptions.

This discussion of how Taiwan characterizes allies is echoed in Chapter 3, which explores long-term ethnocentrism in discursive histories of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, and Chapters 4 and 5, which examine Taiwan's fixation on "professionalism" in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy. Clearly, socio-political contexts have deeply impacted Taiwan's relationship with Tuvalu.

"Taiwan has a unique situation, which is the PRC": The PRC and Taiwan's disloyal allies

A diplomatic phenomenon unique to Taiwan is that, in the 1970s, many of Taiwan's allies began forming relations with the PRC and severing ties with Taiwan, which they had formerly recognized as the Republic of China (ROC) and the legitimate government of China. In 1928, the Nationalist (KMT) Party unified mainland China as the ROC. However, by the late 1940s, the KMT/ROC had lost the Chinese Civil War to the PRC and retreated to Taiwan. By the 1970s, many countries started to accept the PRC as the rightful government of China and saw Taiwan/the ROC as part of that country (see also Chapter 3). At present, Taiwan has 15 diplomatic allies. Thus, over the past 50 years, numerous allies have ended official relations with Taiwan while only a limited number have retained formal ties.³⁷

Consequently, in discussions with Taiwan's ambassador to Tuvalu, a contradiction emerged. The ambassador explained his view that Taiwanese and Tuvaluan cultures were similar because of the kindness and hospitality common to both nations. The ambassador saw these similarities as beneficial to developing close diplomatic ties. He further noted his belief that Tuvaluans viewed Taiwan as a "respectful," "democratic," and "free" nation, all of which engendered feelings that Tuvalu and Taiwan shared common values (4/25a Interview; see also H. Wang & Lu, 2008, p. 432). However, the ambassador also explained that similar values could not guarantee lasting diplomatic relationships, referring to national interest as most directly determining diplomatic decision-making. Here, he conspicuously referred to the PRC and its influence on Taiwan:

[Similar values] are a very important part.... [Tuvaluans] think that being with Taiwan feels a bit better. This is a very important part, but it's not an absolute. You

³⁷ Originally, Taiwan insisted that PRC allies could not also recognize Taiwan (as both countries claimed to represent China). Taiwan relaxed this stance after 1988, but the PRC's One-China Policy now blocks nations from simultaneously recognizing Taiwan and the PRC (Hu, 2015, p. 8; Munsterhjelm, 2014, pp. 10-11).

know, because, actually, diplomacy also has these vital interests, because diplomacy is still ... national interest. Now, they have interests they want to pursue, and we also have goals we want to pursue Now, at present, the two sides are cooperating very well. In the present situation, that's how it is.... Taiwan has a unique situation, which is the PRC, the PRC over there, the massive PRC. And then recently it has become stronger and stronger. So, when cross-strait relations are not so cordial, are not so good, you would feel that the pressure is ... greater (4/25a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The explicit contrast the ambassador draws between the importance of shared cultural values and national interest in determining diplomatic relationships and the implicit connection he indicates between national interest and the rise of the PRC suggest conflict in Taiwanese views of diplomacy. That is, given the enhanced strength, and especially the increased wealth, of the PRC, although cultural values draw certain countries to Taiwan, from the perspective of national interest, the PRC will always prove more attractive to Taiwan's allies, motivating them to sever ties with Taiwan.

Given this socio-political context, Taiwan's government and citizens see a lasting diplomatic alliance as meaning loyalty and true friendship because it requires allies to stay with Taiwan regardless of benefits offered by the PRC (Yan, 2018, May 25; Zheng, 2018, May 2). This idea seemingly dovetails with principles of building/reinforcing friendships expressed by Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomats. Yet, again, because of pressure from the PRC and the frequency with which allies sever relations, Taiwanese officials and citizens assume that allies can never be real friends because they can be lost to the PRC at any time. In this vein, a 2016 *Taipei Times* editorial commented:

Recent weeks have seen intensifying efforts from China to poach Taiwan's remaining allies. Beijing's economic clout and international prestige make it an irresistible attraction to Taiwan's few allies. China offers huge amounts of financial assistance that Taiwan can never match. (Lee, 2016, April 6; see also Cui, 2017, November 4)

This view is reinforced by scholars who contend that Taiwan only has allies because of the monetary benefits it offers, and that, because the PRC is now a global power, Taiwan simply "cannot compete ... anymore" (X. Wang, 2016, p. 156).³⁸

³⁸ See O'Keefe, 2015, p. 132; C. Yu, 2016, pp. 93-94; Y. Zhang, 2007, pp. 370, 376.

Here, a paradox becomes evident: Taiwan considers official diplomatic alliances unreliable and unofficial relationships more dependable. For example, officials from MOFA's Department of NGO International Affairs emphasized their role in promoting Taiwan in non-allied countries and explained that Taiwan needed to work outside official diplomatic channels:

[We] are, currently, we only have 20 [*sic*] allies. So, actually, in many places, places in which we do not have alliances but which are countries that are more friendly to us, if we want to do things, we actually always need NGOs to help the government.... So, this means that our NGOs are very strong. So, actually, we don't have to depend on the government at all (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also MOFA, 1998)

Although Taiwan still sees diplomatic alliances as relationships that have to be maintained (11/8 Interview; Hu, 2015, p. 8), the country's conception of diplomacy is singular because it takes the discontinuity rather than the continuity of alliances as a given. As a result, socio-political ideas of diplomacy center on negative views of an inconstant official diplomacy in which allies are inevitably disloyal.

Conceptions of allies as disloyal are also linked to a second phenomenon where Taiwan's allies are described as of low socio-economic quality both because they can potentially be bought by the PRC and because the PRC has not yet chosen to purchase their allegiance. As a Taiwanese medical volunteer noted,

China will always take our friends, right? Now, similarly, for [Tuvalu], it seems, in the past, there were some rumors—because, actually, you see, all the people who run restaurants are Chinese ... it's only that, officially, it's Taiwan Now, we can't take the initiative here. It all depends on whether China wants to spend money or not. If they want to spend, I think Tuvalu would be taken very quickly.... [It's] just that, to China, Tuvalu has no value, no value whatsoever, none, not worthy (4/14 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

“[Our] allies can be described using three words: black, poor, small”: Aid, humanitarianism, and Taiwan's low-quality allies

Because of the frequency with which Taiwan's allies sever relations, a common conception in Taiwanese society is that if allies stay with Taiwan, they do so only because of aid (C. Cao,

2017, July 5; C. Huang, 2018, pp. 131-132). As the final quote in the previous sub-section demonstrates, citizens even argue that Taiwan's remaining allies are simply those unworthy of PRC attention, demonstrating that allied nations are viewed as underprivileged countries that do not provide even symbolic benefit to Taiwan.

Consequently, in interviews, Taiwanese citizens consistently commented on the perceived low quality of allies:

A lot of people say that our allies can be described using three words: black, poor, small. To a certain extent, that reflects the reality (11/10a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[There] are people who say, "Why don't your allies have [a contemporary concept/contemporary ideas]?" I think I also really want to ask why they don't have these [ideas], why the people in our allied countries don't really have that type of civilization, that type of thing emerging. (11/22 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[Tuvalu's] problem is they have doctors, but they're not specialists and they're not qualified ... Because, basically, ... [medical students from allied countries] almost all can't pass the [medical] exams in Taiwan (4/14 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Taiwanese diplomats and citizens not only view allies as inevitably disloyal, but citizens also emphasize what they see as markers of allies' low quality: perceived underdevelopment, limited size, and dark skin color. Notably, the term 黑, or "black"/"dark," is used in Taiwan's discourse on its allies to refer to people from Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Pacific. The word is a signifier not for any one skin color but instead the idea that a "darker" skin tone (of any kind) means underdevelopment (see Hung, 2017).³⁹ Given these perspectives on low-quality allies, Taiwanese citizens have even criticized government aid to allies because, if allies are destined to leave Taiwan and only of insignificant international status, giving aid wastes resources (C. Cao, 2017, July 5; Chan, 1997, p. 56; Zheng, 2018, May 2).

However, despite these considerations, the Taiwan government still seeks to maintain official diplomatic relationships to retain some level of international recognition, especially at the

³⁹ Taiwan's racialized discourse on the Pacific and how it ties into ethnocentrism is discussed further in Chapter 3. In that chapter, I show that, when the Taiwan government first traveled into the Pacific, officials demonstrated racial hierarchies that privileged Pacific peoples of lighter rather than darker skin tones. However, currently, the term black/dark refers less to these hierarchies and more to ideas that any of a range of "darker" skin tones indicates underdevelopment.

UN. Accordingly, the government has restructured discourse on providing aid to allies to placate negative domestic views. In this restructuring, the government highlights how assisting allies is humanitarian diplomacy that enhances Taiwan's international reputation. Therefore, in 2007, then Vice President Annette Lu "proposed replacing checkbook diplomacy with 'development diplomacy' and using Taiwan's experience [to] boost its allies' economic development" (*Taipei Times*, 2007, July 8).⁴⁰ Yet, in emphasizing Taiwan's superior development status and ability to "improve" allies, this more "positive" framing of allied relations never questions the assumption that allies are low quality. For instance, a MOFA official described government programs in diplomatic allies as follows:

I saw, on Facebook, that one of the students [who worked with us] said he thought—he was proud of Taiwan.... He felt that Taiwan wasn't just engaged in dollar diplomacy like everybody said. We are really engaged in ... international projects [to] improve the welfare of people in allied countries. (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The Taiwan ambassador to Tuvalu similarly explained:

[Because] the development of all countries is all related to the quality of the people. Now, if the quality of the people is good, the country's development will be better. That way. So, actually, it's not only us that are doing this [in Tuvalu] because all countries are doing this.... In the past, people said, if you can't feed yourself, would you go see a play? ... So, usually, you want economic development to be a bit better, and then other activities will ... improve (4/25a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

This discourse is reminiscent of the development ideology Australia promotes for the Pacific (Fry, 1997a) as well as New Zealand's emphasis on remedying "the plight of its less fortunate neighbours in the Pacific" rather than creating a "neighbourhood of equals" (T. Teaiwa, 2012, p. 246). This rhetoric also creates another layer in Taiwan's socio-political conceptions of diplomacy. Namely, the loyalty of allies is not only uncertain but the benefit of even having allies must also be constantly justified, and, regardless of how diplomatic relationships are portrayed, allies are low quality and require "improvement." As outlined in the next subsection, these largely negative conceptions of diplomacy clash with diplomatic ideals maintained by Tuvalu/Pacific allies.

⁴⁰ See Chan, 1997, pp. 39-40; Z. Li, 2017, November 2.

**“[It] was widening the gap, you know, making us look very primitive”:
Taiwan’s socio-political conceptions of diplomacy and presidential visits to
Pacific allies**

In interviews with Pacific diplomats in Taiwan and Tuvaluan diplomats/officials, many interviewees explained that relations with Taiwan were positive and expressed cultural or conceptual affinity with Taiwan and solidarity with efforts to end Taiwan’s colonial status vis-à-vis the PRC (11/10b, 12/4, 4/20, 4/26b, 5/20, and 5/21 Interviews). Some diplomats/officials even stated that they were confident their countries would not leave Taiwan (12/4 and 4/20 Interviews); others were aware that they might be perceived as “money hungry” or insincere in Taiwan and hoped to address these issues through their diplomatic work (10/20a and 4/20 Interviews).

Yet, given how Pacific allies, especially Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, contextualize diplomacy, affinity with Taiwan or awareness of how Taiwan views its allies does not always mitigate tension in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations. Taiwan’s presidential visits to Tuvalu and other Pacific allies are a demonstrative example of how Taiwan’s ideas of disloyal and low-quality allies collide with Tuvaluan/Pacific concepts of friendship-building and proper relationship-reinforcement. For instance, in October to November 2017, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen visited three of Taiwan’s Pacific allies at the time, spending one day in the Marshall Islands, several hours in Tuvalu, and two days in Solomon Islands (Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan [OP], 2017, October 13). One Tuvaluan who assisted with preparations for the visit remarked:

I personally felt very hurt. You know, ... gosh, there was so much preparation.... There was so much preparation down to the last second, and it was only for a few hours. And the people sent over to do protocols, well, I think there was a lot of disrespect.... And just for a few hours.... And, to us, it was ... a clear sign of [President Tsai] wouldn’t like ... to stay, or she wouldn’t like the experience, you know. Or ... we were too ... basic, you know.... I was here for the first president’s visit, and—many years ago, and it was the same thing. I was so exhausted. I was personally exhausted, and I couldn’t forget that. And all for just a few hours.... It, to me, it was widening the gap, you know, making us look very primitive ... to them, but, to me, at the end of the day, it’s the diplomacy, you know? [If] Taiwan doesn’t respect us for who we are and what we respect as decent, then there shouldn’t be any

diplomacy And I really wished they wouldn't rush us because you can't rush tradition and culture. You know, to rush it was like, "Oh. Hurry up. Get rid of them." ... And I used to hate it so much.... I used to say, "You know what? This is just, it's very offensive...." ... [It] takes time to show our traditional ways here, and for them to rush us, it's a clear indication of them not caring at all what we do and what we show them. (4/26b Interview; see also T. Wu, 2012, p. 153)

Another Tuvaluan interviewee termed the 2017 visit a "waste of time" (5/11b Interview), while the Marshall Islands DCM referred to it ambivalently as "rushed" (12/4 Interview).

The block quote cited above not only highlights problems with the 2017 presidential visit (and past visits) but also exemplifies tensions between Taiwanese and Tuvaluan/Pacific conceptions of diplomacy. On the one hand, references to disrespect by Taiwanese protocol officers and the feeling that Tuvalu was too "basic" or "primitive" for the Taiwan president echo negative views of diplomacy and diplomatic allies propagated in Taiwan. On the other hand, allusions to exhausting preparations by Tuvalu's government and citizens and resentment at Taiwan's attempts to rush culture and tradition indicate the significance in Tuvaluan diplomacy of showing hospitality and properly receiving guests through cultural protocols.

Although not referring to a presidential visit, the Palau ambassador highlighted another context where Pacific and Taiwanese concepts of diplomacy similarly clash—disparate expectations regarding how allied officials should be received when visiting Taiwan:

I got a e-mail telling me that our minister of health is coming, our minister of finance, our chairman of the national health insurance, and administrator of the health insurance, and a representative from this private medical insurance—they want to come here and go talk to Shin Kong [Hospital] and the national insurance here. So, I call MOFA for assistance, and the first thing they ask is, "Is our government funding their trip?" "No. I just need your assistance because I don't have enough funding to rent a car to meet them at the airport. And they are our ministers. So, they are our government officials. And this is a official function, not a private—and it is, indeed, a fact that we need your assistance." "Oh, we usually only help those who are funded by Taiwan." So, you tell me, what kind of a relationship is that? (3/1 Interview)

Whereas during Taiwan's presidential visits, Tuvaluan and other Pacific interviewees felt they were not given the opportunity to fully enact cultural protocols of hospitality, here, the

Taiwan government is seen as failing to afford proper hospitality when visitors arrive from Pacific allies. This tension is again tied to concepts of friendship-/relationship-building emphasized by Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats. As the Marshall Islands DCM concisely explained, “I guess [sometimes] we’re not feeling like [Taiwan values] the friendship” (12/4 Interview).

Because of its unique socio-political contexts, especially competition with the PRC, in Taiwan’s conception of diplomacy, allies are low quality and always about to sever ties. As a result, allies are seen as unworthy of Taiwan’s attention or as only worthy of attention because “improving” them enhances Taiwan’s international reputation. Furthermore, Taiwan’s presidential visits to Pacific allies and other relevant examples showcase how Taiwanese ideas of diplomacy clash with those expressed by Tuvalu and other Pacific allies. In the next section, I outline Austronesian diplomacy, an aspect of Taiwan’s foreign policy specific to its Pacific relationships, and examine the influence this diplomacy has on tensions in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations.

The Austronesian Context of Taiwanese Diplomacy: (De)Constructing Diplomatic Relationships through Austronesian Diplomacy and Pacific-Indigenous Ties

Compared to its other alliances, Taiwan has established a unique context for relationship-building with the Pacific: Austronesian diplomacy. In this context, because the languages of Pacific peoples and indigenous peoples in Taiwan belong to the Austronesian language group, linguistic similarities are used to strengthen diplomatic ties (Blundell, 2011; Ciwidian, 2018; P.-y. Guo, 2017). Yet, the term Austronesian is multiply understood from the perspective of both Taiwan and Pacific nations represented in Taiwan. Below, I examine Taiwan’s use of Austronesian diplomacy and connotations of relevant terminology, specifically Austronesian language group, Austronesian culture, and Austronesian ethnicity, as well as Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous. These connotations show the complexities of Austronesian diplomacy and how it reflects Taiwan’s conceptual affinity with non-allied Pacific settler colonies rather than its independent Pacific allies (and other independent Pacific nations represented in Taiwan). Subsequently, I examine understandings of Austronesian diplomacy from the perspective of Tuvaluan and other Pacific diplomats and citizens who live in Taiwan. I finally consider how Austronesian diplomacy often does not

act as an empowering force in Taiwan-Pacific relations, instead marginalizing Pacific allies in ways similar to phenomena outlined in the previous section.

“This person isn’t Austronesian, but [her artwork is] extremely Pacific, extremely ocean”: Austronesian diplomacy and understandings of Austronesian in Taiwan

Compared to how academia defines Austronesian, Taiwan has both expanded and contracted meanings of the word. In this section, I show that, while the term Austronesian refers to a linguistic group ranging from Madagascar to Rapa Nui and including the languages of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, Taiwan’s Austronesian diplomacy enlarges the term so that it refers to linguistic, cultural, and ethnic ties. However, this enlargement has also emphasized links between Taiwan and Pacific nations rather than the entire Austronesian region. Thus, as similarities shared by “Austronesian peoples” expand to the ethnic level, the Austronesian language group contracts to include only the Pacific and Taiwan. This trend creates further confluences where the socio-cultural situations of indigenous peoples in Taiwan, which are most similar to those of Pacific settler colonies like New Zealand, are imagined to represent those of all Pacific nations.

The Austronesian language group was first identified in the nineteenth century, but the “overarching term ... Austronesian [was applied to the] language family” only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Austronesian “languages number about 1,200 [and] are spoken by 270 million to 300 million people” in a region extending from Madagascar to Rapa Nui west to east and Taiwan to New Zealand north to south (Blundell, 2011, pp. 77-79). Furthermore, due to work by linguist Robert Blust and archeologist Peter Bellwood in the 1980s and 1990s, Taiwan’s indigenous languages have been promoted as the possible origin of all Austronesian languages.⁴¹

Because Taiwan’s indigenous languages are included in and the potential source of the Austronesian group, in the 1990s, the term Austronesian was adopted in Taiwan.

Austronesian linguistic connections were first mobilized by indigenous peoples to contest the erasure of their languages and cultures by the KMT—the ROC ruling party that moved from mainland China to Taiwan in the 1940s, imposed martial law, and saw Taiwan as the

⁴¹ See Blundell, 2011, p. 77; Everington, 2017, September 6; Munsterhjelm, 2014, p. 28; Simon, 2010, p. 728.

legitimate seat of the Chinese government and nothing more (see Dvorak & Tanji, 2015).⁴² When martial law ended in 1987, official opposition parties emerged to challenge the KMT. Since then, groups like the Democratic Progressive Party, which champion Taiwanese independence (but not necessarily indigenous sovereignty), have co-opted the Austronesian concept to underscore Taiwan's innate difference from the PRC and develop connections with the Pacific (see Chapters 3 and 5).⁴³ In 2007, indigenous scholar Awi Mona termed this strategy 台灣的南島民族外交, or "Taiwan's Austronesian ethnicity diplomacy" (p. 168); recently, the government and scholars have referred to this practice as 南島外交, or "Austronesian diplomacy."⁴⁴

Yet, Mona's use of the phrase Austronesian ethnicity diplomacy suggests tension in how Austronesian has been adopted to conceptualize relations with the Pacific. As numerous Taiwanese interviewees noted, although the term Austronesian consistently appears in government and media discourse, because it originated in academia, its detailed meaning is not necessarily apparent to the public or even the government (11/10c, 11/16, 11/22, and 11/29 Interviews). Consequently, despite Blundell's (2011) reminder that Austronesian refers to a language family not a group of people (p. 81), the term is used flexibly in Taiwan to suggest that linguistic similarities necessarily entail cultural and ethnic ties. Thus, Mona referred to "Austronesian *ethnicity* diplomacy" in 2007, and, in 2017, Taiwan's current vice president expressed the need to "[use] Austronesian *culture* to explore the present and future prospects of indigenous peoples" (OP, 2017, November 13) (emphasis added). This flexible linking of Austronesian to language, culture, and ethnicity alters the power of the term because the suggestion of a shared Austronesian culture/ethnicity indicates affinity that linguistic similarities may not. Given this, an indigenous choreographer contested the level of rapport Austronesian now implies. He explained: "[other countries in the language group] are different from us. Only some words are [the same]" (11/24 Translated Interview [Mandarin]). However, whereas the term Austronesian has been enlarged within Austronesian diplomacy to suggest cultural and ethnic connections, it has also been contracted: instead of indicating all countries in the Austronesian language group, it refers only to Pacific nations and Taiwan.

⁴² See 11/16, 11/22, and 11/29 Interviews; Heylen, 2012, p. 37; Munsterhjelm, 2014, p. 28.

⁴³ See 9/30, 10/23b, and 4/25a Interviews (for use of Austronesian diplomacy by other political parties, see 11/24 Interview); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC, Taiwan (MOFA), 2003; Munsterhjelm, 2014; C. Wang, 2013, September 23.

⁴⁴ See Ciwidian, 2018; P.-y. Guo, 2017; Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan, 2017, October 26. For discussion of New Zealand's somewhat similar diplomatic strategy for its Pacific relations, see Goldsmith, 2017.

For example, a 2007 *Taiwan Today* article referred to “Austronesian communities” as “the indigenous peoples of the Pacific region” (J. Tsai, 2007, August 10). Furthermore, the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, a major exhibitor of contemporary Pacific art, has hosted exhibitions featuring Pacific artists and indigenous artists from Taiwan. In these exhibitions, the Mandarin title features the word 南島, or “Austronesian,” but this term is then translated into English as “Pacific.”⁴⁵ A researcher involved in these exhibitions explained that she understood the difference between the Austronesian language group and the Pacific region and that Pacific was only used in English translations because Austronesian was unfamiliar to English speakers. However, later in the interview, she directly conflated Austronesian and Pacific, describing a New Zealand artist of European descent as follows:

This person isn’t Austronesian, but I have—at that time, I was collaborating with another colleague. He thought [that artist’s] works were extremely Pacific, extremely ocean, so, no matter what, he definitely wanted to include her (11/22 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 10/23b and 11/16 Interviews)

In Taiwan, the Austronesian language group is removed from its original academic contexts. The shape this removal takes suggests that fostering ideas of Austronesian culture and ethnicity focuses more on developing ties between Taiwan and the Pacific than with other countries in the Austronesian group. Compared to previous administrations, Taiwan’s current government promotes the economically oriented New Southbound Policy, which sometimes highlights Austronesian connections with Southeast Asia instead of Pacific ties (12/4 and 3/1 Interviews). Nevertheless, Austronesian links with the Pacific are still strongly emphasized throughout the Taiwan government (OP, 2017, October 26).⁴⁶

Finally, conflation of the Austronesian language group and the Pacific region (plus Taiwan) has created a second phenomenon that is particularly troublesome for Taiwan’s Pacific allies (and other independent Pacific nations represented in Taiwan). That is, in Taiwan, the peoples of all countries included in Taiwan’s Austronesian conception are considered indigenous peoples who *see* themselves as indigenous and encounter problems similar to indigenous peoples in settler colony Taiwan. In an interview with Taiwan’s Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP), three officials explained that because indigenous peoples in Pacific

⁴⁵ See Asia Art Archive, 2010; *Central News Agency*, 2007, October 22; Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, 2017.

⁴⁶ Despite the presence of Austronesian languages in Madagascar, Taiwan rarely extends its Austronesian diplomacy into the Indian Ocean. This may be because Taiwan has no representation in Madagascar (MOFA, 2000, December 2), but it also seems that, in Taiwan, Madagascar is less intelligible as an Austronesian space than other countries in the language group (11/22 Interview).

allies constitute the majority of the population, “they don’t have a concept of ‘indigeneity’ ” and “we don’t specifically emphasize that they also have indigenous peoples.” However, during the same interview, officials referred to Pacific allies as 南島原住民族的國家, or “Austronesian indigenous countries.” Additionally, CIP representatives explained that it was not until 2016, during a workshop for indigenous students and Pacific students studying in Taiwan, that they even realized that the problems of indigenous students in Taiwan differed from those of Pacific students in their home countries (11/29 Interview).

In Taiwan, this conflation of Austronesian language, culture, and ethnicity, as well as Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous, comes from a realization that locations such as New Zealand, Guam, and Hawai‘i—all settler colonies like Taiwan “in which there is articulation of ... Pacificness and indigeneity” (Te Punga Somerville, 2018, p. 102)—possess similar institutions to Taiwan; similar concepts of indigeneity; and even recognition of shared ancestral ties.⁴⁷ Although applied to all Pacific countries, then, Taiwan’s Austronesian diplomacy is most relevant to non-allied Pacific settler colonies. This suggests that even within conceptions of diplomacy ostensibly targeted at Pacific allies, these allies are only a secondary concern.

Yet, as complex as Austronesian diplomacy is to Taiwan, Tuvalu/Pacific allies and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan also have their own opinions on this diplomatic discourse. Consequently, in the next sub-section, I explore understandings of Austronesian diplomacy from a Tuvaluan/Pacific perspective.

“They say ‘Austronesian’ and ‘indigenous,’ and it’s all foreign concepts to me”: Tuvaluan/Pacific understandings of Austronesian diplomacy

In contrast to Taiwanese discourse, Tuvaluan/Pacific understandings of Austronesian diplomacy often center on ascertaining what Austronesian means and determining whether there *are* ties between Taiwan’s indigenous peoples and Pacific peoples. These understandings also examine Taiwan’s application of the term indigenous to Pacific contexts.

First, during interviews, many Tuvaluan/Pacific diplomats explained that they were unfamiliar with the term Austronesian before traveling to Taiwan. For example, the current Tuvalu ambassador noted that

⁴⁷ See 9/30, 11/10c, and 11/24 Interviews; Council of Indigenous Peoples, 2016, p. 37; Sissons, 2005, pp. 11-25.

No, I just heard [the term Austronesian] here [in Taiwan] when I came. Because when I came and then I was invited to their Austronesian day, and I heard that (11/10b Interview; see also 5/20 Interview)

Similarly, the Palau ambassador and PNG trade representative explained that

Palau ambassador: I think [Austronesian is] ineffective because most people are not familiar with it. I first heard about, of the term, when I came here before I became ambassador. So, then I went back and I searched for it, and there's really a term used, you know, but it's not really familiar. (3/1 Interview)

PNG trade representative: Yeah, so, [Austronesian] may have come out of some terms, but I heard it here, because I'm more used to like Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia. (11/21 Interview; for exceptions, see 12/4 Interview)

Tuvaluans who had visited Taiwan similarly noted being “surprised” by linguistic similarities between Tuvaluans and Taiwan’s indigenous peoples (5/30b Interview). Several Tuvaluan students who had studied in Taiwan also explained that they had not been told that Pacific languages may have originated in Taiwan until I interviewed them (e.g., 4/15 Interview).

Furthermore, if Tuvaluan or other Pacific diplomats and citizens had heard of the term Austronesian, they often developed meanings for it that overlapped neither completely with academic nor Taiwanese ideas. For instance, the former Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan explained Austronesian as follows:

[Taiwan is] trying to prove the fact that we have a trace from Taiwan or from the Philippines to come this way.... [But] the trace here is more or less to do with Polynesian, not the Melanesian and the Micronesian. (5/20 Interview)

By contrast, a Tuvaluan student noted that he saw Austronesian as meaning Melanesian (10/19 Interview), while a Solomon Islands student maintained that Austronesian referred only to Pacific Islanders and did not include Taiwan’s indigenous peoples (8/20 and 8/27 Interviews).⁴⁸

Clearly, because it is unfamiliar, Austronesian is subject to Pacific interpretations that reshape the term to suit Pacific contexts. These interpretations differ from Taiwan’s and often

⁴⁸ Taiwan exacerbates this confusion by sometimes portraying Taiwan as Austronesian but sometimes referring to it as only *having links to* Austronesia (11/16 and 12/19a Interviews; Mona, 2007, pp. 165, 176).

focus on placing Austronesian alongside more common (if not equally problematic) terms used to delineate the Pacific: Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian.

Yet, even when Tuvaluan and other Pacific diplomats did clearly understand Taiwanese definitions of Austronesian, only some were persuaded by Austronesian diplomacy. On the one hand, Tuvalu's former first secretary to Taiwan found ideas of Austronesian-language ties and Taiwan's indigenous links to the Pacific highly compelling:

[The] elderly [indigenous in Taiwan], they are just like the elderly here. And the way they do things—at the evening, they go out. I see them do their handicrafts outside. Just like in the outer islands [in Tuvalu]. Yeah. With their counting and all those things, they—because I went to buy something from their market, and I go, “How much?” “Fa [four in Tuvaluan].” “Four.” “Four dollars.” ... And the way they do their cooking, the setting of the kitchen, the local kitchen—it's just like our local kitchen in the islands, you know? ... And the food—how they cook their fish with coconut cream (5/20 Interview)⁴⁹

On the other hand, however, the Kiribati ambassador saw Austronesian diplomacy and claims of Pacific-indigenous links as extremely unconvincing:

I don't feel that connection because ... the [CIP], they are more focused on New Zealand, you know, the Māoris and probably the ones in American territories and they don't really go out of their way to—so, they don't know our islands, they don't know. They know more about the Māoris and from Guam.... [Because], for us, there's really no other race to say that we are the indigenous people, you know? So, our experiences are very different (10/12 Interview)

This quote highlights an important concern raised by several Pacific diplomats and discussed in the previous sub-section: although for Pacific settler colonies like Taiwan, linking Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous might be persuasive, concepts of indigeneity and socio-cultural concerns found in settler colonies often differ from those in Pacific allies (and other independent Pacific nations represented in Taiwan). Consequently, Taiwan's Austronesian diplomacy reveals tension between Taiwan and its Pacific partners over ideas of indigeneity and whether using indigeneity to strengthen relations is appropriate. To this point, both the Marshall Islands DCM and the Palau ambassador described a disconnect between their

⁴⁹ See 8/20, 8/27, 10/14, 10/30, 11/21, 3/1, 4/15, 5/21, 5/24a, and 5/30b Interviews.

national or ethnic identity and how this identity was challenged within Austronesian diplomacy:

Marshall Islands DCM: [The Taiwan government says] “Austronesian” and “indigenous,” and it’s all foreign concepts to me because we’re Marshallese. I mean, there’s not a certain ... group of Marshallese that are not considered.... But, here, and then it’s Taiwan, and then indigenous, and then it’s— ... I get myself confused, but I understand that concept because, in Australia, there’s also the Australians, but then there’s the indigenous, and, there, they don’t see eye to eye.... Yeah, ... we have some similarities, and I think we value the same things, but we don’t have the same challenges. (12/4 Interview)

Palau ambassador: [Taiwan’s CIP] wanted to know about our issues as indigenous people. I’m like, “You know, we’re not indigenous. We’re just, we’re us, and we rule our country. [So,] our issues—we don’t have issues like you.... I just want to speak on what is the culture, and ... what our youth are going through, ... but issues fighting with the government and that—you know, no. It’s so different.” (3/1 Interview)

Tuvaluan students communicated similar concerns when describing experiences with Taiwanese ideas of indigeneity:

[This] is what [the Taiwanese volunteers in Tuvalu] said, “We also have aborigines in our country.” They’re super excited to tell me. “Ok.” I didn’t understand what that meant at the time because I’d never been to Taiwan— ... I think someone just asked me that. Yeah, someone just asked me that a couple days ago. “Do you guys have aborigines in Tuvalu?” ... We wouldn’t think of [being aborigines]. We think of things like, “Oh. Now we have Chinese in Tuvalu.” ... It’s not really a thing for us. I don’t know. “Do you guys have aborigines there?” What? (10/19 Interview; see also 5/11b Interview)

Although Austronesian diplomacy is a unique layer in Taiwan’s Pacific diplomacy, it again demonstrates tensions in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations. Austronesian diplomacy as circulated in Taiwan showcases connotations of Austronesian language, culture, and ethnicity, as well as Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous, that reveal how Taiwan’s settler-colony status colors its imaginings of the Pacific. Similarly, Tuvaluan and other Pacific understandings of Austronesian diplomacy and differing opinions about whether it is

persuasive demonstrate that Taiwan's Austronesian terminology clashes with how some Pacific peoples identify themselves.

“They lead lazier lives.... [Maybe] that's just the nature of the Austronesian people”: Marginalization of Pacific allies through Austronesian diplomacy

Finally, beyond complex ideas of Austronesian diplomacy found in Taiwan, Tuvalu, and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan, Austronesian diplomacy has also compounded the marginalization of Taiwan's allies described in the previous section. I conclude by considering this phenomenon to show the Taiwanese domestic tensions in which Austronesian diplomacy and, by extension, Taiwan's Pacific allies⁵⁰ are implicated.

Instead of cultivating affinity for Pacific allies, Austronesian diplomacy has sometimes reinforced negative ideas of allies, especially among Taiwan's Han majority. This is because, from the perspectives of ethnicity, race, and culture, indigenous populations in Taiwan are still highly marginalized (Munsterhjelm, 2014, pp. 1-30; 12/6 Interview). Comparisons between indigenous and Pacific peoples under the umbrella term Austronesian enables a similar marginalization of Pacific allies. For example, when discussing Tuvalu, a Taiwanese medical volunteer made the following statement:

Now, about the people, ... [they] lead lazier lives. For example, you don't see many people fishing... If you said—a hypothetical, if *Taiwanese people* lived here, they would definitely always be fishing, but you don't see the people here fishing. Instead, they sell their exclusive economic zone to other people. So, maybe that's just the nature of the *Austronesian people* (4/14 Translated Interview [Mandarin]) (emphasis added)

Here, the interviewee separates the industrious Taiwanese from the lazy Austronesians, suggesting the marginalization of Taiwan's indigenous peoples through the intimation that they are not Taiwanese. This reflects a similar phenomenon to that expressed by T. Teaiwa (2012) for New Zealand, where “white New Zealanders are reluctant to recognise, let alone identify with, Māori as the first people of [the] nation” (p. 254; see also Munsterhjelm, 2014,

⁵⁰ Although PNG is important to Austronesian diplomacy, in this sub-section, I highlight Pacific allies because they are Taiwan's official diplomatic partners. Consequently, they are often the target of more negativity than PNG, which only has unofficial ties with Taiwan.

p. 29). The quote also demonstrates how the term Austronesian is used to simultaneously marginalize and stereotype indigenous *and* Pacific peoples.

Furthermore, the international application of Austronesian diplomacy has led to extreme backlash from conservative portions of Taiwan's Han population. For example, during President Tsai's 2017 visit to the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands, official references to the trip as a 尋親之旅, or "search for relatives" (Cui, 2017, November 5; Tseng, 2017, October 14), generated intense debate about Tsai's perceived attempt to de-Sinicize Taiwan. An editorial from the time captures major concerns posited in this debate:

What relatives are we searching for? Why do we have to search for relatives? ... [Whether] from the perspective of race, blood, language, culture, or other aspects, Taiwan's majority [population] moved from mainland China to Taiwan and has been Han Chinese for generations.... Tsai Ing-wen can say this is [a trip] to search for the relatives and roots of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, but cannot purposefully expand and mislead so that it becomes a search for the relatives of all people in Taiwan.... If, to achieve the political goal of shaping a "new Taiwan ethnicity" and the "historical perspective of an independent Taiwan," only ... Austronesian culture is presented, how can we look the 23 million people of Taiwan in the face? ... That [Tsai Ing-wen] has ... traveled far across the ocean to find a disproportionate and distant relative is not only illusory ... , but, even more, it sends the wrong signal. (*China Times*, 2017, November 11)

More inflammatory reactions to Tsai's trip included that by a Taiwanese actor-singer who proclaimed that Tsai, who is a quarter indigenous, "is perhaps an aborigine of the South Seas and wants to go [there] to search for relatives, but this has nothing to do with us! We are Chinese!" (*Liberty Times*, 2017, October 15).

Consequently, rather than overcoming negative conceptions of diplomatic allies, in some cases, Austronesian diplomacy amplifies negative feelings, especially from the vantage point of ethnicity and race. Here, in addition to ideas of disloyalty and low quality applied to all of Taiwan's diplomatic partners, ambivalent views of Taiwan's indigenous populations are linked to Pacific allies. Moreover, when portions of Taiwan's Han population see Austronesian diplomacy as reconfiguring Taiwanese ethnicity, race, or culture, indigenous peoples and Pacific allies are further ostracized.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered the necessity of examining different contexts that shape conceptions of diplomacy, as well as cultural, social, and political ideas of diplomacy discussed by Taiwanese, Tuvaluan, and other Pacific interviewees. I first sketched concepts of bartering/exchange, building/maintaining friendships, and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships described as socio-cultural contexts for diplomacy by Solomon Islands, PNG, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats in Taiwan. Subsequently, I outlined Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, especially building friendships, properly reinforcing inter-island relationships, and exchange, that overlap with views communicated by some Pacific diplomats. I also used the Tuvaluan alofa to illustrate socio-cultural considerations in Tuvaluan diplomacy, including communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality. In the second portion of the chapter, I examined how Taiwan's competition with the PRC creates negative socio-political conceptions of diplomacy where allies are viewed as disloyal and low quality. Additionally, I demonstrated that Taiwan's diplomacy with the Pacific is distinguished by Austronesian diplomacy, a policy that uses linguistic connections between Pacific peoples and indigenous peoples in Taiwan to strengthen relations. However, I also highlighted complex understandings of Austronesian diplomacy in Taiwan and the Pacific and demonstrated how Austronesian diplomacy can amplify Taiwan's negative feelings toward Pacific allies.

Although this chapter encompasses varied cultural, social, and political conceptions of diplomacy, two main phenomena emerge. First, "what one knows in diplomacy[, indeed,] depends on what one understands diplomacy to be." Thus, in diplomacy, "[plural] knowledge is needed because plural actors and plural audiences are being addressed" (Constantinou, 2013, pp. 143-144). Second, while diplomatic conceptions expressed by Pacific diplomats differ, more salient tensions exist between Pacific ideas and those expressed by Taiwan. Especially for nations like Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, which see building friendships/reinforcing relationships as akin to diplomacy, Taiwan's rejection of cultural protocols and failure to act hospitably undermines important diplomatic ideals. While sometimes ameliorating these tensions, Austronesian diplomacy can also create greater feelings of alienation due to conflicting conceptions of indigeneity and negative reactions to Austronesian diplomacy by some Han Taiwanese.

Given differences between Tuvaluan/Pacific and Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy demonstrated in this chapter, in Chapter 3, I map discursive histories of Tuvalu-Taiwan

relations and assumptions undergirding the relationship. This discussion demonstrates how Tuvaluan and Taiwanese ideas of diplomacy influence Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, especially at the level of official discourse, but also showcases how some phenomena in popular discourse are only indirectly connected to diplomatic concepts. Subsequently, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I examine case studies in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy, exploring how case-study participants interact within these events and issues of audience reception. These chapters not only illustrate how conceptions of diplomacy and assumptions underlying Tuvalu-Taiwan relations affect the implementation and reception of performative cultural diplomacy but also indicate internal conflicts in case-study events. This suggests that performative cultural diplomacy represents tensions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations *and* domestic conflict concerning how Tuvalu and Taiwan should represent themselves to their diplomatic partner.

Chapter 3:

Reframing Diplomatic Relationships: Discursive Histories and Underlying Assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan Relations

This year, the Taipei Tourism Expo extended from 22nd to 25th May, 2015 and was held in Exhibition Hall 1 of Taipei's World Trade Center. The Tuvalu Tourism Booth at the event ... featured [an] attractive aesthetic design, exciting games, and popular prizes ... (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2015, May 28)

Taiwan's South Pacific ally Tuvalu, which is expected to disappear in 50 years due to climate change and sea level rise, participated in the Taipei Tourism Expo for the first time this year. For the event, the country could only afford a small booth less than three by three meters in size ... (L. Huang, 2015, May 22)

Introduction

In 2015, the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan participated in the Taipei Tourism Expo. The above descriptions of Tuvalu's booth at that event are taken from the embassy's website and the Taiwanese news outlet *Liberty Times*; disparities in tone and emphasis are striking. In 1997, Greg Fry analyzed Australian constructions of "the South Pacific" and the preconceived ideas these constructions were based on. He declared the need to recognize "preconceptions that continue to underlie Australian framings" and the effects these preconceptions have both within Australia and on Pacific nations (1997a, p. 344). Given overarching differences between Tuvaluan/Pacific and Taiwanese diplomatic conceptions discussed in Chapter 2, in this chapter, I sketch discursive histories of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations and outline multiple assumptions structuring the relationship. This discussion demonstrates that diplomatic ideals affect how Tuvalu and Taiwan perceive each other but also acknowledges areas where diplomatic conceptions are less influential.

Below, I use archival/document-based research and media analysis to examine official and popular discourse in the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship. First, I highlight the narrative style of early official discourse on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations from the 1970s to 1980s. These narratives

reflect fragmented understandings of diplomacy in that period but also sometimes structured how Tuvalu and Taiwan identified themselves. For more recent official discourse, I trace the hardening of this identification process, where Tuvalu and Taiwan use discourse about each other to shape their national identities. Here, I also indicate a confluence of themes throughout official discourse, especially tension in Tuvalu due to fisheries conflicts with Taiwan and preoccupation in Taiwan regarding whether it is superior to Tuvalu. In the second half of the chapter, I discuss Tuvaluan and Taiwanese popular discourse. I show that disparities exist between official Tuvaluan efforts to construct Taiwan and a popular tendency away from such constructions, while Taiwan's official and popular discourse both rely on continuously defining Tuvalu. Accordingly, although Tuvaluans are aware of Taiwan's presence *in* Tuvalu and have positive opinions of this presence, Taiwan's news media actively structures ideas of Tuvalu as an *international entity*. In this structuring, Tuvalu is viewed ethnocentrically and tied to climate change and Taiwanese sovereignty claims. Finally, throughout this chapter, I examine how diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2, especially Taiwan's negative views of diplomacy and Tuvalu's emphasis on reciprocity and proper relationship-building, emerge in discourse. I also explain how this chapter provides a foundation for understanding and complicating assumptions underlying performative cultural diplomacy case studies discussed in Chapters 4 to 6.

Shifting Histories: Official Constructions of Tuvalu-Taiwan Relations from the 1970s to Present

Tuvalu and Taiwan established diplomatic relations on 19th September 1979 (*United Daily News* [UDN], 1979, September 20). At that time, Tuvalu had recently become post-colonial, having declared independence on 1st October 1978 after separating from the island nation of Kiribati, to which it had been linked under Great Britain's Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (Goldsmith, 2012, p. 129). However, because it possessed historical or linguistic links to Nauru, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Banaba, and Fiji, Tuvalu was by no means an isolated player in the Pacific region upon gaining independence (Beaulieu, 2009; Lawson, 1989; Noricks, 1981; K. M. Teaiwa, 2004). Furthermore, in the 1970s, there was a growing assertion both internationally and in Tuvalu of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), which demarcated

national control of maritime resources.⁵¹ Although Tuvalu did not emerge from colonization with everything it hoped for from the British (Goldsmith, 2012), it did control extensive marine assets that many nations, especially the archipelagic and peninsular countries of East Asia, desperately hoped to access.

For its part, in 1979, Taiwan was nearing the end of a martial law period that began in 1949 with the retreat of Nationalist (KMT) forces from mainland China to Taiwan after their loss to Communist forces in the Chinese Civil War (Corcuff, 2000). This era was preceded by a 50-year period of Japanese colonization on Taiwan that had ended with the conclusion of World War II. Scholars suggest that the KMT retreat marked the transition from one period of colonial rule to another for Taiwan's pre-existing Han population, which had begun migrating to the archipelago in the 1600s (Muyard, 2015, p. 24). This retreat also signaled the continuation of Taiwan's status as a settler colony vis-à-vis the archipelago's indigenous peoples (Shih, 2016). Additionally, in 1979, Taiwan was reeling after withdrawing from the UN in 1971 and subsequently severing official ties with Japan and the United States. In this period, numerous countries established relations with the PRC, asserting that Taiwan belonged to that nation-state (Chu, 2015, p. 707; Gao, 1980, January 1).

It was in this context that, in March 1979, *Tuvalu News Sheet*, Tuvalu's government newspaper at the time, printed an article entitled "Tuvalu's Asian Diplomacy." This article highlighted the rapid development of Tuvalu's relationships with East Asian nations like Taiwan shortly after independence. Contemporaneously, the Taiwan government began reporting on early diplomatic forays into Pacific nations, including Tuvalu. These newspaper and government reports were frequently characterized by narrativizations that suggest the complexities of Pacific-Asia relationships at the time and provide a foundation from which more recent official discourse can be contextualized and complicated. Therefore, in this section, I first outline official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese discourse from the 1970s and 1980s to demonstrate how early diplomatic rhetoric was determined not by official maneuvering but by pre-existing trans-local and individual encounters (Matsuda, 2012, p. 5). Subsequently, in analyzing Tuvaluan and Taiwanese leadership statements from 2000 to present, I point out connections to earlier discourse but also demonstrate how Tuvalu and Taiwan now use each

⁵¹ See South Pacific Commission, 1979, October 17; *Tuvalu News Sheet* (TNS), 1979, August 3, 1979, August 31.

other to shape national identities and interests.⁵² Throughout this discussion, I also draw links between official discourse and diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2.

Narrativizing Tuvalu-Taiwan relations: 1970s to 1980s

Official reporting from the beginnings of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations in the 1970s and 1980s, which coincided with Tuvalu's debut in international diplomacy and early Taiwan-government forays in the Pacific, is much less rigidly structured than current discourse on international affairs. Because no solidified understandings of Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy existed at the time, discourse in Tuvalu's state-run newspaper and Taiwan-government reports frequently adopts a narrative mode, using story-telling to conceptualize incipient relationships. This discourse evinces how early Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy was characterized by "multiple sites of *trans-localism*, [or] the specific linked places where direct engagements took place" (Matsuda, 2012, p. 5). Narrativization and trans-localism are illustrated in discussion below, where I focus first on Tuvalu and then Taiwan.

"Drama on the High Seas—Taiwanese Boat Escapes": Official narratives from Tuvalu

Shortly after Tuvalu's independence in 1978, reporting on diplomatic relations between Tuvalu and Asian nations—specifically South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan—was a feature of *Tuvalu News Sheet* (TNS), a periodical published from 1976 to 1983 through Tuvalu's Broadcasting and Information Division/Office.⁵³ The rapid development of Tuvalu-Asia relationships was, in many instances, based on the need for East Asian nations to purchase fishing licenses so that vessels operated by their citizens could *legally* access Tuvalu's sea territory. Thus, one article in TNS notes that, immediately after Tuvalu and Japan established diplomatic relations, Japanese representatives arrived in Tuvalu's capital Funafuti to

⁵² Official Taiwanese reports on Tuvalu do not appear after the late 1980s while full-length leadership statements are not available until 2000 (one exception is a brief 1986 speech by Executive Yuan President Yu Kuo-hwa [K.-h. Yu, 1986, pp. 94-95]). Furthermore, archive holdings for Tuvalu's state-run newspaper are incomplete after 1992 and leadership statements only emerged en masse after Tuvalu joined the UN in 2000. Hence, the 1990s are excluded from my analysis of official discourse. However, thematic connections between the 1970s and 1980s and 2000 to present suggest that the periods are not separate but are instead distinguished by a shift from informal to formal diplomatic rhetoric. This is signaled in Tuvaluan newspapers: after the first visit of a Tuvaluan head of government to Taiwan in 1986, Tuvalu's discourse transitioned from narrative to formal (*Tuvalu Echoes* [TE], 1986, October 23, 1986, November 6).

⁵³ See Goldsmith, 2016; Government of Tuvalu, 1979, April, 1979, December; TNS, 1978, November 24, 1979, March 16, 1979, May 11, 1979, June 8-b, 1979, December 12.

negotiate a fisheries licensing agreement (TNS, 1979, May 11; for South Korea, see TNS, 1979, June 8-a).

Although these accounts conform with current fisheries-centered analysis of Asian diplomacy in the Pacific (Aqorau, 2015, p. 223; Izumi, 2010, pp. 89-90), TNS reporting also suggests that it was not Asian governments that actively sought relations with Tuvalu. Rather, it was interactions between the Tuvalu government and Asian fishing interests—which were often located in other Pacific places (typically American Samoa)⁵⁴—that required intervention by Asian governments. This challenges assumptions of unified national action in diplomacy because Asian governments were often called on to intervene in situations in which they were not directly involved. It also highlights the trans-local nature of Pacific histories in which direct engagement between sites like Tuvalu and American Samoa forged connections between the governments of Tuvalu, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea.

In TNS, this phenomenon was the subject of extensive narrativization, especially in articles on Taiwanese fishing vessels, where Taiwanese fishing transgressions and Tuvaluan skill in detecting transgressions were serialized over several issues. These narratives, two of which I outline below, foreground Tuvaluan agency and the trans-local character of early Tuvalu-Taiwan interactions.⁵⁵ However, they also served a nationalizing agenda, underscoring Tuvalu's unified action in the face of wayward Taiwanese fishing crews.

First, from 3rd August to 31st October 1979, TNS printed at least five articles referencing the case of the Chyan Yeng No 21, a Taiwanese vessel based in Pago Pago, American Samoa and contracted to Feng Ch'un Agents, which represented the U.S. firm Starkist. The vessel was charged with fishing without a license inside the 200-mile EEZ of three Tuvaluan islands (Nanumaga, Vaitupu, and Funafuti), the ship's captain arrested, and the vessel fined A\$20,000. The ship, crew, and captain were detained on Funafuti for five weeks before fines were finally paid and they were released (TNS, 1979, August 3, 1979, August 31).

In TNS, retelling of the Chyan Yeng's capture and the expertise of Tuvaluan authorities in discovering foul play not only depicts a united Tuvaluan nation-state but also highlights Tuvalu's agency and Taiwan's naivete in its illegal exploits:

⁵⁴ See New Zealand External Intelligence Bureau, 1977; TNS, 1979, August 31; for a similar situation in Tokelau, see Thomas & Tuia, 1990, p. 271.

⁵⁵ Articles discussed here are the earliest TNS reports on illegal Taiwanese fishing. Other coverage includes TNS, 1980, July 9, 1981, February 20, 1981, March 20, 1981, April 3, 1981, August 21, 1981, September 18, 1983, May 26. See also *Bulletin of the Tuvalu Philatelic Society*, 1981, Spring; Fisheries Development Limited, 1976; South Pacific Commission, 1992, August 3.

The vessel called at the capital—Funafuti—on late afternoon Monday July 16 with what was reported to be engine trouble and water shortage.

[....]

The following afternoon, the police boarded the vessel and arrested the captain....

Investigations prompted by the Attorney General and carried out by police, customs and fisheries officials, revealed that the ship was carrying 25 tons of fish, a portion of which was fresh and un-frozen. It was suspected that some of this fish may have been taken from Tuvalu waters, since Captain Shing has admitted to fishing about 70 miles off-shore from Nanumanga. He claims, however, that he believed the 200 mile economic resources zone to apply only to waters surrounding Funafuti. Nevertheless, it was reported that the vessel called at Vaitupu, which is within 200 miles of the capital, the previous week and it is believed that fish may also have been taken from waters near the island. (TNS, 1979, August 3)

Additional articles on the incident highlight insufficient Taiwan-government response to transgressions. Specifically, Tuvaluan officials are reported as proclaiming that “such problems could be avoided by the local issuance of fishing licenses, provided that foreign nations [were] cooperative in securing licensing agreements with Government.” Officials further warn that “ ‘[foreign governments] ... might want to better look after their interests by encouraging the institution of formal licensing agreements ...’ ” (TNS, 1979, August 31). Interestingly, the issue of slow response to fishing crises is also integral to Taiwan-government reports from the period (discussed below), demonstrating consonance in early Tuvalu-Taiwan discourse.

A second and more dramatic incident is described in “Drama on the High Seas—Taiwanese Boat Escapes,” which was published on 23rd January 1980 with a related article printed on 20th February of the same year. These articles recount the tale of the Taiwanese fishing vessel Tong Chou Kao Hsiung No 7 (also originating from American Samoa), which “appeared” and “disappeared” near the coast of the central Tuvaluan island Nukufetau. During this time, the ship’s crew requested supplies, and it was noted that fish on the vessel were “still fresh.” This led to a nationwide search for the ship involving even “a Fijian cargo boat [the MV Ai Sokula] running on a British Phosphate Commissioners’ charter to repatriate Tuvalu employees from Banaba.” The Ai Sokula spotted the Taiwanese vessel fishing near one of Tuvalu’s northern islands, Niutao, at which point “the Government issued instructions for her

arrest” and the ship’s captain “stole off in the middle of the night,” beginning “the country’s first troublesome scene at sea.” The story unfolds as follows:

[The] Ai Sokula reported back that she had come alongside the Taiwanese vessel, but although the Ai Sokula had put 2 men on board the vessel her master refused to comply with the instructions to head for Funafuti.

The Government then instructed the Nivaga to leave as soon as possible to rendezvous with the Ai Sokula ... , with instructions to escort the Taiwanese boat to Funafuti

The following morning however, ... the fishing vessel was nowhere in sight. It is believed that about midnight, the previous evening, the master of the boat hauled in his nets and extinguished his lights before sailing away from the Ai Sokula which had been trying to detain her.

[...]

Following this incident ... the Government is preparing to take legal action against [the Tong Chou’s] master on several charges. (TNS, 1980, January 23)

Like reporting on the Chyan Yeng, this narrativizing of “drama on the high seas” underscores Tuvalu’s agency because it was able to rally forces and track the Tong Chou. It shows Taiwanese inexperience because the Tong Chou stopped for supplies at an island near which it was fishing illegally.

Reporting on this incident also clearly demonstrates the trans-local links characterizing Tuvalu-Taiwan encounters shortly after Tuvalu’s independence. In both narratives outlined above, private Taiwanese fishing vessels based in American Samoa and connected to the United States are involved in direct conflict with Tuvaluan officials or citizens who then demand that the Taiwan government resolve the issue by purchasing fishing licenses. However, in the case of the Tong Chou, more extensive links are suggested when a Fijian boat carrying Tuvaluan citizens employed by British mines in Banaba is enlisted in Tuvalu’s search for the boat. In this instance, myriad locations and histories are entangled within a single “high seas” pursuit, a tangible example of K. M. Teaiwa’s (2004) observation that Pacific histories involve the “movement of all kinds of bodies and materials” (p. 220; see Dvorak, 2014, p. 352). Yet, we also see how early discourse on illegal Taiwanese fishing in Tuvalu, as well as the need to assert Tuvalu’s EEZ, naturalizes Tuvalu’s identity as a nation-

state because, in each narrative, a series of Tuvaluan islands are linked through common violation by the Taiwanese.

To summarize, narrativizations and trans-local links characterized reporting in Tuvalu's government newspaper at the beginnings of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, with narratives reinforcing both Tuvalu's agency *and* its unified identity. Interestingly, in contrast to diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2, in early narratives, Tuvalu forfeited ideals of communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality when interacting with Taiwan. However, this was mainly because Taiwanese actors were seen as not reciprocating these ideals and as not properly building relationships. In early Taiwanese discourse on Tuvalu, narratives and trans-localism are similarly connected to diplomatic conceptions.

“Our expatriates are quite influential”: Official narratives from Taiwan

For Taiwan, at least two records of oral hearings where Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) discussed Pacific diplomacy at the Taiwan Legislature are available for the 1970s and 1980s, specifically records for 1974 and 1988. The 1974 report, which describes the first official Taiwanese delegation to the Pacific (*Legislative Yuan Gazette* [LYG], 1975, p. 6), does not mention Tuvalu, focusing instead on Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea (PNG). However, this report dovetails with TNS coverage and also shows how the Taiwan government fixated on stories of 僑胞, or “Chinese/Taiwanese expatriates,” in the Pacific.⁵⁶ This underscores the importance of individual experiences to government discourse on Pacific-Taiwan relations at the time. That is, as nation-states in the Pacific-Asia region took shape, governments were often scrambling to overtake trans-local engagements already initiated by individual citizens or business interests (see G. Smith, 2012). With this in mind, I first consider the 1974 report before analyzing the 1988 record, which addresses Tuvalu.

First, in the 1974 report, the problem of illegal fishing so dramatically outlined in TNS is also clearly explicated. Taiwan's deputy minister for foreign affairs explains that 200 Taiwanese fishing vessels are operating in American Samoa, bemoaning the complexities of fisheries regulations:

Especially now that many countries have expanded their sea territories, we must remember that ... it is easy for fishermen to cross into [these] territories when they are

⁵⁶ In the 1970s and 1980s, the Taiwan government and many expatriates saw Taiwan as the seat of the Chinese government. Consequently, expatriates from Taiwan *and* mainland China are included in 1974 reporting (Chiang, 1982, pp. 55-56, 1987, p. 139; Sun, 1980, p. 123).

not paying attention.... [It] might be that some fishermen don't know that the sea territories of various countries have expanded.... [We] must make them pay attention to this. If we wait until they are detained or [items] confiscated, the losses are great. Whether to guarantee government rights or fishermen interests, we must take active measures.... [Our] reactions have been slow (LYG, 1975, pp. 6-7, 13)⁵⁷

This explanation reveals a gap between Taiwanese fishermen in American Samoa and their government representation. It also suggests that major changes in international policy during this period were far removed from those most in danger of violating relevant regulations.

The 1974 report is also notably characterized by tales of Chinese/Taiwanese expatriates in locations visited by MOFA, and, frequently, the success of even one expatriate is taken to indicate a favorable atmosphere for foreign affairs. For example, the deputy minister comments that, in Samoa, "all important economic activities are undertaken by the Chinese." He also explains that "there is one expatriate, Mr. Chen," who arranged a welcome party for the Taiwanese delegation that was attended by all local ministers. This is because "every week [Mr. Chen] invites the local people to watch a free movie at his home; everyone knows [him]" (LYG, 1975, pp. 7-8). The deputy minister further surmises that "Fiji is friendly to [Taiwan]" because "Chinese expatriates have contributed to the Fiji economy" (LYG, 1975, p. 8). He reports that

Our expatriates are quite influential. I didn't know ... that the [Fijian] prime minister ... wouldn't have time to meet with me [during my visit].... I discussed this with an expatriate. He ... called straight over and arranged for a meeting the next day. (LYG, 1975, p. 9)

Official use of expatriate experiences to understand diplomacy also illustrates how Taiwan struggled with ethnocentrism and racism in foreign affairs. This is showcased in the 1974 report when officials assess the success of Pacific expatriates through narratives of intermarriage. For example, the deputy minister explains that "we don't have racial prejudices, so we can interact harmoniously with the local people," after which he approvingly tells the story of Wong Kee, an expatriate who married the daughter of a local chief in Samoa (LYG, 1975, p. 8). Yet, he also narrates the story of an expatriate in PNG that reads as both ethnocentric and racist:

⁵⁷ See Australia-Free China Society, 1975, August 5; Chiang, 1981, November 6.

[Mr. Chen] took a local aboriginal as his wife and they had a son with curly hair and black skin.... Mr. Chen has forbidden his children to speak to the aborigines using aboriginal languages and has taught them using Cantonese. When he was on his deathbed, he told his son that he must take a Chinese woman as his wife, and his son did marry [such] a woman. They already have two sons whose skin is of a Chinese tone. They are truly patriotic. (LYG, 1975, p. 11)

Notably, just as Tuvalu's early interactions with Taiwan were mediated through trans-local engagements at the government-to-individual or -group level (and not the government-to-government level), the Taiwan government's earliest mission to the Pacific was also mediated through government-to-individual interactions. Government discourse also demonstrates ambivalence over how expatriates should comport themselves, especially with regard to ethnicity and race. This is clear when tales of both integration into and assimilation of Pacific communities are proffered as examples of ideal behavior. This ambivalence may have been prompted by racial prejudice against Pacific peoples with darker as opposed to lighter skin tones (LYG, 1975, p. 7), but it also demonstrates uncertainty regarding whether Taiwan should position itself as superior or equal to Pacific nations. This uncertainty is apparent in official discourse even today.

Although the 1974 report is rich with narratives from Taiwan's first mission to the Pacific, Tuvalu is not mentioned until a second record from 1988 when the Taiwan ambassador to Tonga and Tuvalu spoke before the Taiwan Legislature. By 1988, a more formalized tone characterized reporting, and Tuvalu and Tonga were discussed in relation to PRC encroachment; strategic positioning; and the need to compete with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Europe in providing Pacific aid (LYG, 1989, pp. 281-284, 286-287). This signals movement from the disparate and individually based elements of Pacific diplomacy apparent in 1974 toward a cohesive vision of which issues should constitute Pacific-Taiwan relations. Yet, an exchange between the ambassador and Taiwanese legislators about aid to Tuvalu reveals that, even in 1988, Taiwan's diplomatic discourse was still fragmented. During this exchange, the ambassador describes a conversation with Tuvalu's Prime Minister Dr. Tomasi Puapua, in which the prime minister requested Taiwan's financial support for hotel construction. The ambassador explains that, because Puapua is a doctor and "different from your average slippery politician," it would be best to promptly provide funding to "[aid] the election of the ... prime minister to another term" (LYG, 1989, p. 284; see also UDN, 1988, November 3). This suggestion is met with strident criticism from Taiwanese legislators, but

the different perspectives reflected in their criticisms demonstrate disparate understandings of diplomacy with Tuvalu/the Pacific. One legislator, viewing Taiwan as a “great and impressive nation,” exclaims that Taiwanese diplomats need not kowtow to allies out of fear they will sever relations. Another criticizes the ambassador for not being a “modern diplomat” who would understand that he must “not interfere in the domestic politics of other countries” and that swaying an election would be “a scandal among democratic nations.” Yet another legislator suggests that links between Taiwan’s indigenous peoples and Pacific nations should be used to “promote Taiwan’s diplomatic work,” noting the need to examine claims that “Polynesians [originated] from the Asian mainland” (LYG, 1989, pp. 285-288). Here, divergent conceptualizations are bound to Taiwan’s diplomacy in Tuvalu and the wider Pacific. They include continued belief in Taiwan as the true seat of the Chinese government and a powerful nation that must conduct itself as such in diplomacy, neoliberal conceptions of Taiwan as needing to exemplify a “modern” and “democratic” stance in international affairs, and connections linking Taiwan’s indigenous peoples to Pacific diplomacy. These ideas reveal multiple perspectives on what Taiwan’s national identity is and how it might best be expressed in the Pacific.

In the 1970s, the Taiwan government used narratives of trans-local interactions with Chinese/Taiwanese expatriates to discursively explore early Pacific diplomacy. Even into the late 1980s, the government maintained varied imaginings of how the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship should be conducted. These narratives and imaginings are linked to diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2—where Taiwan highlights the need to “improve” its low-quality allies—because early discourse reveals uncertainty over Taiwan’s identity and whether it should position itself as superior or equal to Tuvalu/the Pacific. In fact, while tales of individual or small-group interactions characterize early Tuvalu/Taiwan discourse, today, rhetoric is more clearly focused on considerations of identity. As discussed in the next subsection, discourse from 2000 to present demonstrates that official rhetoric now reinforces national identity by defining how Tuvalu and Taiwan should exist in relation to each other.

Identifying self in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations: 2000 to present

After the uncertain beginnings of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations—as understood through narratives of rogue Taiwanese fishing vessels in TNS and Chinese/Taiwanese expatriates in Taiwan-government reports—discourse on more recent diplomatic relations, especially leadership

statements from 2000 to present, has moved away from trans-local explications. Now, it focuses on totalizing rhetoric in which each nation defines the other as a unified whole that reflects its own identity. However, this discourse is still connected to narratives from the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, in this discourse, Tuvalu and Taiwan continue to maintain complex imaginings of each other, reconfiguring imaginings based on changing domestic and international circumstances and to achieve varied aims. Below, I outline how Tuvalu and Taiwan identify self and other in more recent official discourse.

“Tuvalu is the oldest ally for Taiwan in the Pacific region. But our ties are much older than this”: Tuvalu’s official identifications of Taiwan

From 2000, when Tuvalu joined the UN, to present, Taiwan has surfaced in various statements from high-level Tuvaluan officials. Here, it has been multiply articulated to discourses of enmity, moral cause, and kinship, which demonstrates Tuvalu’s complex regional, international, and bilateral identities and how it uses Taiwan to rhetorically fortify these identities.⁵⁸

First, in Tuvalu’s regional fisheries statements, Taiwan has been tied to discourses of enmity and become symbolic of Pacific Rim powers attempting to wrest fishing rights from Tuvalu and the broader Pacific. I outline this discourse first because it links to earlier TNS narratives of tracking and detaining Taiwanese fishing vessels. For example, at the 12th Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission meeting in 2015, then Minister for Natural Resources Elisala Pita commented:

Until just a few weeks ago the construction of our second vessel continued to be blocked by certain Commission members.... I would stress ... that the recent unblocking of this process was not because these [members] suddenly decided to respect and abide by the measures of this Commission. It was because, at the request of Tuvalu, [the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)] threatened to prohibit fishing in PNA waters by vessels of the [members] concerned.... I hope you will remember that this fishery takes place primarily in the Pacific Islands, and must be managed in a way that provides benefits to the people of that region. (2015, December 3, p. 3)⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Because Tuvalu does not have political parties, I do not address how party ideologies affect Tuvaluan leadership statements.

⁵⁹ For further fisheries statements, see Boreham, 2016, December 5-9; Pita, 2015, September. For a positive regional statement on Taiwan, see Sopoaga, 2016, December 7.

Earlier that year, the nations Pita took issue with had been identified as Japan and, most specifically, Taiwan (*Radio New Zealand*, 2015, June 12). Clearly, in 1979 and 1980, Taiwanese ships in Tuvalu waters unified the islands of Tuvalu, and even Fiji, in joint pursuit, and, now, Taiwan and its fisheries violations unite the Pacific region (or, at least, the PNA) in cooperative action. In these instances, Taiwan is a symbolic outsider demarcating national Tuvaluan and regional Pacific interests.

Yet, outside of fisheries meetings, and most visibly at the UN, Tuvalu's discourse on Taiwan overlooks fisheries disputes. Instead, at the UN, Taiwan is a moral cause through which Tuvalu gains affective leverage by championing a nation that has been shunned in the UN structure. McNamara (2009) notes that, in UN climate-change negotiations, Pacific nations control "considerable moral leverage" (p. 8; see Goldsmith, 2015, pp. 140-142); Tuvalu's UN discourse on Taiwan is positioned to achieve a similar effect. Thus, in 2002, then Governor General Sir Tomasi Puapua expressed Tuvalu's hope, "[as] a peace-loving nation," that "the right to self-determination of the people of the Republic of China and [their right] to join the United Nations [would] be urgently addressed." If the UN did not ameliorate this issue, he added, it could not be seen as "universal" nor could it fulfill its charter to maintain "peace and security for all nations of the world" (UN General Assembly, 2002, September 14, p. 2). Ten years later, in 2011, then Prime Minister Willy Telavi similarly intoned that "collective efforts to strengthen and maintain peace across the globe [would] be meaningless, if the United Nations [continued] to turn blind eyes and deaf ears to Taiwan's contribution" (UN General Assembly, 2011, September 24, p. 15). For Tuvalu, at the internationally oriented UN, Taiwan is no longer a tool for building Pacific regional unity through discourse on fisheries transgressions. Rather, it identifies Tuvalu as a moral actor on the world stage and serves as a humanitarian cause that distinguishes Tuvalu (along with Taiwan's 16 other allies) among the UN's numerous member states.⁶⁰

Finally, in Tuvalu's bilateral leadership discourse, Taiwan is disconnected from themes of enmity and morality and even the concept of nation-state itself. Here, Tuvalu inserts itself and its ally into a sweeping history where Taiwan is neither an egregious intruder demarcating the insiders of Tuvalu and the wider Pacific nor a pitiable outsider denied admission to the UN.

⁶⁰ Although Tuvalu's UN discourse may be prompted by the Taiwan government, Taiwan's allies have always exerted agency when deciding whether to defend Taiwan at the UN (Fu, 2007, September 23; *United Daily News* [UDN], 1995, September 6).

Instead, Taiwan is the ancestral home of Tuvalu and Polynesia. To this point, at the 2013 opening of the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan, then Prime Minister Telavi explained:

Tuvalu is the oldest ally for Taiwan in the Pacific region. But our ties are much older than this. Studies of the origins of the Polynesian languages of the Pacific, including Tuvaluan, suggest that they are strongly linked to the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan. This connection extends back over 5,000 years. So in a way, the establishment of this Embassy is a symbolic homecoming for us. (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2013, March 14-b, p. 2)

Although prompted by diplomatic considerations, Telavi's linking of Taiwan to a regional imagining that pre-dates contemporary diplomacy unsettles national boundaries increasingly evident in Tuvaluan discourse from the 1970s to present. It also highlights how Tuvaluan leaders reshape imaginings of the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship by invoking broad historical and geographic ties often missing from analysis of Pacific-Asia diplomacy (Salesa, 2012, pp. 400-402).

In its more recent official discourse, Tuvalu employs three motifs—enmity, moral cause, and kinship—to identify Taiwan and, by extension, itself. When compared to the previous subsection, discourse on enmity and fisheries transgressions is directly related to early narratives, as well as Tuvalu's forfeiture of diplomatic ideals like communication/cooperation when Taiwan does not reciprocate these concepts. By contrast, Tuvaluan diplomatic conceptions of proper relationship-building/reinforcement through affirmation of care and concern *are* evinced when Tuvalu identifies Taiwan as kin or moral cause. In Taiwan's official discourse from 2000 to present, similar links to early rhetoric and diplomatic ideals are also evident.

“Tuvalu is the most peaceful country in the world”: Taiwan's official identifications of Tuvalu

Digital records of Taiwanese leadership statements on Tuvalu are available beginning from 1992, which was during the presidency of Lee Teng-hui, who later became Taiwan's first democratically elected president in 1996.⁶¹ However, these statements are brief and were published in the form of press releases. For this reason, I focus on leadership statements spanning the presidential terms of Taiwan's second and third directly elected presidents: Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008), who represented the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and

⁶¹ During martial law (1949-1987) and until 1996, presidents were elected by Taiwan's National Assembly (F.-c. Wang, 2013, pp. 82-83).

its movement toward Taiwanese independence, and Ma Ying-jeou (2008-2016), who fronted the more PRC-friendly KMT Party.⁶² In these bodies of discourse, Tuvalu has been linked to sometimes radically different ideas. Yet, these statements all reflect official attempts to define Taiwan based on how it conducts diplomacy with Tuvalu; they also discuss whether Taiwan is superior to the Pacific. In this way, they overlap with rhetoric from the 1970s and 1980s.⁶³

Chen Shui-bian's ascension to the presidency in 2000 represented the first peaceful transition of power in Taiwan. Relations between Taiwan and the PRC were hardly amicable during and directly after the KMT-controlled martial law period (1949-1987). Nevertheless, the election of a DPP president was not a welcome change to the PRC, and wrestling over diplomatic allies and Taiwan's sovereign status was characteristic of Chen's presidency (J. Yang, 2011, pp. 56-59, 68). During this period, Taiwanese leadership statements consistently formulate a common identity for Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific to suggest a Taiwanese identity independent from the PRC. Here, Chen adopts affective rhetoric that highlights Austronesian-language ties between Taiwan and the Pacific, which recalls certain recommendations outlined in the 1988 Taiwan Legislature report discussed in the previous sub-section.

A common theme in official Taiwanese discourse on Tuvalu is the presumed need to make Tuvalu knowable before undertaking further discussion on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. As posited by Chen, Tuvalu is small, possesses abundant marine resources, and is righteous or peaceful (see Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan [OP], 2002, April 18). The first two characteristics appear in other leadership descriptions of Tuvalu. The last, however, is featured by Chen given the common identity he hopes to create for Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific, which is predicated on constructing Tuvalu and other Pacific allies as worthy of this shared identity. For example, in his typically effusive fashion, Chen explains:

⁶² Although directly at odds with the PRC's Communist government for most of its history, most of the KMT is now considered PRC friendly because it has always seen Taiwan as Chinese (in some way) and believes closer ties with mainland China are necessary. The DPP, which considers Taiwan uniquely Taiwanese and separate from China, is more hostile toward the PRC (Clark, Tan, & Ho, 2018, pp. 475-479).

⁶³ The discourse of Taiwan's current president, Tsai Ing-wen, is not considered here because her term only began in May 2016. However, based on Tsai's statements thus far, she takes a middle path between Chen and Ma. She emphasizes a common identity for Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific and the need to collectively attain sustainable development goals. Yet, she also uses Taiwan's aid projects in Tuvalu/the Pacific to demonstrate Taiwan's contributions to the global community (see Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan, 2017, July 14, 2018, May 15).

Tuvalu is the most peaceful country in the world and its people are [also] the most peaceful [in the world.] ... The world should learn from the people of Tuvalu. If they did, there would be no war and world peace would be eternal. (OP, 2005, May 4)

This definition of Tuvalu furthers Chen's goal of then linking Taiwan to Tuvalu/the Pacific through mutual "ocean" or "island-nation" identities and using Taiwan's position as the purported origin of the Austronesian language group to bolster this united status (Mona, 2007). Here, Chen's strategy is similar to that adopted by Telavi at the opening ceremony for the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan. However, Chen's discourse is not aimed merely at creating bilateral goodwill but also at including Taiwan in a Pacific regional vision that redefines Taiwan internationally. To this point, Chen explains that "the foundation for strong [Tuvalu-Taiwan] friendships" is the shared status of "Tuvaluans and Taiwanese [as] ocean peoples" (OP, 2002, April 18). He further declares:

The Pacific Ocean ... nurtured the Austronesian culture ... as well as the precious and mutually supportive friendship between Taiwan and its Pacific allies. The vast Pacific Ocean has not created a barrier between us and has instead provided plentiful resources and become an ocean that we all depend on for survival. In a spirit of brotherhood and mutual trust and benefit, let us work diligently toward the creation of a better Pacific era. (OP, 2006, September 4)

Chen was not above patronizing Tuvalu and Taiwan's other Pacific allies, once telling a meeting of Pacific leaders that Taiwan must teach them how to develop rather than simply giving development aid (OP, 2006, September 3). However, his broader discursive strategies do not rely on connecting Tuvalu and the Pacific to any specific ideas but, instead, tie Taiwan to Tuvalu/the Pacific to re-form Taiwan's domestic, regional, and international position. Tuvalu moves in broad regional and international circles that allow it to link Taiwan to multiple identities to achieve varied aims. By contrast, Taiwan's more circumscribed global standing necessitates not the redefinition of Tuvalu for multiple contexts but the connection of Taiwan to Tuvalu/the Pacific to construct new possibilities for national identification.

After Taiwan's 2008 presidential election, the KMT Party regained power under President Ma Ying-jeou. Ma's foreign policy was radically different from Chen's and based on constructing a diplomatic truce with the PRC and positioning Taiwan as supportive of Pacific development programs championed by "traditional" donors like Australia (Overton, 2016; J. Yang, 2011, p. 71). In contrast to Chen's construction of a common Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan

identity, then, Ma develops separate but mutually constitutive identities for Taiwan and Tuvalu/the Pacific. In this identification process, Taiwan is tied to a respectable consortium of donor countries and deals peaceably with the PRC:

Our viable diplomacy can allow us to win friendship and respect from our allies and gradually change our relations with mainland China.... From the perspective of international society, and especially in the South Pacific region, Australia has shown great admiration for us. This is a tremendous difference from three years ago when they would frequently criticize us. We have created a climate in which international society, Taiwan, and mainland China all win. (OP, 2010, March 21)

In this discourse, Tuvalu is relegated to the status of a “developing” country that offers certain advantages to Taiwan but also requires Taiwan’s humanitarian assistance (OP, 2010, March 23). Taiwan’s Pacific allies are, thus, conceptually reimagined:

The difference between these six [Pacific] allies and [our] other allies is that they only became independent after 1979 [*sic*]. Moreover, aside from Solomon Islands, ... a characteristic [of the Pacific allies] is that their populations are extremely small [and] their resources relatively lacking. The countries are still developing or are even in a relatively low state of development. They therefore require aid from foreign countries or international society. As a nation in which average income is US\$16,000, the ROC has a duty to provide aid. In addition, although these [Pacific] countries are small, they still have a vote in international organizations. (OP, 2010, March 27-b)

Similar to Chen, Ma uses Tuvalu and Taiwan’s other Pacific allies to define Taiwan. However, in contrast to Chen, Ma’s discursive strategy is more aligned with rhetoric from the previously mentioned 1988 legislature report where Taiwan was understood based not on Austronesian connections but on how an important, modern, and democratic nation should conduct diplomacy.

As illustrated by Ma and Chen, recent Taiwanese leadership statements on Tuvalu demonstrate striking disparities, which, like Tuvaluan discourse, show the complexities of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. Yet, notable also is how elements in recent discourse connect back to government reports from 1974 and 1988. For example, different ideas of the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship from the 1988 Taiwan Legislature report surface in Chen and Ma’s divergent imaginings of Pacific-Taiwan diplomacy. Furthermore, given the ambivalent ethnocentrism and racism in the 1974 legislature report, it is interesting to consider how Chen

and Ma portray Tuvalu and other Pacific allies when building a national identity for Taiwan. Although Chen sometimes belittles Pacific allies, he also attempts to discursively bypass ethnocentrism and racism and imagine a united Pacific region to circumvent the PRC. Ma, however, rejects this strategy, seeing Taiwan as a beneficent donor separate from and above its Pacific allies. In this way, Chen and Ma showcase different aspects of diplomatic conceptions outlined in Chapter 2: Chen highlights the importance of Austronesian diplomacy in relations with Tuvalu and the Pacific but also indicates the fraught nature of this diplomacy because he uses indigenous cultures as political tools to achieve diplomatic aims. For his part, Ma clearly embodies the belief that Taiwan's allies are low quality and require "improvement," a theme that is sometimes echoed in statements by Chen.

In the next section, I transition from mapping how official discourse has shaped the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship and its underlying assumptions to examining how popular discourse compares to official statements. This discussion illustrates not only the complex and contested nature of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, which informs analysis of performative cultural diplomacy in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, but also indicates how diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2 affect (or do not affect) popular imaginings.

From Official Constructions to Societal Perspectives: Popular Discourse in Tuvalu-Taiwan Relations

Official discourse is clearly crucial to understanding how Tuvalu-Taiwan relations have been conceptualized from the 1970s to present. Examining popular discourse, however, is critical to determining whether and how official characterizations have molded popular opinion (or vice versa). Additionally, analyzing popular discourse demonstrates gaps between official and popular assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, suggesting the varied perspectives that populate Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy. Below, I analyze news media, film, literature, interviews, and questionnaires to explore major themes in popular understandings of Tuvalu and Taiwan. In the first sub-section, I identify ties between motifs in Tuvalu's state-run media and popular Tuvaluan impressions of Taiwan, as well as differences between these motifs and Tuvaluan leadership statements. In the second sub-section, I consider how portrayals of Tuvalu in Taiwanese media, literature, and film connect to popular understandings and how popular discourse corresponds to official rhetoric. In my discussion, I outline links to diplomatic conceptions from Chapter 2 where possible.

Tuvalu: Divergent understandings of Taiwan’s local and international identities

The Tuvalu Broadcasting Corporation (formerly Tuvalu’s Broadcasting and Information Division/Office or the Tuvalu Media Department) oversees the newspapers and radio programs that communicate information across Tuvalu’s eight islands. The corporation operated independently from 2000 to 2007 and again from 2015 to present, but it has been a government department for most of its history and has always been state owned (5/30b Interview). For Tuvalu, then, it is difficult to distill official from popular opinion through media analysis alone (Besnier, 2016, p. 90; *Fenui*, 2015, June 22; Goldsmith, 2016). Consequently, I combine analysis of Tuvaluan newspapers, interview findings from Tuvaluan citizens who have been to Taiwan, and audience-questionnaire results from a 2018 Taiwanese performance in Funafuti.⁶⁴ I examine the changing portrait of Taiwan constructed by Tuvalu’s media and Tuvaluans’ impressions of Taiwan before they traveled there. I show that, similar to how Taiwan is represented in news media, citizens are highly aware of Taiwan’s local presence in Tuvalu but do not more broadly construct imaginings of Taiwan as an international entity. Any preconceived notions Tuvaluans have about Taiwan come from impressions shared by Tuvaluans already in Taiwan or, in some cases, popular film.

“[The delegation] enjoyed the warmth and kind hospitality of the Taiwanese people”: Representations of Taiwan in Tuvalu’s news media

Tuvalu’s state-run newspaper, TNS, which I cited in my discussion of early official Tuvaluan discourse, ran from 1976—before Tuvalu’s independence—until 1983, after which it was replaced by *Tuvalu Echoes* (TE) and then *Fenui*. Although complete versions of these publications are unavailable, based on issues of TNS from 1976 to 1983, TE from 1983 to 1992 and 1998 to 2004,⁶⁵ and *Fenui* from 2013 to 2015, two phenomena emerge regarding coverage of Taiwan. First, reporting shifted in tone from negative to positive and increased in frequency after 1986. Second, compared to the narrativizations adopted in early TNS articles, the style of subsequent coverage is more like government press releases and characterizations of Taiwan’s society and culture are rare. This reporting is at extreme odds with Taiwan’s coverage of Tuvalu, which consistently constructs imaginings of Tuvalu for readers.

⁶⁴ Analysis of Tuvalu’s radio broadcasts is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the Tuvalu Broadcasting Corporation confirms that radio and newspaper content is the same (5/30b Interview).

⁶⁵ TE publication stopped in the mid-1990s but resumed in November 1998 (TE, 1998, November 26). The newspaper was discontinued in 2007/2008 (5/30b Interview).

Analyzing successive reporting in TNS, TE, and *Fenui* indicates that the frequency and tone of Tuvalu's coverage on Taiwan shifted in late 1986. In the 11 years of reporting from 1976 to 1986, approximately 48 articles on Taiwan were published; many were negative in tone. For example, in eight years of TNS coverage from 1976 to 1983, most articles on Taiwan discuss illegal fishing, the outcomes of illegal fishing cases, or fisheries agreements. Furthermore, in three years of TE coverage from 1983 to early October 1986, Taiwan is mentioned in only four articles (TE, 1983, December 22, 1984, July 5, 1986, April 24, 1986, October 9-b). However, in the same period, TE published approximately 28 articles on Japan, another nation with which Tuvalu had fisheries disputes (see TE, 1985, April 11), and many of these articles note positive aspects of Tuvalu-Japan relations (TE, 1984, April 12, 1984, June 21, 1985, February 14).

By contrast, in six years of TE coverage from late October 1986 to 1992, Taiwan appears in over 41 articles. Five of these articles describe illegal fishing (see TE, 1988, November 25, 1992, February 14) and dissatisfaction with Taiwan's use of driftnets (TE, 1989, March 31, 1989, October 13, 1990, November 23). Despite this, the majority explore positive themes including technical training programs hosted in Taiwan and Taiwan's assistance with constructing Tuvalu's hotel.⁶⁶ Similarly, while TE articles from the late 1990s to the early 2000s and *Fenui* articles from 2013 to 2015 sometimes negatively portray Taiwan (mainly regarding fisheries) (see *Fenui*, 2015, January 26-a), reporting usually highlights scholarships, monetary and equipment donations, and agricultural or medical projects Taiwan operates for Tuvalu.⁶⁷

Although the tone of coverage shifted in late 1986, a trend notable in all reporting on Taiwan is that the nation is rarely characterized as a cultural, social, or political entity, making it difficult for readers to construct assumptions. For example, many articles in TE feature Taiwan, but they seldom provide any information on Taiwan as an international presence, focusing instead on Taiwan's projects in Tuvalu. Any subjective information is limited to quotes from officials or trainees who have recently returned from the country and note that it possesses "high technology" (TE, 1991, February 15-a) or that they "enjoyed the warmth and

⁶⁶ See TE, 1988, October 28, 1990, November 9, 1991, July 19, 1992, April 10. This shift was motivated by the first official visit to Taiwan of a Tuvaluan head of government (then Prime Minister Tomasi Puapua) in September 1986 (UDN, 1986, September 21). However, Taiwan's martial law ended in 1987, and, when Lee Teng-hui became president in 1988, he worked to enhance Taiwan's international status (Hu, 2015, p. 8). These factors undoubtedly contributed to plentiful Tuvalu-Taiwan interactions after 1986.

⁶⁷ See *Fenui*, 2014, September 1, 2015, May 11; Lalue, 2014, August 25; TE, 2004, March, 2004, July-a, 2004, July-b.

kind hospitality of the Taiwanese people” (TE, 1992, March 27). Articles from *Fenui* similarly refrain from consistent or extended characterizations of Taiwan. For example, one article on a visit of the Taiwan Youth Ambassadors briefly notes that Taiwan provides “compassionate aid and [a] standard of Chinese culture” (Lalua, 2014, September 22); another on Taiwan’s efforts to join the UN explains that Taiwan adheres to principles of “democracy and good governance” (Semi, 2015, February 16).

Substantially descriptive writing on Taiwan and its culture, arts, technology, food, and indigenous peoples only appeared in Tuvaluan publications in 2014 and 2015 after *Fenui* reporters attended press visits to the country (D’Unienville, 2015, May 4; Lalua Melton, 2014, October 20). Yet, despite the detail provided in these articles, an overview of reporting from 1976 to present shows that coverage on Taiwan rarely includes subjective characterizations and does not tell readers how they should understand Taiwan. Consequently, although, in Tuvaluan leadership statements, Taiwan is consistently reconstructed to achieve different objectives, *in* Tuvalu, state-owned media does not adopt this strategy, a phenomenon clearly reflected in popular understandings of Taiwan outlined below.

“I didn’t even know about Taiwan until I applied for the scholarship”: Popular imaginings of Taiwan in Tuvalu

In the Taiwanese documentary *Taivalu* (discussed below), the narrator condescendingly declares:

Though Taiwan does not have a high international profile, the people in Tuvalu are very familiar with Taiwan. Taiwan is the only nation that sends an ambassador to the island. The largest building on the island, the government halls, and the only hotel in Tuvalu are built by Taiwan. (H.-y. Huang, 2011, 24:41-25:05; see also Zhao, 2013, April 2)

However, while the narrator’s statement may reflect Tuvaluan awareness of Taiwan’s presence *in* Tuvalu, it is not indicative of broader familiarity with Taiwan’s position internationally. This trend is evident in interviews with Tuvaluan citizens who had traveled to Taiwan and audience questionnaires collected after a 2018 Taiwanese performance in Funafuti.

Although it is important to note that Taiwan’s work in Tuvalu centers on Funafuti and not Tuvalu’s seven outer islands (10/13 Interview), citizens who had lived in Funafuti were all

knowledgeable of and held positive opinions about Taiwan's infrastructure, technical, and cultural projects there.⁶⁸ Yet, there is a striking distinction between interviewee discussions of Taiwan *in* Tuvalu and their imaginings of Taiwan as an international entity. In interviews, many Tuvaluan citizens who had traveled to Taiwan explained that, before going there, they had no preconceived ideas about what the country would be like. For example, two interviewees who grew up abroad, attended high school in Tuvalu, and then applied for Taiwan scholarships expressed the following views:

To be honest, I didn't even know about Taiwan until I applied for the scholarship. All this time, when I hear people say Taiwan, I'd be thinking of Thailand.... But then I realized that it was actually ... a country that existed. So, when they ... did [a] brief history about Taiwan and how it was taken over, I was like, "Wow. That's a really interesting place to go to." So, I got here not knowing what to expect, right, not knowing if it's going to be so influenced by China or any other thing else. It was just a whole new experience. (10/9 Interview)

I knew the name. I knew it was a country, but I didn't know anything else. Like, orientation-wise, I didn't know they had problems with China ... (10/9 Interview)⁶⁹

Furthermore, if interviewees did have preconceived ideas about Taiwan, these conceptions were not derived from the media but through interactions with Tuvaluans in Taiwan or Taiwanese citizens in Tuvalu. For instance, many students noted that they were encouraged to study in Taiwan by Tuvaluans who had studied there previously and whom they termed relatives or friends. These relatives/friends described Taiwan positively and characterized it as safe, convenient, and advanced:

Oh, ok, for Taiwan, I got it from a friend and [she] said it's like—cause [she's] been to Fiji and New Zealand—she said Taiwan is still the best out of them.... Oh, they said it's fun, more advanced, and safe. (9/24b Interview)

Cause [I] just heard from those—somebody from here, Taiwan, that Taiwan is safe and good (10/25 Interview)

Some of the students who applied, who [were] already here ... , they're telling me, "You can apply to this cause it's nice there. I mean, nice here in Taiwan."... Even my

⁶⁸ See 8/20, 8/27, 9/24b, 10/13, 10/16, 10/19, 10/30, 4/15, 4/17c, 4/22, 5/9a, 5/12, and 5/21 Interviews.

⁶⁹ See 9/24b, 10/25, 11/4, 4/15, 5/3b, 5/9a, 5/11b, and 5/30a Interviews. Two former students noted that they knew of Taiwan before studying there because they had attended training programs in Taiwan before receiving scholarships (4/27 and 5/21 Interviews).

sister, she heard stories from here in Taiwan—from the students here ... I just know that they said, “Taiwan is nice cause it’s safe, it’s very safe, and everything is there.” (11/4 Interview)⁷⁰

Some interviewees who had lived in Funafuti also described friendships they developed with Taiwanese citizens volunteering or working in Tuvalu. These friendships entailed sharing information about Taiwan and its culture (10/13, 10/16, and 10/19 Interviews).

Notably, the phenomena described above are also reflected in the broader Tuvaluan population on Funafuti. Consequently, in a 2018 audience questionnaire, the majority of respondents explained that they knew of Taiwan either because of Taiwan’s assistance to Tuvalu or because of stories they heard from friends (see Chapter 6).

Aside from understandings of Taiwan constructed through interpersonal relationships, one student suggested another way Tuvaluans developed impressions of Taiwan: she linked her expectations for the country to Chinese or Hong Kong film:

For me, ... I watch a lot of Chinese movies, so I thought Taiwan is going to have people who know how to [do]... kungfu, but, when I get to Taiwan, not everyone [does] kungfu every day.... [I watch a] lot, like Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan. (8/20 and 8/27 Interviews; see also 10/14 and 4/17c Interviews)

References to the impact of kungfu films on understandings of Taiwan dovetail with Mallon’s (2014) observations about Bruce Lee’s popularity in the Pacific. However, they also indicate that cultural constructions of Taiwan in Tuvalu position the country as Asian. This suggests insufficient information on or identification with Taiwan’s indigenous populations, which echoes contested understandings of Austronesian diplomacy from Chapter 2.

Recent Tuvaluan media reports overlap with interview and questionnaire findings because they manifest positive understandings of Taiwan as a local actor but do not then extrapolate from these understandings characterizations of Taiwan as an international presence. Instead, for Tuvaluan citizens, any subjective ideas of Taiwan are typically formed through interpersonal relationships. Hence, official and popular Tuvaluan discourse diverge because characterizations of Taiwan as it exists outside of Tuvalu are more prevalent in official than popular rhetoric. Conversely, Taiwan’s news media, film, and literature play a strong role in

⁷⁰ See also 10/9, 10/29, 4/15, 4/17c, 4/22, 4/27, 5/11b, and 7/6 Interviews.

defining Tuvalu as a cultural, social, and political entity for Taiwanese citizens, and popular imaginings about Tuvalu often form before any interpersonal interactions can occur.

Taiwan: Mediating Tuvalu through considerations of climate change, ethnocentrism, and Taiwanese sovereignty

Popular coverage on Tuvalu in Taiwan is sprawling. Especially in Taiwanese news outlets, Tuvalu has been articulated to numerous themes since the beginnings of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, with Taiwan's attempts to join the UN and climate change most consistently tied to Tuvalu. In this sub-section, I discuss how Taiwanese popular discourse fixates on Tuvalu's "imminent demise" due to climate change to outline imaginings of Tuvalu in mainstream society. I choose this discursive thread not only because it appears in newspapers spanning Taiwan's political spectrum but also because interviews with Taiwan's Youth Ambassadors (YAs) and Tuvaluan students in Taiwan reveal climate change as a major factor shaping how Taiwan knows Tuvalu.⁷¹

In 2010, Farbotko argued that the "islands of Tuvalu, largely absent from Eurocentric imaginings of the Pacific region, have become meaningful spaces in cosmopolitan discourses only as they disappear" (p. 48; see also Goldsmith, 2015, p. 133). Similarly, although Tuvalu is more present in Taiwanese discourse because it is a diplomatic ally, it has also become increasingly significant to Taiwan only with more frequent coverage of its disappearance.⁷² Still, in the West, Tuvalu is an "experimental space through which many environmentalist narratives derive force" (Farbotko, 2010, p. 53); by contrast, in Taiwan, Tuvalu and climate change form a broader comparative text ultimately used to navigate domestic and international problems plaguing Taiwan. Popular discourse rarely advances knowledge of Tuvalu itself, and Tuvalu is instead a foil through which Taiwan is understood.

In this sub-section, I first examine the dominance of climate change in Taiwanese reporting on Tuvalu and the characterizations of Tuvalu this perpetuates. I then consider how the prevalence of climate-change discourse renders Tuvalu a convenient medium for reflections on Taiwanese sovereignty. Finally, I discuss two works on Tuvalu and climate change cited in interviews and questionnaires for this research. I show that, while both works attempted to

⁷¹ See 10/13, 10/14, 10/20b, 11/9, 11/19a, 3/8, and 8/30a Interviews; T. Wu, 2012, p. 108, back cover.

⁷² Tuvalu is *not* widely known in Taiwan. Consequently, the relationship between climate change and Tuvalu is not recognized by all Taiwanese citizens but is known to those familiar with Tuvalu.

overturn assumptions about Tuvalu, they were forestalled in this goal by Taiwan's socio-political contexts.

***“[In] the next several years, Tuvalu will be unfit for human habitation”:
Representations of Tuvalu in Taiwan's news media***

Articles in three major newspapers spanning Taiwan's political spectrum—聯合報, or *United Daily News* (UDN); 中國時報, or *China Times*; and 自由時報, or *Liberty Times*⁷³—show that climate change is a dominant theme in reporting.⁷⁴ For example, UDN published its earliest coverage on climate change and Tuvalu's potential disappearance in a 1991 article entitled “Global village: Island crisis, Facing terror of being swallowed by the sea.” The article begins by stating that “The South Pacific Island nation of Tuvalu, which is made up of nine coral atolls, became independent 12 years ago but might disappear ... forever 100 years from now.” It goes on to describe Tuvalu's low elevation above sea level, small population, and lack of economic resources, which have, the article relates, motivated immigration to Australia and New Zealand (*United Evening News*, 1991, December 20). Although *China Times* began covering Tuvalu and climate change much later than UDN, it printed a remarkably similar series of articles beginning in 2000 and 2001. One of these articles, “Tuvalu to be submerged,” explains that a U.S. policy society has announced that Tuvaluans will begin leaving their country in the next year with the hope of migrating to New Zealand (*China Times Express*, 2001, November 16).⁷⁵

This early coverage on Tuvalu potentially disappearing because of climate change is characteristic of subsequent articles on the topic frequently published in UDN, *China Times*, and *Liberty Times*.⁷⁶ Reporting not only continually reminds readers that, since the 1990s, Tuvalu has always been about to disappear but has also become tied to what reporters see as Tuvalu's negative qualities: small size, small population, and low development level (see 11/10a Interview). For example, in an article on then President Chen's visit to Tuvalu,

⁷³ UDN and *China Times* are considered supportive of the KMT and *Liberty Times* the DPP.

⁷⁴ All three newspapers have keyword-searchable databases with digitized articles available for UDN from 1951 (when the newspaper was established) to present, *China Times* from 1950 to present (most content is from 1994 to present), and *Liberty Times* from 2003 to present (most content is from 2005 to present). For 2009 to 2016, when reporting on Tuvalu and climate change was most prevalent, 49% of *China Times* articles, 48% of UDN articles (including articles from the affiliated *Economic Daily News*), and 24% of *Liberty Times* articles on Tuvalu were about climate change.

⁷⁵ See *China Times*, 2000, October 28; *China Times Express*, 2001, July 21; T. Liu, 2001, November 17.

⁷⁶ According to *China Times* television listings, from 2003 to 2006, Taiwan's National Geographic channel also repeatedly aired a program titled “Tuvalu: The sinking country” (e.g., 2003, June 16, 2005, March 18, 2006, January 4).

Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands in 2005, *China Times* described the poor telecommunications situation in the three countries. It noted that “[this situation] is especially bad for Tuvalu, which only has 10,000 people and is on the verge of being submerged into the sea” (S.-l. Lin, 2005, May 3). Writing on the same presidential visit, UDN explained not only that Tuvalu would disappear in several decades due to climate change but also that, compared to the relative “civilization” of the Marshall Islands, the most remarkable characteristic of Tuvalu was that it had “no wars and no malaria” (H.-z. Li, 2005, April 30). Furthermore, in a 2009 article on Tuvalu donating 1% of its GDP to help Taiwan recover from Typhoon Morakot, UDN rapidly qualified and even undermined Tuvalu’s generosity:

Tuvalu has a population of only approximately 12,000 and its landmass is only 26 square kilometers. Tuvalu’s coastline is subject to severe erosion and the greenhouse effect has caused the sea level to rise without stop.... International media predicts that in the next several years, Tuvalu will be unfit for human habitation (G. Wang, 2009, August 26).

It is important to note that, contrary to the above discussion, some Taiwanese interviewees suggested that reporting on Tuvalu emphasizes tourism (2/28 and 8/30a Interviews) or the country’s paradisiacal nature (12/13 Interview). Yet, these are not actually predominant themes in media coverage. For example, of the 528 UDN articles that have mentioned Tuvalu between September 1979 and January 2019, only six portray the country as “beautiful” or “paradise,” and these descriptions are all connected to climate change and Tuvalu’s disappearance. Nevertheless, some popular Taiwanese non-fiction meant to raise awareness of climate change has emphasized the beauty of Tuvalu—and Pacific Islands more generally—as opposed to negative qualities highlighted in media reports (P. Wang & X. You, 2011; Yamamoto, 2008). Although these works construct idyllic imaginings of Tuvalu/the Pacific, they still underscore the ultimate helplessness of Tuvalu in the face of climate change.

The resonance media reporting, and other writing, has had with popular assumptions about Tuvalu is clear from the extent Taiwan’s education system has co-opted Tuvalu as an environmental case study. Tuvalu is included in lesson plans for environmental education courses at the elementary and junior high school levels and students have written school reports about Tuvalu’s imminent disappearance. Tuvalu’s struggle with climate change even

appears in qualifying exams required to move between different school levels.⁷⁷ The importance of climate change to knowing Tuvalu was also manifest in interviews conducted throughout my research: at least three Taiwanese interviewees of different ages, backgrounds, and relationships to the project asked when Tuvalu would sink or when the population was planning to move (10/23b, 11/9, and 11/24 Interviews).

If Tuvalu has made an impression in Taiwanese media and popular opinion, it is because of climate change, and relevant reporting on Tuvalu betrays ethnocentric views of the country as small, poor, and vulnerable. Like aspects of official Taiwanese discourse, this trend reflects themes in Chapter 2 where allies are seen as low quality and needing “improvement.”

***“[The] Tuvaluans seemed like they didn’t care [about losing their country]”:
Popular imaginings of Tuvalu in Taiwan***

Because Tuvalu’s imminent disappearance is so frequently reported in Taiwan, Tuvalu and climate change have also become a vehicle for citizen reflections on problems plaguing Taiwan. This demonstrates that, at the popular level, Tuvalu is as much a tool for identifying Taiwan as it is at the official level; it also shows that popular assumptions on Tuvalu rarely move beyond ideas of vulnerability due to climate change.

One of the most intriguing ways in which this issue has surfaced in popular discourse is in musings on the possibility of combining Tuvalu and Taiwan into a single country to solve Tuvalu’s climate-change problem and Taiwan’s sovereignty dilemma. For example, in 2007, a hospital administrator, Lai Youzhe, published an opinion piece in *Liberty Times*. Lai explained that the Taiwan government was not paying enough attention to the fact that one of its allies, Tuvalu, had almost disappeared due to climate change. He suggested that if the Tuvaluan population moved to Taiwan and the two nations merged, this problem could be easily solved. Furthermore, through the formation of the new country 台灣吐瓦魯, or “Taiwan-Tuvalu,” Taiwan could gain independence from the PRC *and* access to Tuvalu’s membership in the UN, the Commonwealth, and other international organizations (2007, March 21). Interestingly, Lai’s letter was published the day after *Liberty Times* and UDN ran articles respectively titled “Taiwan’s ally Tuvalu to soon become a water world” and “Global warming, Tuvalu soon to be submerged,” and many details from the *Liberty Times* article are repeated in Lai’s piece (*Liberty Times*, 2007, March 20; UDN, 2007, March 20). In this way,

⁷⁷ For lesson plans, see W. Chen, 2015, May 16; X.-T. Yang, 2015; for school reports, see Y. Guo & Y. Chen, 2008; Su & T.-y. Li, 2010, November 15; for qualifying exams, see Qiu, 2010, January 21; Taoyuan Municipal Dasi Senior High School, 2013, June 19; Xue, 2007, June 8.

Lai's letter indicates how reporting on Tuvalu structures public opinion and has made Tuvalu a convenient medium for contemplating Taiwan's present and future (for a recent example, see J. Lin, 2016, September 15).

This phenomenon is also apparent in recent Taiwanese literary production. Consequently, in a 2017 untitled short story, award-winning author Huang Chong-Kai seems to build on Lai Youzhe's proposal outlined above. Huang's story imagines a future in which Tuvalu has already disappeared and citizens have evacuated to settlement areas on Taiwan's eastern coast. The story centers on the reunification of an estranged Taiwanese family after the protagonist's father marries a Tuvaluan widow named Anna and adopts her three daughters. However, it also sketches debates in Taiwan over whether and how to merge Taiwan and Tuvalu so as to engineer Taiwan's independence from the PRC.

As Huang himself has explained, in the story, Tuvalu is merely a conduit for the true focus of the work: dissatisfaction with Taiwan's current international situation.⁷⁸ Thus, in a 13-page story where Taiwan's socio-political issues are depicted with clarity and frequency, Huang reduces Tuvalu and its people to the following descriptions:

[The] Tuvaluans seemed like they didn't care [about losing their country], as if it didn't matter if they couldn't return to their homes. (p. 32)

The Tuvaluans mainly lived as they always had: groups congregated together chatting, holding ukuleles, and happily singing songs. The gist of the lyrics was that, before, they had always sung about Taiwan being very, very far away, but now Taiwan was right before [their] eyes. (p. 32)

[Anna's] eldest daughter said she liked her life in Taiwan better; it was more convenient, and she could ride the train The youngest daughter said that the beach in Taitung was very different from the fine, white sand in Tuvalu. (p. 39)⁷⁹

As the story unfolds, descriptions of Tuvaluan characters also focus more on their assimilation into Taiwanese society than on reflections about Tuvalu. As the Mandarin and Hokkien⁸⁰ language skills and food preparation abilities of the Tuvaluan characters rapidly improve, the narrator remarks that "I almost couldn't tell they were foreigners" (p. 39) and "it was as if Tuvalu had never existed" (p. 42). Therefore, Huang's engagement with Tuvalu

⁷⁸ Personal communication, 2017, December 20; see Goldsmith, 2015, p. 135.

⁷⁹ Notably, some descriptions in Huang Chong-Kai's story are based on Huang Hsin-yao's (2011) documentary *Taivalu*, which is discussed in the next sub-section (Personal communication, 2017, December 20).

⁸⁰ Hokkien is a Southern Min Chinese dialect prevalent in Taiwan.

reflects a common trend in Taiwanese media and society: contentment with understandings of Tuvalu that begin and end with climate change and that concentrate more on Taiwan than Tuvalu. This trend again indicates links to socio-political conceptions of diplomacy from Chapter 2 because the suggestion that Tuvaluans would be better served if relocated to Taiwan is an extreme example of discourse on “improving” allies. The intertwining of Tuvalu with Taiwanese sovereignty issues via climate change also shows how Taiwan’s fraught national status affects its imaginings of allies.⁸¹

“The beautiful beach of Tuvalu is important to me”: Promoting understandings of Tuvalu through popular discourse

To consider another level at which climate change and Tuvalu intersect in Taiwanese popular imaginings, I conclude this sub-section by discussing two works on Tuvalu and climate change that directly influenced how interviewees for this research understood Tuvalu. The 2010 Taiwanese documentary 沈沒 (ㄅㄨㄣˇ ㄇㄟˋ) 之島, or *Taivalu*⁸², was mentioned in audience questionnaires collected after a 2017 Tuvaluan performance in Taiwan and by at least one YA (10/20b Interview) as a way Taiwanese citizens learned about Tuvalu; the film was also later recommended by another YA (12/13 Interview). The 2008 illustrated book 日漸沉沒的樂園吐瓦魯，你最重要的東西是什麼？地球暖化篇, or *Tuvalu, the island nation sinking because of global warming—The most important thing for you*, was the work YAs referenced most commonly when explaining how they learned about Tuvalu before traveling there (10/20b, 11/9, and 12/13 Interviews). Both pieces are notable for attempting to overturn stereotypes about Tuvalu and climate change. However, consistent with trends outlined above, in Taiwan, these works have been undermined in promoting deeper understandings of Tuvalu either because they themselves use Tuvalu to reflect on Taiwan or because the messages they advocate have been co-opted in Taiwanese media and politics.

Taivalu, a documentary produced in Taiwan in 2010, was awarded First Prize at the Taipei Film Festival in 2011. After the destruction wrought on southern Taiwan in 2009 by Typhoon Morakot and prompted by Tuvalu donating 1% of its GDP to Taiwan for disaster relief, the

⁸¹ Although popular discourse on combining Tuvalu and Taiwan is prominent, whether the Taiwan government supports this idea—and whether it hopes to gain control of Tuvalu’s EEZ as a result—is unclear from public documents.

⁸² *Taivalu* is a portmanteau of Taiwan and Tuvalu (or Tai + valu). Furthermore, although the Zhuyin phonetic notation for the documentary title should technically be ㄅㄨㄣˇ ㄇㄟˋ, which means “sinking,” the director used a different notation—ㄅㄨㄣˇ ㄇㄟˋ—as a play on words to subvert stereotypes about Tuvalu and climate change.

film's director Huang Hsin-yao traveled to Tuvalu to collect evidence of climate change. However, in the film, Huang chides himself for his foolish attempts to find conclusive evidence of sea level rise and strives to feature what he sees as more pressing issues (e.g., trash disposal problems⁸³), thereby broadening understandings of Tuvalu. Nevertheless, as the film's English title *Taivalu* indicates, the focus of the documentary is not actually Tuvalu, and it instead uses Tuvalu to reflect on Taiwan's own environmental protection problems.⁸⁴ In a scene toward the end of the film reminiscent of Huang Chong-Kai's short story, the director even notes that, given its technological talents, Taiwan can undoubtedly develop an artificial island for Tuvaluans to live on; when Taiwan inevitably sinks as well, the people of Tuvalu and Taiwan can live there together (1:10:21-1:10:34). Although partly an attempt to expand narrow understandings of Tuvalu in Taiwan, the film consistently refers back to Taiwan, limiting Tuvalu's value to that of a comparative lens (see *China Times*, 2009, August 31).

Based on its title, the second work considered here, *Tuvalu, the island nation sinking because of global warming*, seems an extension of typical Taiwanese discourse on Tuvalu's disappearance. However, it is more complex than that. The book, which was authored by Toshiharu Yamamoto, then president of the nonprofit organization Earth the Spaceship, includes mainly photographs showing pictures drawn by Tuvaluan children after they were asked what was most important to them. While these pictures do focus on climate change, they also reflect the importance of Tuvalu's beaches, sunsets, people-to-people relationships, schools, water availability, and trash disposal issues. The work is not an unproblematic representation, but YAs credit it with generating new perspectives on Tuvalu and potentially modifying the way they understood and conducted projects in the country (10/20b and 12/13 Interviews).

Yet, the fate of this work in Taiwan is particularly interesting: from 2009 through 2011, then first lady Christine Chow Mei-ching gave readings of the book at bookstores and schools throughout Taiwan and even at the presidential residence.⁸⁵ In media coverage of these readings, the book becomes a prop secondary to reporting on Chow's charitable visits to remote and indigenous schools and her own comparisons of Tuvalu and Taiwan (Pan, 2011,

⁸³ The Tuvalu government has since addressed trash disposal issues and they are now less of an urgent concern.

⁸⁴ See M. Li, 2011, August 28; *Liberty Times*, 2011, August 7; X. Liu, 2011, August 28.

⁸⁵ See Hua, 2011, May 18; Z. Lin, 2009, December 21; Pan, 2011, February 16; Y. Wang, 2010, October 3; C. You, 2010, November 3. Yamamoto also traveled to Taiwan in 2009 to discuss his work (UDN, 2009, November 29).

February 16). The book is even summarized as discussing “the helplessness of Tuvalu, a small country in the Pacific, in the face of climate change” (C. You, 2010, November 3) and is sometimes barely mentioned at all (Hua, 2011, May 18). Clearly, despite the book’s content, its integration into the Taiwanese press through the first lady’s fame transformed it—and Tuvalu—into mere signifiers of climate change, tools more important for forwarding political agendas than anything else.

To summarize, in popular Taiwanese discourse, Tuvalu is mediated through discussions of climate change; this mediation involves linking Tuvalu to ethnocentric and often negative descriptors and reflections on Taiwanese sovereignty. These phenomena are consistent with themes in both official Taiwanese discourse and socio-political conceptions of diplomacy, as has been shown throughout this sub-section. Thus, while Tuvalu’s official and popular discourse on Taiwan diverge, Taiwanese discourses more closely overlap.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I sketched official and popular discourse that structures the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship. In the first portion of the chapter, I illustrated how official discourse on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations from the 1970s and 1980s involved narratives and trans-local engagements but also represented informal attempts by Tuvalu and Taiwan to identify themselves as nation-states. For official discourse from 2000 to present, I showed the development of this identification process. That is, currently, Tuvalu and Taiwan shape (and reshape) discourse about each other to define themselves and achieve varied goals. I also indicated converging themes in official discourse throughout time. Specifically, Tuvalu consistently articulates Taiwan to rhetoric on fisheries transgressions that unifies Tuvalu and the Pacific. For its part, Taiwan regularly includes Tuvalu in imaginings of its international identity, with discussions of whether Taiwan is superior to Tuvalu/the Pacific a recurring motif. In the second portion of the chapter, I analyzed popular discourse on Tuvalu and Taiwan. I showed that Tuvaluan and Taiwanese citizens maintain only weak understandings of their diplomatic partner. However, while disparities exist between official Tuvaluan efforts to construct Taiwan and a popular propensity away from such constructions, Taiwan’s popular rhetoric echoes official discourse and structures imaginings of Tuvalu. To this point, Tuvaluans are aware of and often positively view Taiwan’s presence *in* Tuvalu, whereas Taiwan’s media engineers ideas

of Tuvalu as an *international entity*—these ideas are ethnocentric and tie Tuvalu to climate change and Taiwanese sovereignty claims.

Official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese discourse also both converges with and diverges from diplomatic conceptions outlined in Chapter 2. While more recent Tuvaluan discourse includes themes of moral cause or kinship that correspond with diplomatic ideals of properly building/reinforcing relationships, discourse on fisheries transgressions shows that Tuvalu abandons these ideals when Taiwan is seen as rejecting them. For Taiwan, ideas of diplomatic allies as low quality and requiring “improvement” are present throughout official rhetoric as are the vagaries of Austronesian diplomacy. In popular discourse, connections to diplomatic conceptions are less apparent for Tuvalu. However, popular portrayals of Tuvalu in Taiwan illustrate the assumption that allies require “improvement” and indicate that Taiwan’s fraught national status affects how it characterizes diplomatic partners.

Finally, trends identified in this chapter are critical to analysis in the next three chapters, which discuss Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects and audience reception. From the level of official discourse, whereas the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments continually characterize each other, Tuvaluan characterizations do not shift with changes of government but when discourse about Taiwan must be realigned for different audiences. By contrast, shifts in Taiwan’s official portrayals of Tuvalu coincide with efforts to reidentify Taiwan whenever a new party takes power. Accordingly, while Taiwan’s performative cultural diplomacy with Tuvalu should adjust as Taiwan reorients itself to changes of leadership, Tuvalu’s official policies will remain more consistent over time. For popular discourse, although Tuvaluans who engage in performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan may have few pre-formed assumptions about the country, Taiwanese participants should be influenced by more solidly formed imaginings of Tuvalu, especially its climate-change vulnerabilities. Similarly, when Tuvaluan or Taiwanese audiences attend performances, any pre-existing assumptions (or lack thereof) will affect reception. Given this, in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I consider how Tuvaluan and Taiwanese diplomatic conceptions, official and popular discourse, and relevant assumptions affect the planning and reception of performative cultural diplomacy projects. However, I also note how projects have, at times, overturned assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. I consider what factors made change possible and the significance this has for promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Chapter 4:

Culture Performed?: Fatele, Siva, Fakaseasea/Fakanau, and Tuvalu’s Performative Cultural Diplomacy in Taiwan

I think [they should do] a good fatele. ... [Having] a fatele with a good costume would be something that attracts ... attention, and maybe having, like you said, the Nukulaelae in front.⁸⁶ If that happens, the group at the back, and the dancers in front, good costume, fou [flower garland] and everything, that will attract the attention of ... the people, the crowd. Good—and loudspeakers—because, first, they’ll hear it, and like, “What’s that annoying noise?” Cause it’s a fatele. I mean, if you’re someone who doesn’t know the culture, you’ll hear it, and then you’ll like, “That sound is so annoying.” And people dancing and chanting, right? Cause it’s a chant, the fatele. So, they’ll hear it, and they’ll think that it’s annoying, the sound, and they’ll look, and once they see the costume and all, they’ll be curious, “What’s going on?” So, then, they’ll go. (5/11b Interview)

Introduction

The next three chapters focus on case studies in performative cultural diplomacy that exemplify diplomatic conceptions and discursive assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 4 and 5 examine themes in the planning and implementation of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects, while Chapter 6 considers audience reception. Clarke (2016) contends that policy-makers, policy implementers, cultural practitioners, and audience members all make meaning with and potentially change cultural diplomacy projects (p. 154). Additionally, Beausoleil (2014) notes that performance “[brings] to light latent tensions ... often occluded in other forms of representation” (p. 28), while K. M. Teaiwa (2012) and Chao (2012) maintain that “[dance] movement ... [is] modified and created under specific social and political conditions” (p. 20).

⁸⁶ Among Tuvalu’s eight islands, only Nukulaelae and Funafuti dancers stand in front of singers and instrumentalists during fatele.

Consequently, the following chapters center not only on the multiple levels of change and tension inherent in performative cultural diplomacy projects but also on the cultural, social, and political conditions in Tuvalu and Taiwan that incite this tension and change.

In this chapter, I first outline literature on Pacific-Asia diplomatic contingency/complexity, cultural diplomacy, and Performance/Dance Studies to demonstrate that highlighting diplomatic contingency/complexity through performance/dance expands understandings of diplomatic projects; this discussion provides a conceptual foundation for Chapters 4 to 6. Subsequently, I analyze Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan. I begin by discussing the significance in Tuvalu of the performative/dance form *fatele*, especially as it relates to domestic diplomacy and cultural representation. I then outline participation by The Association of Tuvalu Students in Taiwan (TATST) at the 2013-2016 Asia-Pacific Culture Day (APCD) and by the Tuvalu Youth Troupe (TYT) in the 2014 Nan Ying International Folklore Festival (NYIFF) and a subsequent solo performance. After providing this context, I illustrate internal tension in TATST/TYT performances. Based on interviews with Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers, I discuss interviewee insistence that performing *fatele* abroad is necessary but highlight conflicts that emerged over how this performative/dance form was actually presented in Taiwan. I also illustrate external tension in performances, showing that the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments express similar official goals for the APCD and NYIFF but hold sharply contrasting views on how these goals should be achieved. Finally, I explore recent changes in how Tuvaluan officials develop performing groups for travel abroad. These changes show new convergences with official Taiwanese ideas of successful performative cultural diplomacy. Throughout the chapter, I also chart protocols that determine Tuvalu's performative strategies in Taiwan by considering the country's participation at expos in Japan (2005), the PRC (2010), South Korea (2012), and Kazakhstan (2017), as well as the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FESTPAC).

Current Research on Pacific-Asia Diplomatic Contingency/Complexity, Cultural Diplomacy, and Performance/Dance Studies

As noted in Chapter 1, the concept of diplomatic contingency/complexity, or awareness of the multiple forces and actors that influence and change diplomatic practice, is key to expanded understandings of diplomatic relationships and the assumptions underlying these relationships. Yet, like the multiple meanings of diplomacy addressed in Chapter 2,

contingency/complexity is overlooked in most research on foreign affairs. Recently, however, scholars of Pacific-Asia diplomacy and cultural diplomacy have demanded greater attention to the contingencies and complexities of International Relations (IR).⁸⁷ Therefore, Salesa (2016) and G. Smith (2012, 2013, 2014) recommend considering “a variety of ... [actors] ... rather than imposing ... fictional [monoliths]” in Pacific-Asia relations (G. Smith, 2012, p. 95). Academics like Clarke (2016), Mark (2010), and Paschalidis (2009), who research cultural diplomacy, have also abandoned “totalising” histories. They instead examine how cultural diplomacy is “shaped by accident and accommodation, organisational culture and personalities, [and] local cultural politics and social circumstances” (Paschalidis, 2009, p. 286). Given this, analyzing Pacific-Asia cultural diplomacy clearly provides a vantage point from which greater nuance can be introduced into understandings of diplomacy and IR. It is also a perspective that exemplifies the conceptions of diplomacy and complex constitution of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations described in Chapters 2 and 3.

More critically, *performative* cultural diplomacy is crucial to analysis conducted in this and the next two chapters because scholars of Performance/Dance Studies argue that culture, performance/dance, and diplomacy and politics often act as intertwining forces.⁸⁸ However, these academics also demonstrate that, when performance/dance is used to forward diplomatic aims, it inevitably exposes layers of meaning-making and contestation that can cement, subvert, or both cement and subvert diplomatic goals.

For example, from a Pacific perspective, K. M. Teaiwa (2012) analyzes the “body politics” of Banaban dance, identifying bodies and body movements as “major vehicles for ... history, culture, politics, and identity” (p. 72). Body movements are also a political means of “[producing] difference” (p. 65) that tests the wherewithal of politics given the nuance performative/dance forms entail. From the vantage point of diplomacy, Henry (2011)—who examines local, regional, and national performances by Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders—similarly notes the ability of dance to “[display] relatedness and communal closeness” while also “[articulating] divisions, differences and competition” (p. 182). Hence, performance/dance demonstrates “particular efficacy in the practice of diplomacy” by

⁸⁷ This attention to contingency and complexity has sometimes been referred to as “a micropolitical approach to IR” or a “turn to micropolitics” (Solomon & Steele, 2017, p. 268).

⁸⁸ See Chao, 2012; Desmond, 1993-1994; Henderson, Mallon, & K. M. Teaiwa, 2011; Henry, 2011; Y.-h. Hsu, 2013; Kaeppler, 1999, 2000; Nash, 2000; Ness, 1992; Tamisari, 2016; Taylor, 2003; K. M. Teaiwa, 2012.

“[concealing] as much as [revealing]” (p. 190). It also illuminates tensions underlying diplomatic practice.

For Taiwan, Y.-h. Hsu (2013) and Chao (2012) illustrate the relevance of performance/dance to questions of diplomacy and politics, discussing performance/dance as diplomatically or politically symbolic but also a factor that complicates diplomatic and political contexts. For example, Y.-h. Hsu (2013) shows how the mainland Chinese government used performances to popularize Mandarin language and culture in Taiwan directly after Japanese occupation in World War II. However, he also highlights the complex groupings implicated in this post-war performative cultural diplomacy. Y.-h. Hsu (2013) thus emphasizes how performance was easily articulated to diplomatic aims but also fractured these aims by including participants with competing agendas and performance themes divergent from audience interests. His attention to the multiple contexts of performance/dance reveals how an “explicit political act” (K. M. Teaiwa, 2012, p. 86) is complicated when effected performatively.

These works on Performance/Dance Studies confirm the political importance of performance/dance and demonstrate how it is used to attain diplomatic objectives. However, they also show that the multiple contexts of and participants in performative/dance projects complicate projects and potentially undermine diplomatic aims. This is why Performance/Dance Studies and performative cultural diplomacy are particularly suited to elucidating diplomatic contingency/complexity and further investigating the conceptions, discourses, and assumptions outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. Consequently, in the remainder of this thesis, I contemplate how projects in performative cultural diplomacy highlight Tuvaluan and Taiwanese ideas of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics; reflect and complicate assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations; and populate Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy with the voices of various project participants. I begin in this chapter by considering Tuvalu’s performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan.

Dance as Diplomacy: Tuvalu’s Foreign Affairs, Culture, and Performance

For the Tuvalu government, the status of cultural diplomacy and its importance in relations with Taiwan is contested. On paper, preserving culture, advocating Tuvalu’s culture abroad, and strengthening relations with Taiwan are all government priorities. Culture is the focus of Tuvalu’s National Culture Policy: Strategic Plan 2018-2024, was highlighted as one of 12 strategic areas in Tuvalu’s current national strategy for sustainable development (Te Kakeega

III), and is even one of the three pillars in the Tuvalu Constitution. A 2016 draft of Tuvalu's foreign policy, which, at the time of this writing, has not yet been finalized⁸⁹, further notes that foreign affairs should "[advocate] Tuvalu's image as a peaceful nation ... recognized for ... its unique culture" and "focus on its main development partners ... [including] Taiwan."⁹⁰ From a policy standpoint, then, Tuvalu's participation in cultural diplomacy with Taiwan dovetails with foreign policy and national development goals.

Yet, current and former officials from Tuvalu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment & Labor (MFATTEL) and Ministry of Home Affairs & Rural Development (MHARD), who organize performing groups for festivals and tourism expos, note that budget constraints restrict participation in international performative cultural diplomacy.⁹¹ They further explain that, at least from a tourism perspective, Taiwan is not a key market for performative promotion (Personal communication, 2018, May 5). Therefore, as significant as culture and Taiwan are to national and foreign policy, Tuvalu would only enact cultural diplomacy projects in Taiwan if the Taiwan government or other organizations provided funding (5/24a Interview). Unlike Taiwan, where cultural diplomacy became a major policy initiative after 2008 (see Chapter 5), implementing cultural diplomacy in Taiwan (and other nations) is not a budgetary priority for Tuvalu.

However, this does not mean that cultural diplomacy is absent from Tuvalu's implementation of foreign affairs or its relationship with Taiwan. The Tuvalu government has not only engaged in numerous cultural diplomacy projects in Taiwan when funding was provided,⁹² but it also actively implements cultural diplomacy with Taiwan (and other nations) in a domestic setting. Importantly, this practice entails the alofa and diplomatic conceptions of hospitality, symbolism, and performativity discussed in Chapter 2. As an assistant secretary at MFATTEL noted,

[We] are very well-known for our hospitality, especially when dignitaries visit Tuvalu. They always say that we treat them very nice compared to other countries.... [Because], traditionally, in Tuvalu tradition, when you come, you are to be greeted by

⁸⁹ Tuvalu's foreign policy has not yet been finalized because the Tuvalu government decided to wait for the results of the 2019 parliamentary elections before making the document official policy.

⁹⁰ Government of Tuvalu (GoT), 2016b, pp. 2-3; see also 6/1 Interview; GoT, 2012, pp. 1, 8, 2014, p. 11, 2016a, p. 25, 2018, p. 7; South Pacific Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 11.

⁹¹ See 5/16 and 6/1 Interviews; GoT, 2012, pp. 1-2, 8, 13, 2018, pp. 12, 20, 26; South Pacific Tourism Organization, 2014, pp. 4-8, 15-17.

⁹² See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, September 11, 2014, September 29, 2014, October 18, 2015, October 26.

fatele [We] always have to begin with fatele and end with fatele [One] other important aspect of a visit [is] the alofa. We call it “the giving of gifts.” That’s the most important part of our—so, it’s usually given at the last fatele before you depart. [So], that’s when, after the fatele, we’ll ... start running around with mats. Cause, in Tuvalu, we don’t like to give gifts just like that. It’s boring. We run.... So, ... it’s more like [clowning]. Like a comedy-type thing.... Some dignitaries, they get into it (4/20 Interview; see also 4/28 and 5/21 Interviews)

When the Tuvalu government enacts diplomacy domestically, protocols center on cultural engagement with foreign guests, which highlights the importance of culture to Tuvalu’s diplomacy. These cultural protocols have also been critical to government planning for Taiwan’s three presidential visits to Tuvalu in 2005, 2010, and 2017.⁹³ Furthermore, Tuvalu’s domestic diplomacy is noteworthy not only because it includes performative diplomatic protocol like the alofa but also because it depends on performative/dance forms, specifically fatele, that are seen as inextricably connected to representations of Tuvaluan culture. This connection has ensured the prevalence of performance/dance in Tuvalu’s cultural diplomacy projects in Taiwan (and other nations) regardless of funding constraints.

As identified by Tuvalu’s culture officer and reiterated by numerous interviewees, three performative/dance forms are considered representative of Tuvalu: siva, fakaseasea/fakanau⁹⁴, and fatele (10/14, 10/16, 10/30, 11/10b, 5/3a, 5/16, and 6/1 Interviews). Siva is seen as a “modern” or “contemporary” Tuvaluan dance. It is accompanied by recorded music or guitar and ukulele and is described by many interviewees as “not ours,” being viewed instead as a transplant from Samoa (10/16, 4/17c, 4/26b, and 5/24a Interviews). For this reason, when ranking Tuvalu’s representative performances/dances, one interviewee explained that “[siva] always comes last” (10/16 Interview). For its part, fakaseasea/fakanau is a form of chanting that “tells a story” and is sometimes accompanied by movement (4/20, 5/3a, 5/4, and 5/9b Interviews). It is considered older than siva and fatele and as more familiar to older generations (4/20 and 5/4 Interviews). However, it is fatele that is

⁹³ See 4/20 Interview; Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan, 2005, May 4, 2017, November 1-a, 2017, November 1-b; T. Wu, 2012, p. 153.

⁹⁴ Explanations vary as to how fakanau and fakaseasea differ (10/14, 10/16, and 4/20 Interviews), but many interviewees use the terms interchangeably, noting that Tuvalu’s northern and southern dialects have created different terms for a similar performative/dance form (4/20 Interview). Samuelu (1983) differentiates fakanau and fakaseasea based on fakanau’s rapid pacing and greater number of dancers compared to fakaseasea (pp. 40-41), while McLean (1999) distinguishes the forms based on dancers’ gender and whether they stand or sit (pp. 180-182).

undoubtedly the most prevalent performative/dance form in Tuvalu and where connections among Tuvalu's performance/dance, culture, and diplomacy are most salient.

Fatele is a performative/dance form practiced in different styles by the eight islands comprising Tuvalu (4/25b, 5/2, 5/4, and 5/12 Interviews). In all cases, however, fatele includes singing, rhythmic accompaniment, and dancing or movement. A fatele performance is rooted in brief lyrics that, although allusive, record events in Tuvalu or one of its islands or comment on themes such as island life or religion (4/20, 5/2, 5/3a, 5/4, 5/8, and 5/11b Interviews). Once the words of the fatele are composed and they are set to music,⁹⁵ actions that demonstrate the meaning of the lyrics are developed (5/8 Interview; Beaulieu, 2009, p. 56). Final performances of fatele occur in maneapa, fale kaupule, or ahiga (different terms for the same type of meeting house) and require 20 to 100 participants (4/20, 5/3a, and 6/1 Interviews). The minority of participants are dancers who stand to perform fatele actions, and the majority are singers who sit and clap fatele rhythm (dancers can stand behind, in front, or on two or three sides of singers). The center of the group of singers is older men who beat a pokisi ("box") or mat, a person of any age playing a kaapa ("tin"),⁹⁶ and sometimes a person blowing a piila ("whistle"), all of whom drive the rhythm of the fatele. The brief lyrics of the fatele are repeated as the speed and pitch of the performance increase, after which the music and dancing break briefly. This process is then repeated as the speed and pitch again increase. During this time, those who were not originally dancing but feel the matagi ("spirit") of the fatele join the dancing and dancers can break from set actions.⁹⁷

Although the discussion above will already have suggested this, it is important to emphasize here how crucial performance/dance, especially fatele, is to daily life in Tuvalu. As Beaulieu (2009) notes, "*faatele* is a celebratory dance, and its most basic function, obvious to any observer, is to raise the spirits of the participants. Perhaps most importantly, *faatele* is considered Tuvalu's most cherished musical tradition, and is associated with island-specific and national pride" (p. 52). As many interviewees noted, in Tuvalu, fatele is seen either as equivalent to Tuvaluan culture or as one of its most potent signifiers:

⁹⁵ Beaulieu (2009) notes that fatele melodies are composed before words (p. 58). However, interviewees highlighted the text of fatele as its most important attribute (5/4, 5/8, 5/9b, 5/11b, 5/16, 5/20, and 6/1 Interviews).

⁹⁶ A kaapa, or "tin," is not used in fatele for the island of Niutao.

⁹⁷ See 4/15, 4/20, 5/3b, 5/8, 5/11b, 5/20, and 5/30a Interviews; Beaulieu, 2009. Performative/dance forms similar to Tuvaluan fatele are found in Kiribati, Tokelau, Rotuma, and Wallis and Futuna. For Tokelau, the form is also referred to as fatele and is as central to Tokelau's culture as it is to Tuvalu's. However, "Tuvalu is ... where the dance originated" (Thomas, 1996, pp. 133-134; see also GoT, 2012, p. 5).

I would love for maybe our Culture Department [to] translate the meaning of fateles because ... they're poems actually, and they're very deep in meaning, and they carry our culture and our traditions. (4/20 Interview)

[It's] always good to what? To show our own traditional dance, and that's fatele, nothing else. (4/26b Interview)

So, fatele is very unique to the Tuvaluans, and fatele is the traditional—it's cultural. (5/4 Interview)

We normally do the fatele—which is a good thing because that's the main culture. (10/14 Interview)

Given this, fatele is performed on the capital and Tuvalu's outer islands for almost every activity or event important to the nation of Tuvalu or its island communities. During Independence Day, all of Tuvalu's islands will perform fatele on the capital, but fatele will also be performed when a new pastor is sent to an outer island, when one of Tuvalu's eight islands finishes building an important new structure (e.g., a meeting house), or when islands celebrate their individual island holidays (both on the capital and in the outer islands). Leading up to these events, fatele practice becomes a nightly activity for entire island communities, with everyone from young children to elderly members of the community necessary to performative success. Amassing tremendous numbers of dancers and singers feeds into the energy and passion of fatele performance. This is what makes fatele, as a performative/dance form, so unique and electrifies it to the point where performances can carry on for several hours and spectators typically join in performances. Thus, for Tuvalu, performance/dance is not considered divorced from society—something to be presented only in a theater or designated performance space—but is instead integral to community life.

Additionally, a critical aspect of fatele is how it reflects the autonomy and individual personalities of Tuvalu's eight islands. As cited in Chapter 2, the former Ulu Alikī, or "head chief," for the island of Vaitupu suggested that, in relationships between Tuvalu's eight islands and the central government, all parties are equal and must communicate to maintain relationships. As a reflection of this, in Tuvalu, fatele is almost always performed by a single island community; islands also maintain distinct fatele styles. For example, in fatele for the island of Niutao, only women dance, while fatele for the island of Nukufetau are danced by both men and women but characterized by highly masculine movements; fatele for the capital island Funafuti are marked by rigid arm movements, and the lower bodies of dancers

typically remain fixed, whereas fatele for the island of Nukulaelae feature soft, flowing arm gestures, with hip movement an integral part of the style. The lyrics of fatele will also be unique to a single island—that is, if one island composes a fatele, it will usually only ever be performed by that island. Even for national events, islands will never perform in mixed groups but will instead “compete” against each other: one island will present a single fatele, after which the other island will present their own fatele in response. This will continue for several rounds.⁹⁸ As will be discussed in the next section, because fatele is linked into everyday life in Tuvalu and the distinct identities of Tuvalu’s eight islands are a necessary part of fatele performance, it is difficult for Tuvalu to present fatele effectively abroad. Yet, the intense importance of fatele in the domestic Tuvaluan context has also tied it inextricably to cultural diplomacy and determined the performative nature of this diplomacy, as explained below.

First, because fatele is viewed as Tuvalu’s most significant performative/dance form (8/27, 10/13, 10/16, and 11/10b Interviews; Government of Tuvalu, 2018), when representing Tuvaluan culture for any audience, fatele is always described as a “must” (5/4, 5/12, and 5/20 Interviews). Second, although fatele is performed for Tuvalu’s Independence Day, as well as other events that are internal to Tuvalu or its island communities (5/3a, 5/8, 5/9b, and 7/6 Interviews), since Tuvalu separated from Kiribati in 1976 (at the very latest), fatele has also been crucial to entertaining guests.⁹⁹ Furthermore, fatele is currently the main method of receiving foreign dignitaries when they visit Tuvalu and members of Tuvalu’s central government when they travel to the nation’s outer islands.¹⁰⁰ As noted in Chapter 2, a modified form of fatele (where all performers stand and only a kaapa, or “tin,” is used) is also part of the alofa. Fatele is not only an embodiment of culture but also a means of communicating this culture to outsiders at both the intra-national and international levels.

Consequently, national policies emphasizing culture and Taiwan are sometimes contradicted by policy implementation that neglects cultural projects. However, Tuvalu’s application of culture in domestic instances of diplomacy and the importance of fatele in representing culture for diplomatic purposes suggest the significance of performative cultural diplomacy to Tuvalu. This is consistent with the critical role performativity plays in Tuvaluan diplomatic

⁹⁸ Much of the description in the preceding paragraphs is based on the time I spent practicing fatele with different island communities on Tuvalu’s capital island and in the outer islands.

⁹⁹ See 10/19 Interview; GoT, 1981, p. 4, 1982, 2012, p. 40; *Tuvalu Echoes* (TE), 1985, February 28-a, 1989, December 8; Tuvalu House of Assembly, 1977, December 12, p. 56; *Tuvalu News Sheet* (TNS), 1977, July 8, 1980, October 15.

¹⁰⁰ See 4/20, 4/25b, 4/26b, 5/3a, 5/4, 5/8, 5/9b, 5/14, 5/20, and 5/21 Interviews.

conceptions, as outlined in Chapter 2. Additionally, within the major cultural diplomacy projects Tuvalu has enacted in Taiwan—the APCD and the NYIFF—performance/dance has served as the main form of cultural exchange. Yet, because resources necessary for performing *fatele* are unavailable in Taiwanese settings, a key phenomenon in Tuvalu’s projects in Taiwan is that *fatele* is often altered or becomes secondary to other performative/dance types in representations of Tuvalu.

Given this, in the rest of the chapter, I examine the APCD and NYIFF and two points of tension, one internal and one external, apparent in these events. That is (1) the decision by Tuvaluan groups who live in or travel to Taiwan to represent Tuvalu through performance/dance; the subsequent discovery of the necessity/impossibility of presenting *fatele* as part of this performance/dance; and internal tension among Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers that occurs when addressing this challenge; and (2) external tension that arises when Tuvaluan standards for implementing performative cultural diplomacy clash with Taiwan-government standards and conceptions of Pacific performance.

Venues for Representing Tuvalu in Taiwan: The APCD and the NYIFF

After the Tuvalu Embassy was established in Taiwan in March 2013, Tuvalu participated in two performative cultural diplomacy projects spearheaded by Tuvaluan diplomats in Taiwan and coordinated with Tuvalu’s central government: TATST’s performative participation at the 2013-2016 APCD and the TYT’s performative participation in the 2014 NYIFF and a solo performance for the Cyuanhua Temple Association (5/20 and 5/24a Interviews).¹⁰¹ The APCD and NYIFF are hosted by Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) or Taiwan city governments and are not Tuvalu-government initiatives. However, Tuvalu’s diplomats in Taiwan lobbied to participate in these events because they saw them as “a good ... way of ... advocating for our countries ... in the Pacific” (5/20 Interview). This suggests Tuvalu’s subjectivity in pursuing performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan. It also corresponds with Mark’s (2010) contention that cultural diplomacy is implemented when “cultural group performances” are used to “support ... a government’s foreign policy goals” (pp. 64-65).

Below, I first outline the APCD and NYIFF before describing how the performing groups and performances for these projects were developed. I highlight the different protocols

¹⁰¹ See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2013, March 14-a; Taupo, 2014, October 13.

adopted by the Tuvalu government when forming groups for international performances and explain how these groups differ from those that perform in Tuvalu. This provides a context for understanding the internal and external tensions evident in Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan.

APCD event description

Taiwan's MOFA sponsored the first annual APCD in Taiwan's capital Taipei from 28th to 29th September 2013 to "implement President Ma [Ying-jeou's] policy of 'cultural diplomacy'" and "[showcase] the diversity and richness of Asia-Pacific cultures."¹⁰² The event was inspired by the Asian Culture Day, which was held in 2012, but hosting the APCD was only possible after the Tuvalu and Kiribati Embassies opened in Taipei in 2013 and all of Taiwan's Pacific allies at that time had official representation there (5/20 Interview; *The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December). The Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan has participated in the culture day every year since it was established (11/10b and 5/20 Interviews).

The APCD is a two-day event where Taiwan's allies and non-allies from the Pacific-Asia region host booths featuring cultural items, food, and activities and present performances on the festival main stage. Tuvaluan students who study in Taiwan under Taiwan-government scholarships and who constitute TATST organize performances for this event (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, September 11, 2015, October 26). Although students develop performances independently, they often practice at the home of the Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan, and Tuvaluan diplomats provide varying levels of advice and training for performances from year to year (4/27, 5/20, and 5/21 Interviews). This indicates the diplomatic contexts in which performances exist and by which they are influenced. At times, the main TATST performing group has also been supplemented by other Tuvaluans in Taiwan. For example, the first Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan¹⁰³ and his wife joined the 2013 APCD performance (5/20 and 5/30a Interviews) and short-term vocational trainees participated in 2014 (4/27 and 5/3b Interviews).

¹⁰² *Taiwan Today*, 2013, September 30; *The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December, p. 21. Chapter 5 describes Taiwan's cultural diplomacy policy during this period.

¹⁰³ Although two non-resident ambassadors represented Tuvalu to Taiwan beginning in 1981 (*Presidential Office Gazette*, 1981, November 9, 1997, July 2), the first resident ambassador was posted in 2013 (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2013, March 14-a).

When explaining why he asked students to perform at the APCD, the first Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan referenced a broader context for organizing international performances based on his experience as deputy high commissioner in Fiji:

[Because,] with our experience here in Fiji, in Suva, ... every year, we are often invited by the host in some events to organize fatele. So, the quickest way to organize that is to call students[.] In those times, we only have students, ... which is basically the Tuvalu community.... So, from that way of organizing, that really helped me out (5/20 Interview; see also 5/30a Interview)

Thus, for short-term events in Taiwan and other countries with a pre-existing Tuvaluan community, common practice is to invite this community to provide performances. However, both Tuvaluan diplomats and members of TATST noted that they experienced difficulty when implementing this practice in Taiwan, especially with regard to fatele:

Because we don't have a lot of people to do the fatele.... [So, we just] play the fatele song and we dance like a fatele.... [The] Fiji, the USP [University of the South Pacific students], ... they don't do that idea [dancing to a recorded fatele]. Because there's lots of Tuvaluan students there. So, and I don't think so other place, ... because [New Zealand has a lot of Tuvaluan people]. And I don't know to Australian, I mean, to students in Australia. [But] I know only in Taiwan we do that idea.... [Because] we don't have a lot of people ... and also the students, they come from different islands. So, some students, they don't know ... the fatele from Vaitupu; some student they don't know the fatele from Nanumaga, Niutao, you know? So, ... we come up [with] that idea to just to play [a recording] and then we dance. (4/15 Interview; see also 5/20 Interview)

As illustrated in the next section, although TATST members can easily present certain Tuvaluan performative/dance forms in Taiwan (e.g., siva), they find it difficult to perform live fatele (i.e., fatele with live dancing, singing, and instrumental sections). This is because fatele is typically presented by a large group of people of all ages from the same island (with older members leading singing and instrumental sections).¹⁰⁴ By contrast, TATST members are all young, may not have extensive experience performing fatele because of their age, and

¹⁰⁴ There are exceptions to this general rule, but they usually occur in restricted contexts. For example, when students attending Tuvalu's secondary school on Vaitupu perform fatele for school programs, they are sometimes divided not by individual island but based on whether their island is in northern or southern Tuvalu (7/6 Interview).

come from different islands (4/17c, 5/8, 5/14, 5/20, 5/22b, 5/23, and 6/1 Interviews). Consequently, TATST performances for the APCD always contain siva and usually include fatele actions performed to recorded accompaniment, but live fatele has only been performed once (in the first year of the APCD).¹⁰⁵

Notably, while the TYT, a performing group discussed below, was highly focused on representing Tuvalu's eight islands when selecting troupe members and performance pieces, TATST sought to represent a unified Tuvalu in Taiwan. Accordingly, they chose performance items about Tuvalu rather than any of its individual islands (4/15 and 5/30a Interviews). This signals that Tuvaluan performing groups developed in Taiwan and those sent from Tuvalu to Taiwan adopt different organizing practices, as outlined in the next subsection.

NYIFF event description

Participation by Tuvaluan students at the APCD is an example of Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy enacted entirely in Taiwan and the organizing practices adopted for this type of event. Although similarly motivated by the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan (5/24a Interview), Tuvalu's participation in the 2014 NYIFF, as well as a solo performance after the festival, was coordinated by Tuvalu's central government using a performing group selected from Tuvalu. Therefore, examining Tuvalu's participation at the NYIFF demonstrates domestic protocols for international performative events and how these protocols differ from those at the APCD. However, it also paradoxically reveals how domestic practices create performing groups that encounter the same challenges as those faced by TATST.

A description of the 2014 NYIFF explains that the "Nan Ying International Folklore Festival which was first held in 1996 is a biennial festival [hosted by Tainan City Government]. [The] festival [is held to preserve] intangible cultural heritages of nations all over the world and ... for international cultural exchange" (Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, 2013, p. 1). For 2014, 24 international troupes performed at the NYIFF, including groups from Indonesia, Nepal, Panama, and Italy; the TYT was the only troupe that attended from the

¹⁰⁵ See 4/15, 4/27, 5/11b, and 5/30a Interviews; Embassy of Tuvalu in Taiwan YouTube Channel, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Kalijia86 YouTube Channel, 2013; Q. Zhang, 2016. TATST also performs items that rotate each year, including introductory songs, fakaseasea/fakanau, and sasa. Sasa is a Samoan group dance (Trinick & Sauni, 2016, p. 50). Although some interviewees identified sasa as a representative Tuvaluan performative/dance form (8/20, 8/27, 9/24b, 10/16, and 10/30 Interviews), it was not mentioned as frequently as fatele, siva, or fakaseasea/fakanau. For this reason, it was not discussed in the previous section.

Pacific aside from two New Zealand groups (Ye, 2015, pp. 40-41). During the festival, which ran from 3rd to 12th October 2014, the TYT performed during opening and closing ceremonies and presented six 20-minute performances throughout Tainan. In this period, the TYT also attended five “Local Life & Culture [Experiences]” during which members performed and engaged in exchange with Taiwanese “host families, schools or ... performance groups.”¹⁰⁶ After the festival, the TYT presented a 60-minute solo performance in Miaoli, Taiwan for the Cyuanhua Temple Association, a Buddhist organization that partially funded the troupe’s travel to Taiwan.¹⁰⁷

When planning Tuvalu’s participation at the NYIFF, the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan first recommended the event to MFATTEL, which oversees foreign affairs. Organization of a performing group for the festival was then passed to the culture officer in MHARD. However, after the culture officer resigned, responsibility for the event was transferred to MFATTEL’s tourism officer, as well as the youth officer for the Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports (5/24a and 6/1 Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4). This transfer of responsibility is significant because it indicates the two paths through which international performative events are planned in the Tuvalu government. Typically, performances for any event termed a festival are overseen by the culture officer¹⁰⁸ who is also responsible for Tuvalu’s participation at FESTPAC (6/1 Interview; personal communication, 2018, May 5). Performances for tourism expos, especially those planned through the Bureau of International Expositions, are overseen by the tourism officer (5/16 Interview; personal communication, 2018, May 5).¹⁰⁹ Although inter-ministry taskforces supervise most festivals and expos (5/16, 5/22b, 5/24a, and 6/1 Interviews), protocols for organizing performing groups and performances change based on the officer directly responsible for events.

For example, from 1976 to 2004, Tuvalu’s performances at FESTPAC, which are overseen by the culture officer, were planned by Tuvalu’s eight islands on a rotating basis (i.e., Nukulaelae represented Tuvalu in 1976, Nanumea in 1980, and so on).¹¹⁰ Groups were large

¹⁰⁶ See Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, 2013, p. 2, 2018; 4/22, 5/9a, and 5/14 Interviews.

¹⁰⁷ See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, October 18; Taupo, 2014, October 13.

¹⁰⁸ The work of the current culture officer was formerly handled by the youth welfare officer; youth and welfare officer; or youth, welfare and culture officer from 1979 until at least 1992 (Personal communication, 2018, August 2; GoT, 1981, p. 1, 2012, p. 11; Mackinson, 1988, p. 93; O’Brien, 1992; TE, 1985, February 28-b). A community affairs officer was also possibly involved in cultural work in the 1990s (Manuella, 1993).

¹⁰⁹ The Bureau of International Expositions “is the intergovernmental organisation in charge of overseeing and regulating [expos].” The bureau holds six-month world expos every five years and three-month specialized expos in between (Bureau International des Expositions, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

¹¹⁰ See GoT, 2018; TNS, 1976, January 15, 1976, February 12, 1976, February 26. Tuvalu participated in the 1972 FESTPAC as part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Subsequently, Tuvalu’s education department

at approximately 30 to 40 people, and, although islands determined their own performances, the culture officer would sometimes travel from the capital to the island representing Tuvalu to assist with preparations (5/2, 5/23, and 6/1 Interviews; O'Brien, 1992, p. 9). After 2004, when all eight islands had performed at FESTPAC, this protocol was terminated due to budgetary issues and new protocols have yet to be formalized (5/23 and 6/1 Interviews). However, rotating-island attendance is still considered standard practice for Tuvalu's participation at festivals (5/11a, 5/20, and 5/23 Interviews).

For expos, because countries hosting these events all provide different funding packages for Least Developed Countries (5/16 Interview), Tuvalu's performing troupes have varied in size from 26 for the 2010 world expo in the PRC (5/22b Interview) to five for the 2017 specialized expo in Kazakhstan (4/28 Interview). Furthermore, since at least the 2005 world expo in Japan, performing groups have not been selected from a single island. Instead, because Tuvalu's eight islands all have communities on the capital Funafuti, the government requests that each community, or its youth group, nominate an equal number of youth¹¹¹ to participate in performing groups (5/16 and 5/24a Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4). Regarding this process, officials explain that to "avoid disputes and being accused of favouritism, it is common government practice to always ensure all islands are represented" (Personal communication, 2018, May 4).¹¹² They further comment that working with performers who live on Funafuti is more convenient than working with those in the outer islands and that a youth presence at expos is preferable from a tourism perspective (5/24a Interview). When developing expo performances, officials instruct performers to include songs from each of Tuvalu's islands, and fatele, siva, and fakaseasea/fakanau are performed most frequently (4/28, 5/11a, 5/16, 5/22b, and 5/24a Interviews).¹¹³

As shown above, methods for organizing festival and expo performances differ greatly. However, equitable representation of Tuvalu's eight islands is critical to selection protocols for both event types. From a domestic perspective, groups that cannot or do not allow for

and other ministries helped plan the 1976 FESTPAC, and the youth welfare officer (now the culture officer) began traveling with delegations in 1980 (GoT, 1980, 1981, p. 8; O'Brien, 1992). According to current and former culture officers, Tuvalu did not perform at the 2008 and 2012 FESTPACs (6/1 Interview; personal communication, 2018, June 23).

¹¹¹ In Tuvalu's Youth Policy, a youth is defined as anyone 15 to 35 years of age (GoT, 2014, p. 6; 4/18, 5/9a, and 5/22a Interviews). However, island communities identify youth differently: youth are defined as anyone under 50 or anyone who can labor for their community (5/22a and 6/1 Interviews).

¹¹² See 10/9, 10/13, 5/20, and 5/24a Interviews.

¹¹³ Live versions of these performative/dance forms are presented if funding permits a large enough performing group and rehearsal time is sufficient.

island representation are considered biased or inappropriate for travel abroad (4/26b and 6/1 Interviews).

Although the NYIFF is a festival, because it was ultimately overseen by Tuvalu's tourism officer, the performing group for the event (the TYT) was developed as it would be for an expo: youth groups from each island community on Funafuti were asked to select one male and one female versed in traditional Tuvaluan dances to participate (Personal communication, 2018, May 4; see also 5/24a Interview). When performing in Taiwan, the TYT included at least one youth from each island of Tuvalu¹¹⁴ as well as a popular singer from Nukulaelae, for a total of 15 people (5/9a and 5/18 Interviews). Performance items were selected from each island except Niutao (5/18 Interview)¹¹⁵ and included fatele, siva, and fakaseasea/fakanau. Interestingly, the fact that the NYIFF was a festival but adopted expo protocols also led to subsequent modifications to FESTPAC: in 2016, Tuvalu's culture officer used the NYIFF to justify changing Tuvalu's FESTPAC troupe from an outer island group to two youth from each island community on Funafuti (6/1 Interview).

Despite the strict protocols structuring the TYT, however, the troupe was ultimately similar to TATST's performing group: it consisted of a limited number of youth from different islands. Additionally, officials note that even when instructing island communities to select experienced performers for international groups, "we're starting to see that ... even ... the best that they picked, they are not really [performing] very well" (5/24a Interview; see also 6/1 Interview). Several TYT members also remarked that they did not typically perform in their communities and were chosen by their youth groups because they had a valid passport or for reasons unknown to them (5/9a, 5/12, 5/18, and 7/6 Interviews). Therefore, some TYT performers shared with TATST members limited experience with fatele and other performative/dance forms. From a performance perspective, the TYT also overlapped with TATST because most of the items the group presented were danced to recorded accompaniment (5/9a and 5/18 Interviews). Consequently, like TATST, the TYT experienced difficulty presenting live fatele in Taiwan. As the first Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan noted,

[We] were thinking of a live fatele—I really want them to come in a big group. But, unfortunately, that was the only number that we can get, which is, at least, I think we

¹¹⁴ One participant each from Nanumaga and Nukufetau withdrew from the TYT before the group left for Taiwan (4/17c and 5/24b Interviews).

¹¹⁵ Niutao items were not included because performers from the island did not know how to teach them or thought they were unexciting (5/12 Interview; personal communication, 2018, May 13).

did a good job. But my preference, of course, is to have a big number to come and do a fatele live. Cause I know the fatele is a must, eh? It's a must to do that, ... but it's just because we didn't have the number, and then we couldn't do the fatele. (5/20 Interview)

TATST/TYT groups were formed in different contexts and with varying levels of stringency, demonstrating the diverse methods Tuvalu adopts when engaging in performative cultural diplomacy abroad. Yet, given the characteristics of Tuvaluan scholarship students in Taiwan and the island- and youth-based protocols used to select the TYT, both groups were similarly constituted and applied comparable performance techniques. Often these techniques represented changes to performative formats found in Tuvalu, especially fatele. In light of this, in the next section, I consider the perspectives of Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers to trace the difficulties TATST/TYT encountered when presenting fatele in Taiwan and the tension this created among different actors.

Domestically Contested Representations of Tuvalu in Taiwan: Tuvalu's Mixed Opinions of the APCD and NYIFF

In Chapter 6, I examine Taiwanese audience responses to TATST/TYT performances at the APCD and NYIFF. Here, however, I explore other responses to these instances of performative cultural diplomacy that showcase how “cultural production is bound up for [cultural diplomacy] participants with questions of identity.” This is because policy goals often create “a context within which [senses] of self must be negotiated” (Clarke, 2016, p. 156). In this section, I focus on tensions that emerged among Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers for TATST/TYT performances over how fatele works as a cultural product in a foreign setting and the effectiveness of performances in conveying Tuvaluan culture. First, I outline the widespread opinion among TATST/TYT planners, performers, officials, and observers that live fatele is *the* Tuvaluan cultural product that should be presented to Taiwanese audiences. However, given the limited resources with which TATST/TYT performances were developed, I explore conflicts that arise when planners feel they must alter fatele for performance in Taiwan, but performers, officials, and observers question this change as unnecessary or detrimental. These tensions show how senses of cultural identity integral to fatele produce heightened sensitivities when the form is modified.

This is due not merely to concerns over “authenticity” but also to considerations of whether and how Tuvalu can be adequately represented in Taiwan.

In these internal debates on TATST/TYT, it is important to note that the roles of planners, performers, officials, and observers are sometimes distinct but typically overlap. This trend underscores the complexity of performative cultural diplomacy projects and the multiple perspectives from which participants may view and make meaning with them. Furthermore, although Tuvaluan opinions of TATST/TYT performances are numerous, discussion of audience reactions, especially discussion of tailoring performances to reflect Taiwanese tastes, is muted.¹¹⁶ This echoes themes from Chapter 3—where Tuvaluan media and society engage in limited subjective characterizations of Taiwan—and suggests that TATST/TYT did not have pre-formed assumptions about Taiwan before traveling there.

“[Then] we do the fatele, like the way we do here in Tuvalu”: Convergent ideals for the APCD and NYIFF

When in Taiwan, TATST/TYT chose to represent fatele by playing recordings of singing and instrumental sections while performers danced fatele actions. Yet, when discussing potential improvements to performances, especially if more resources were available, most planners, performers, officials, and observers emphasized the importance of performing live fatele:

I think we—if the embassy can give us more people, more money, and then—we can add a lot, you know? We can do the posters, we can make the food, you know? ...

[And] ... especially ... the fatele. [We] don’t use the music, and then we do the fatele, like the way we do here in Tuvalu. (4/15 Interview)

So, ... maybe recruit—have more people go and actually have the live fatele there.... Because ... having people dance, performing a fatele there with a recording, that is not ... that’s not the culture. [So], to actually have the box and everyone there. So that people will actually see what it’s like when we have the fatele here. (5/14 Translated Interview [Tuvaluan])

¹¹⁶ For exceptions, see 4/15 and 7/6 Interviews. One clear example of changes that *were* made for Taiwanese audiences is when TATST/TYT performed sasa and introductory songs with Mandarin phrases added (Embassy of Tuvalu in Taiwan YouTube Channel, 2015a; Kalijia86 YouTube Channel, 2014). TATST also introduced their 2016 APCD performance in Mandarin to pique audience interest (10/9 and 5/11b Interviews).

[Maybe] it would be better to do a real fatele. [To] really show them our kind of entertainment, and—so, it would be better. Like, if I had the money and a lot of people to do that. (4/27 Interview)¹¹⁷

This focus on performing live fatele exhibits the value of fatele as a culturally representative form to actors involved with TATST/TYT performances. However, it also indicates concern that changes made to fatele to accommodate movement abroad (e.g., performing to recorded accompaniment) weaken its ability to communicate Tuvaluan culture to foreigners.

Yet, this uniform opinion of how TATST/TYT performances can be improved also represents a fracturing point. It divides planners/performers¹¹⁸ for performances, who must present Tuvaluan culture with limited resources, and performers, officials, and observers, who react to how planners/performers challenge what they see as the essence of fatele. This fracturing emerges in conflict over performing fatele to recorded accompaniment because this change is seen as altering the effects and effectiveness of performance. Fracturing also surfaces in insistence on the part of Tuvaluan officials and observers that TATST/TYT did not exert sufficient effort to present fatele and, by extension, “authentic” Tuvaluan culture in Taiwan.

“But that one—yeah, you can feel it, but not like a real one, eh?”:

Diverging ideas on developing effective performances for Taiwan

Discussions with planners/performers for TATST/TYT performances show that organizers decided to present fatele to recorded accompaniment only after attempting live fatele and discovering that the effect was not what they expected. Thus, planners/performers see themselves as preserving and protecting fatele by using accompaniment pre-recorded in Tuvalu rather than having TATST/TYT sing fatele themselves. For example, TYT representatives explained that

Due to past experience from Expo performances of the fatele, live performance did not go down well as mics provided to catch the singing would pick up only one or two people’s voices and did not sound nice. Expo Korea in 2012 showed that by

¹¹⁷ See 10/13, 10/14, 10/30, 4/22, 4/27, 5/9a, 5/11b, 5/12, 5/21, and 5/30a Interviews; for an exception, see 5/18 Interview.

¹¹⁸ As noted, TATST/TYT planners, performers, officials, and observers often overlap; I indicate this using a slash between the different roles participants occupied.

prerecording the fatele, audio would be perfect, and we would have more people available for dancing. (Personal communication, 2018, May 4)

I think [the TYT planner] mentioned that we should ... prepared some of—just a little box and the kaapa [tin], eh, to make [the fatele] a live [one], eh? But, then, we change it again to make it ... the recorded one. [The planner] said ... we might make it a wrong thing. Might not sound good, and then it will spoil the song ... so, [she thought] it was ... good to use the recorded one (5/18 Interview)

TATST planners/performers similarly noted:

So, all of us, we agree, and then we plan ... , and the first Asian-Pacific [APCD], we do the fatele. Like, we use the ... box and the mat ... and everything, and then we do different fatele. I mean, it's the same, but, you know, because ... we don't have enough people, so our fatele is up and down.... I mean, that time, I was thinking that our fatele is not, it's bad, it's not good.... So, the next [time], we learn our mistakes from the first time, so the second time, we try to do our best and to do better. So, that's why we ... come up with the idea of the music, to change ... the fatele to the music. And then we see from that time we do better, you know? (4/15 Interview; see also 5/20, 5/30a, and 7/6 Interviews)

Here, planners/performers determine from experience that presenting live fatele in Taiwan (or other countries) “spoils” the form, deciding that dancing to a recording is the safest and most appropriate way to communicate fatele. Consequently, planners/performers interpret the effectiveness of fatele as a cultural product abroad based on whether the sounds are clear, consistent, and loud and the dance actions uniform. Although altering fatele, planners/performers do so to ensure that it is respectfully presented, demonstrating their investment in ideas of cultural identity integral to the form.

Yet, many TATST/TYT performers/observers see the effectiveness of fatele in the emotions it stirs in performers and how this adds to the excitement of fatele performance. They contend that the power of fatele is constricted when a recording is used. This reflects the idea communicated in numerous interviews that fatele is a cyclical form in which singers and instrumentalists are inspired to continue and amplify performances by dancers and vice versa (10/16, 4/20, 5/3a, and 6/1 Interviews). To this point, an interviewee who attended a vocational-training program in Taiwan in 2014 and participated in that year's TATST performance explained:

So, when we came there, they told us how they make their fatele. But the only problem, not like here. We beat the box. But, there, they already record the fatele, and they just clap.... It's very different. Because the real one is one man start, and everybody sing and clap. And those in the box, they beat the box. And you can feel the [*pauses*] eh? ... Matagi [*spirit*]. You know? You want to dance. But that one—yeah, you can feel it, but not like a real one, eh? (5/3b Interview)

A TATST performer similarly described his opinions of TYT performances:

I think it's good, but I just think the way they sing the songs, like, the soundtracks and stuff—cause, if you want to do a fatele or something, the voice of the people, it needs to be really big cause that's where it motivate the people to dance... [If] I was gonna dance, if I was ... the one dancing—and the people were singing just—they don't sing that ... loud or something—I would just dance like [*imitates weak dancing*], yeah.

(10/16 Interview; see also 5/2, 5/3a, 5/8, and 5/30a Interviews)

Internal tension is apparent, especially between planners/performers and performers/observers, regarding the significance of performing fatele abroad. This tension centers on whether fatele is more effective when there is little risk of failure or disrespect to the form if live singing and instrumental sections do not meet expectations or when this risk is present but the potential also exists for participants to reach levels of excitement crucial to fatele performers/performance.¹¹⁹ Planners/performers and performers/observers are all aware of challenges to presenting live fatele in Taiwan. They disagree, however, over whether recorded accompaniment positively or negatively influences performances and how fatele can be most effectively conveyed abroad.

“[The] only problem will be [they had] less time to practice. Or they didn't practice at all”: Diverging ideas on preserving “authenticity” in Taiwan

Another internal conflict that emerges in discussion of TATST/TYT performances is that between planners and performers and Tuvaluan officials/observers over whether performing groups could have performed live fatele. Despite their different opinions about what

¹¹⁹ Interestingly, although the alofa contains fatele, because it can be completed with all participants standing and fewer instruments, a live alofa is easier to perform internationally than live fatele (see Chapter 2). Consequently, the TYT presented the alofa in Taiwan (4/17c and 5/18 Interviews). Performers found this meaningful because they could show audiences Tuvaluan gift-giving practices and a form of live fatele (4/17c Interview).

constitutes effective fatele performance, TATST/TYT planners and performers agree that, due to limited numbers and a lack of experienced singers and instrumentalists, performing live fatele successfully in Taiwan is extremely difficult.¹²⁰ Yet, Tuvaluan officials/observers insist that, if TATST/TYT had exerted greater effort, they could have performed live fatele regardless of challenges. This reflects the cultural standards maintained by officials/observers and their sometimes negative assessments of how committed TATST/TYT are to preserving standards and promoting “authentic” culture in Taiwan. For example, when discussing TATST performances, the current Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan remarked:

To do the fatele? They can do. They can do, but it depends if they know how to—but they can do it.... I think because fatele—if the students want to perform it here, they need to practice, and it would take a lot of time. That’s a big problem, whereas the siva, it’s easy ... (11/10b Interview)

An official from the Tuvalu government expressed a similar if not more critical view of TYT performances:

[For] me, if it is a cultural meet, it has to be traditional Tuvaluan dancing. Not a mixture of ... [you] know, we don’t have that in our culture. It was just introduced—I mean, people get lazy, getting together and perform a fatele, and then, “Ok. We do a recording. You know. We do a recording, and then we dance to the recording.” That’s what they do.... See, if it’s ten people, alright, four can dance, six can sit down and beat the box and sing, you know? ... The short version of a fatele, you know? ... I can—the only problem will be [they had] less time to practice. Or they didn’t practice at all. (4/18 Interview)

Although not directly commenting on fatele, a Tuvaluan attendee at the TYT performance in Miaoli further noted:

I just thought it was bland. It wasn’t what I had expected.... [It] wouldn’t, it—well, of course, it represented Tuvalu in the dance itself and ... the attire. You know, the costume, and the people themselves, but to ... , you know, to actually show the outside world the real life of Tuvalu through—well, if it’s through entertainment and song, then, I think the ... team [to the 2005 world expo in Japan] takes the cake.... They sang, they sang and danced. Yeah, but the singing was authentic, you know?

¹²⁰ See 10/14, 10/29, 4/15, 4/17c, 4/22, 4/27, 5/12, 5/14, 5/18, 5/21, and 5/30a Interviews.

That's what I missed in the Taiwan performance. [Maybe] because it was rushed
(4/26b Interview)

In tension between TATST/TYT planners/performers and performers/observers, we find conflict over the significance of fatele as a cultural product and how its effects might best be conveyed to Taiwanese audiences. However, officials/observers more removed from performance planning focus instead on cultural “authenticity,” seeing the “failure” of TATST/TYT to perform live fatele as equivalent to rushed preparation or even laziness and a betrayal of traditional forms. Desmond (1993-1994) argues that performance/dance demonstrates how “social identities are signaled, formed, and negotiated” (p. 34), while Henderson, Mallon, and K. M. Teaiwa (2011) explain performance/dance as “a means through which individuals and communities make meaning,” “performing senses of self and other” (p. 1). For the case of TATST/TYT, internal fracturing occurs when planners and performers negotiate fairly uniform ideas of cultural identity contained in fatele in different ways for restricted cultural diplomacy settings. Fracturing also emerges when officials/observers removed from these negotiations read them, often negatively, from the perspective of Tuvaluan cultural contexts. These phenomena suggest that adjustments to fatele potentially challenge ideas of performativity critical to Tuvaluan diplomatic conceptions outlined in Chapter 2, which may further exacerbate internal tensions.

Yet, one common theme that surfaces in interviews with Tuvaluan planners, performers, officials, and observers is certainty that Taiwanese and other foreign audiences are incapable of differentiating a “good” Tuvaluan performance from a “bad” one:

[Of] course, foreigners wouldn't know a good dancer from a bad dancer. But, you know, for me, for things like that, it needs to be well prepared and well planned, and dancers well selected. (4/26b Interview)

Yeah, we don't really mind cause performing to different—it would be ok cause I don't think [Taiwanese audiences] don't even mind too. Like, they don't know, “Oh. That's not—that one is not really good.” (11/4 Interview; see also 9/24b Interview)

In the next section, I move from internal to external tensions surrounding TATST/TYT performances and examine differences in Tuvaluan and Taiwanese standards for implementing performative cultural diplomacy that surface in APCD/NYIFF events. Although it is certainly true that Taiwanese officials rarely differentiate “good” Tuvaluan performances from “bad” ones, they do judge performances based on their ideas of successful

performative cultural diplomacy and in comparison to Pacific dance styles popular in Taiwan. This generates conflict between what Tuvaluan protocols dictate for performative cultural diplomacy and what the Taiwan government sees as “good” performance that fulfills performative cultural diplomacy goals.

Bilateral Tensions over Representations of Tuvalu in Taiwan: Official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese Perceptions of the APCD and NYIFF

As discussed above, internal tension in TATST/TYT performances reflects negotiations over cultural representation and identity incited when fatele and other Tuvaluan performative/dance forms become cultural products subjected to limitations and altered contexts in Taiwan. Yet, TATST/TYT performances are also marked by external tension between the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments over the implementation of performative cultural diplomacy. Below, I first examine convergences in official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese remarks on the goals of the APCD and NYIFF. Despite these convergences, however, I show that Taiwan-government statements and interviews with officials reveal ambivalence regarding how Tuvalu has fulfilled performative cultural diplomacy goals. This ambivalence springs from Taiwan’s emphasis on “professionalism” when evaluating successful performative cultural diplomacy (see Chapter 5). It also emanates from the idea that other Pacific performing groups (especially Māori, Tahitian, and Hawaiian groups, which all hail from non-allied settler colonies) better embody Taiwanese standards. These trends dovetail with Taiwanese opinions that diplomatic allies are low quality and require “improvement,” as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. In the final section of the chapter, I consider how Tuvalu’s Tourism Department has recently reconsidered its expo performances in terms of “professionalism.” This signals new similarities in Tuvaluan and Taiwanese conceptions of successful performative cultural diplomacy.

“[The performance] also allowed Taiwanese society to understand the culture of [Tuvalu]”: Convergent bilateral goals for the APCD and NYIFF

Because the APCD and NYIFF are hosted respectively by Taiwan’s MOFA and Tainan City Government, both organizations have issued statements about goals for the events, most of

which center on the importance of exposing Taiwanese citizens to foreign cultures. For example, a MOFA report on the 2013 APCD states that

Because there was ample time this year, each country was well-prepared and invited the best performing groups ... to ... communicate their different cultural foundations and distinct charms ... This enhanced the familiarity of the Taiwanese people with the cultures of Asia-Pacific countries (*The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December, p. 24)

In the foreword to a commemorative book on the 2014 NYIFF, the director-general for Tainan's Cultural Affairs Bureau also explained that

Art is borderless and cultural and arts exchange is the best method of dialogue between cities. During this period, song and dance from around the world converged in Tainan, and international teams ... shared ways of life passed down by their people for hundreds of years (Ye, 2015, p. 8)

Although the TYT's solo performance in Miaoli, Taiwan, which occurred after the NYIFF, was not organized by the Taiwan government, the host of the event described its goals in terms of diplomacy and enhancing cultural understanding:

[We] ... invited a traditional folk youth dancing troupe from the Republic of Tuvalu [*sic*] to perform, and we had a positive response. This was one instance in which we were quietly practicing citizen diplomacy. We hope to have friendly interactions with all countries and assist the government in this regard. [The performance] also allowed Taiwanese society to understand the culture of [Tuvalu] (11/5a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Similarly, official statements from the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan, and the Tuvalu government more generally, emphasize the APCD, NYIFF, and related performances as ideal opportunities for communicating Tuvalu's culture to Taiwan:

During this year's [APCD], the Tuvalu Booth promoted the "Music, Instruments, and Dancing of Tuvalu" by displaying a variety of Tuvaluan instruments and dance costumes ... [TATST] also presented an outstanding traditional dance performance that served to further highlight Tuvalu's unique dance styles. (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2015, October 26)¹²¹

¹²¹ See 11/10b Interview; Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, September 11.

The [TYT] performance you will see tonight represents the end of the first official visit by a Tuvalu dance troupe to the Republic of China. During the performance, you will be treated to an exhibition of traditional Tuvaluan music and dance ... , which will undoubtedly open your eyes to the wonder of Tuvalu's traditional culture.

(Taupo, 2014, October 13)

Just recently, a dance troupe from Tuvalu [the TYT] was invited to participate in a festival organised by Taiwan [the NYIFF]. This presented an opportunity for Tuvalu to showcase its culture through music and dancing (Italeli, 2014, November 12)¹²²

Consequently, for the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments, the overarching goals of the APCD, NYIFF, and Tuvalu's performances for these events are the same: they are meant to increase awareness of Tuvaluan culture in Taiwan.

“They are all extremely representative and professional troupes”:

Diverging bilateral standards for the APCD and NYIFF

Despite convergent goals, however, the standards the Tuvalu and Taiwan governments deem appropriate for fulfilling these goals are highly divergent. As discussed in the fourth section of this chapter, due to the short duration of the APCD and practices adopted in Fiji, the Tuvalu Embassy in Taiwan requests that Tuvaluan students form ad hoc groups to develop APCD performances. Additionally, although Tuvalu's NYIFF performing group was sent from Funafuti, standards for forming the troupe focused on equitably representing Tuvalu's eight islands with less consideration given to the performative/dance prowess of group members (5/9a, 5/12, and 5/24a Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4). Yet, in its engagement with performative cultural diplomacy and Pacific dance, the Taiwan government consistently demonstrates a preference for “professional” (typically well-established) performing groups (see Ministry of Culture, ROC, Taiwan, 2004, p. 216), which engenders ambivalence about TATST/TYT performances. This ambivalence also extends to Taiwan's engagement with performing groups from all of its Pacific allies, which coincides with Chapters 2 and 3 and ideas that allies require “improvement.”

The Global Indigenous Peoples Performing Arts Festival (GIPP) is a demonstrative example of how Taiwan's “professionalism” discourse affects Pacific allies. The festival was first held

¹²² See Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, October 10; *Fenui*, 2014, October 20.

in 2011 by Taiwan's Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) and was initially described in internal government documents as a means of "promoting cultural exchange with ... Pacific allies" (Legislative Yuan, ROC, Taiwan, 2012, February 29, p. 78).¹²³ Although in 2011, the Pacific allies of Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Palau, along with Pacific troupes from Tahiti, Rapa Nui, and a Māori group from New Zealand, performed at the GIPP (CIP, 2014), by the second festival in 2014, allies were absent. However, groups from Tahiti, New Zealand, and Rapa Nui were again invited to perform. At the time, the CIP (2014) conspicuously noted that groups invited to participate in the 2014 festival were all "extremely representative and professional." In 2016, for the third GIPP, performing groups from Tahiti, New Zealand, and Rapa Nui were again invited while no Pacific allies participated.¹²⁴ Here, we see a distinct shift in Pacific representation at the GIPP and how this shift was linked to discourses of "professionalism" during the second year of the event. A CIP official even openly explained:

Perhaps it's like, if you're using the second iteration [of the GIPP], like Tahiti, Chile [Rapa Nui] ... , our boss thought they were quite, quite good. Like, Chile [Rapa Nui] and Tahiti participated in the first year, the first time, and it made a deep impression on him, and then they came again. (11/29 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The implications of "professionalism" discourse are also apparent in MOFA's coverage on the 2013 APCD. In this reporting, performances presented by students from Taiwan's Pacific allies are condensed into a single, vague sentence while description of an established Māori dance troupe flown in from Japan for the event is extremely detailed:

The APCD invited 15 ... troupes from various countries to perform at the event. Students from the Pacific allied countries of Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Palau, and Kiribati studying in Taiwan were mobilized to perform folk dances "Ngā hau E Whā," a Māori dance troupe from New Zealand located in Japan, traveled specially to Taiwan to demonstrate traditional Māori music and arts, performing a relaxed and interesting Ti Rakau and Tititorea, an elegant Māori love song, and other items. The troupe also invited audience members ... to dance with them on stage, and was rewarded with enthusiastic applause in the cool evening breeze. (*The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December, p. 23)¹²⁵

¹²³ That the government highlighted an indigenous festival as an opportunity to promote exchange with Pacific allies illustrates connotations of Pacific and indigenous discussed in Chapter 2.

¹²⁴ A performing group from Guam also attended the 2014 GIPP; groups from Hawai'i and Fiji participated in 2016 (Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation, 2016; M. Wang, 2014, August 2).

¹²⁵ For the 2015 APCD, see *The MOFA Quarterly*, 2015, December, p. 6.

For the TYT, personnel involved in organizing the troupe's Miaoli performance expressed similar disregard for the group based on a perceived lack of "professionalism." A representative noted that TYT dances were messy, boring, and common; that performance items should have been choreographed so that they were livelier; and that more attractive costumes and more frequent costume changes were necessary. The representative also compared TYT dancing unfavorably to Hawaiian performance, explaining that Hawaiian dancing was designed to engage audiences whereas TYT performances were not (11/5b Interview).

“Taiwan has a polarized [understanding] of dance in the Austronesian region”: Official Taiwanese conceptions of Pacific performance/dance

The Taiwan government's propensity for "professional," or established, performing troupes also overlaps with its emphasis on certain types of Pacific performance, that is, Māori, Tahitian, and Hawaiian performative/dance forms.¹²⁶ Familiarity with and preference for these forms, which reflects Taiwan's conceptual affinity with non-allied Pacific settler colonies (see Chapter 2), means that Taiwanese officials do not have an aesthetic base from which to appreciate how Tuvaluan performance/dance might be different. They are thus ambivalent about the effectiveness of Tuvaluan performance/dance in cultural diplomacy. As the chairman of Taiwan's Formosa Indigenous Song and Dance Troupe explained,

Taiwan's familiarity with the Pacific Islands—they've probably only heard of Hawai'i, and then they imagine all of the islands as being exactly like Hawai'i [For] Tahiti, it's that they have an idealized imagining of Tahiti and Hawai'i. For example, beautiful girls, white skin ... and then Taiwan—actually, Taiwan really likes to invite Māori because the dancing is really unique, right? ... So, Taiwan has a polarized [understanding] of dance in the Austronesian region. Either it's overly beautified or they want a representation of wild nature, of wilderness, of roughness (11/10c Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The Pacific preferences highlighted in this statement not only correspond to those in the previous sub-section on "professionalism" but were also apparent in discussion with a

¹²⁶ Although I mentioned Rapa Nui in the previous sub-section, it is not included here because it was only relevant to the GIPP, not to other festivals, government reports, and interviews examined for this research.

government official who organized the NYIFF in 2014 when the TYT performed. When asked about Tuvalu's NYIFF performances, the official commented:

Tuvalu, that year [*pauses*] [Interviewer: You don't remember?] Yeah. They were probably pretty good because before we didn't really have that style, like you said, like Hawai'i, so, I think the style was more unique.... I really forgot it (10/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

However, when asked about audience favorites at the festival, the official noted that "I think they ... like the Māori. They really like the Māori," and, later in the interview, she played a video from the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawai'i, seeking clarification about groups to invite for the upcoming NYIFF. Focusing on clips of Tahitian performance, she stated, "Now, I think this type—like how she can twist her hips like that, that's really amazing.... Because we haven't invited [this Tahitian] type" (10/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 10/23b and 5/24a Interviews). It is also informative to note that, when invited to perform at government and university functions in Taiwan, students from Tuvalu and other Pacific allies are frequently asked to present Māori performative/dance forms rather than their own. In this way, Taiwanese preferences for Pacific performance/dance disadvantage Tuvaluan (and other allied) forms (8/20, 8/27, 10/9, 10/22, and 10/30 Interviews).

As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the opinions of audiences and other Taiwanese observers on TATST/TYT performances do not always overlap with those expressed by officials. However, Taiwan's official engagement with these performances demonstrates how contested seemingly straightforward goals of enhancing cultural awareness become in bilateral settings. Although the TATST/TYT groups were formed according to recognizable standards for performative cultural diplomacy from a Tuvaluan perspective, these standards are not acknowledged by the Taiwan government and often fall afoul of demands for "professionalism" in performative exchange. Additionally, because Tuvaluan performative/dance forms and Pacific performance styles preferred in Taiwan are different, Tuvaluan dance is not readily accepted as an effective means of promoting culture.

Consequently, Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan is subject to internal tension over how best to convey Tuvalu's cultural context in restricted circumstances. Yet, it is also subject to external tension over standards for success in performative cultural diplomacy and how Tuvalu's culture should be conveyed to suit a Taiwanese context. Interestingly, because Taiwanese interviewees who had seen fatele in Tuvalu described

feeling 震撼, or “stunned,” by the performative/dance form (9/21, 11/28, and 12/13 Interviews), internal tension over TATST/TYT not performing live fatele may be linked to external tensions discussed in this section. That is, given reactions to fatele by Taiwanese observers in Tuvalu, if Tuvaluans had been able to perform live fatele in Taiwan in the way they ideally wanted to, this might have overcome official Taiwanese ambivalence to Tuvalu’s performative cultural diplomacy.

Emerging Trends in Representations of Tuvalu Abroad: Changing Protocols for Tuvaluan Performing Groups

In this section, I conclude by discussing recent changes in Tuvalu-government protocols for selecting performing groups to represent Tuvalu internationally. While these changes do not address internal tensions apparent in TATST/TYT examples, they do demonstrate awareness of external tensions discussed above. Especially for Tuvaluan officials in MFATTEL and its Tourism Department, “professionalism” has become increasingly important when developing performing groups for travel abroad, suggesting overlap with Taiwan-government perspectives on performative cultural diplomacy.

As noted above, when developing performing groups for international expos and recent iterations of FESTPAC, priority has always been given to equitably representing Tuvalu’s eight islands, with each island community on Funafuti asked to choose members for performing groups. Despite this, for the 2017 specialized expo in Kazakhstan, the Tuvalu government departed from this practice, selecting a five-member performing group through auditions held on Funafuti. An assistant secretary for MFATTEL explained this decision as follows:

[We] just started with the Kazakhstan one. Before, they used to pick two from each youth group. We changed that with Kazakhstan because we found out that the people that were being chosen by the youth groups didn’t really dance, they didn’t like dancing, they were scared of the crowd. They were just picked on the basis that they were very into community work and all that. But they are not really performers. So, we changed that. We actually had auditions for Kazakhstan.... [It’s] just that ... [past performers] didn’t know what they were getting themselves into. And then it made the performance boring because they were not happy that they were dancing.... So, now, with dancing, I said—it was actually my decision to do the auditions. I was like,

“Let’s do auditions. [We] have so many people who want to dance. [Let’s] move away from that picking cause you have to.” (4/20 Interview; see also 5/16 and 7/6 Interviews)

Other current and former MFATTEL officials, as well as performers selected for the Kazakhstan expo, expressed similar opinions about this change, and officials noted that auditions should continue (4/28 and 5/24a Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4). While, in a domestic context, ensuring that Tuvalu’s eight islands are represented in activities ranging from workshops to visits of foreign dignitaries is critical (10/19, 10/25, 11/10b, 4/20, and 4/26b Interviews), foreign affairs officials see this protocol as existing in tension with international settings. They have thus begun to focus instead on sending the “best” dancers abroad regardless of island affiliation (5/24a Interview). The change inherent in using auditions reflects not only a new emphasis on “professionalism” similar to that found in the Taiwan government but also suggests how accumulated experience at international expos has altered perceptions of what it means to successfully represent Tuvalu abroad.

However, the Tuvalu government has not yet uniformly accepted auditions. Although MFATTEL and its Tourism Department see auditions as useful when selecting expo performing groups, the culture officer for MHARD, who oversees Tuvalu’s participation at FESTPAC, rejected the idea of using auditions for the festival:

[We would never use an audition.] [Because we are] funded by the government, and we can also accommodate eight islands.... [It’s] the best thing to take into account that we have to pick [all] the [islands]. Either one from each island or either two from each island. (6/1 Interview)

This quote indicates that, while norms for performative cultural diplomacy can change for expos and tourism purposes, island representation is still crucial to communicating Tuvaluan culture at festival events like FESTPAC.¹²⁷ Yet, recent changes to how islands participate at festivals, in which large performing groups from a single island have been replaced by small mixed-island groups, also suggest that domestic protocols for equitable representation are hardly uncontested. As a 2016 FESTPAC performer noted,

¹²⁷ In a 2012 report, however, the former culture officer did emphasize the importance of “professionalism,” explaining the need to “establish a National Dance and Arts Theatre (NDAT) group with a view to making this group the official representation for Tuvalu at any overseas cultural shows and gatherings” (GoT, 2012, p. 58).

[For 2016,] ... there were two from each island. [Back] in the days, they usually choose [one island], and, for these islands, they usually come from the outer islands, not the ones here in Funafuti.... [But] I think, recently, they've changed their way of selection. They've picked up the youths but only here in Funafuti And [the public was] commenting, "[Why] not an island community?" ... [Because] they said before it was usually island communities ... representing Tuvalu to an art festival. (4/25b Interview)

As Tuvalu's MFATTEL and Tourism Department respond to external tensions similar to those found in Taiwan and construct new protocols for developing "good" performing groups, internal tensions apparent in the TATST/TYT examples remain: due to limited numbers or mixed-island membership, performing groups organized by the Tourism and Culture Departments can rarely present live fatele. New tensions have also emerged. Before 2016, Tuvalu was represented at expos by performing groups with members from the eight island communities on Funafuti and at FESTPAC by large groups consisting of participants from a different island every four years. Now, Tuvalu is represented at expos by performers auditioned on Funafuti and at FESTPAC by troupes consisting of youth from the eight island communities on Funafuti. This raises questions about insufficient opportunities for outer island participation at international events and whether island representation is still even relevant for these events (4/20, 5/24a, and 6/1 Interviews; personal communication, 2018, May 4). It also highlights conflicting internal and external expectations for performative cultural diplomacy that Tuvaluan officials, planners, and performers must constantly navigate.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed TATST/TYT performances at the APCD and NYIFF, as well as interviews and statements from planners, performers, officials, and observers, to underscore the internal and external tensions created and negotiated when Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy is enacted in Taiwan. By first examining the culturally representative and diplomatic nature of Tuvaluan performative/dance forms, especially fatele, I demonstrated the consistent use of performative cultural diplomacy in Tuvalu's domestic contexts. I then outlined the Tuvalu Embassy's protocols for developing performing groups in Taiwan, as well as Tuvalu-government methods for forming international expo and festival troupes.

Subsequently, I showed how tensions arise internally among Tuvaluans because live fatele is absent from Taiwan performances and externally because Tuvaluan and Taiwanese standards for performative cultural diplomacy are highly divergent.

The main phenomenon apparent in Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan, then, is not how the peoples and cultures of Taiwan affected TATST/TYT or how Tuvaluan impressions of Taiwan changed during performances there. Instead, Tuvalu's projects are confronted by multilevel discussions of what it means to represent culture *well*, where internal standards are clear but difficult to act on in foreign settings and external standards are increasingly influential in parts of the Tuvalu government. Accordingly, Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy in Taiwan is, indeed, a "reflection ... of a specific history and of contemporary cultural ... strategies" (K. M. Teaiwa, 2012, p. 82). Yet, in simultaneously reflecting the "cultural ... strategies" of Tuvalu and Taiwan, as well as varying opinions of what constitutes appropriate "cultural ... [strategy]" abroad, this diplomacy integrates both domestic and foreign concerns. It also demonstrates how officials, planners, and performers must consider conflicting standards when developing performances. Finally, this chapter also connects to themes from Chapters 2 and 3. Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy described in Chapter 2, especially principles manifested in the alofa (which includes fatele), are reflected in the importance of fatele to performative cultural diplomacy in Tuvalu and in tension over changes to fatele in Taiwan. For its part, Taiwan-government responses to Tuvaluan performances reflect Taiwanese ideas of low-quality allies and conceptual affinity with non-allied Pacific settler colonies, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Furthermore, consistent with Chapter 3, few TATST/TYT planners or performers had pre-formed assumptions about Taiwan when they traveled there, and changes made to performances in response to Taiwanese contexts were minimal. Additionally, although TATST/TYT members developed positive impressions of Taiwan when there (4/17c, 4/22, 5/9a, 5/12, and 5/14 Interviews), their experiences in the country rarely elicited strong reactions. By contrast, in the next chapter, I show how Taiwan's projects in Tuvalu are marked by intense reactions to Tuvalu on the part of Taiwanese performers, as well as the immediate influences Tuvalu exerts on projects. This trend reveals differing socio-cultural contexts for Tuvalu and Taiwan and the varying extents to which these contexts shape incoming performative cultural diplomacy. It also shows how solidly formed Taiwanese imaginings of Tuvalu, which performers construct based on official and popular discourse, are either challenged or confirmed when they travel to the country.

Chapter 5:

Programming Performance?: Re-Presenting Taiwan’s Culture(s) and Taiwan’s Performative Cultural Diplomacy in Tuvalu

I think the Youth Ambassadors project is actually a really curious composite: diplomacy—it starts from a diplomatic perspective, and then people involved in theater, and then there’s also people not involved in the performing arts, like us. So, actually, it’s—I think it’s quite interesting. (12/2 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze interviews, archival materials, and performances relevant to Taiwan’s 2009-2016 Youth Ambassadors (YA) project and its relationship to Tuvalu. As noted in Chapter 4, Clarke (2016) contends that policy-makers, policy implementers, cultural practitioners, and audience members all make meaning with and potentially change cultural diplomacy projects (p. 154). Furthermore, K. M. Teaiwa (2012) maintains that performance/dance “[reflects] a specific history and ... contemporary cultural and political strategies” (p. 82). I consider the YA project from these perspectives. I examine the changing role of performance/dance in the YA program as it relates to Taiwan’s socio-political situation and how Tuvalu has intervened in meaning-making when the program is enacted abroad.

Below, I first introduce the general policy considerations that prompted enactment of the YA project in Taiwan. I analyze how performance/dance factored differently in the 2009-2013 and 2014-2016 versions of the program and how the 2009-2013 version may have allowed for more direct performative exchange between YAs and their Tuvaluan counterparts. Subsequently, I demonstrate that, although the 2014-2016 YA project mobilized infinitely more resources than the 2009-2013 version, it focused almost exclusively on “properly” representing Taiwan’s culture(s) and developing “professional” performances. In this way, it became a domestic conversation rather than a foundation for exchange. However, Tuvalu exerted its own pressures on the project that resulted in direct YA interactions with Tuvaluan

society. These interactions left deep impressions on Taiwanese participants and mediated assumptions described in Chapter 3. Finally, I outline controversies surrounding indigenous representation in the YA project to reflect on the broader adoption of indigenous performance in Taiwan's Pacific foreign affairs; this resonates with Chapter 2's discussion of Austronesian diplomacy.

Cultural Persuasion: The Origins of the YA Project

Taiwan's YA project involves sending groups of Taiwanese youth in Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD programs to countries that maintain official or friendly relations with Taiwan for short-term cultural exchange. This exchange is meant to enhance understanding between Taiwan and the countries YA groups visit. Although the idea for the program is not new to Taiwan (a similar program is discussed later in this chapter), it was most immediately inspired by the 2008 inauguration of Nationalist (KMT) President Ma Ying-jeou and his implementation of 活路外交, or "viable diplomacy."

In viable diplomacy, Ma hoped to utilize resources readily available to Taiwan to "solidify allied relationships, expand friendships, participate internationally, and protect [Taiwan's] dignity." This was in contrast to Ma's predecessor, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) President Chen Shui-bian, who had conducted 烽火外交, or "scorched earth diplomacy." In this diplomacy, Chen actively endeavored to increase Taiwan's diplomatic allies through sometimes disturbing scuffles with the PRC (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC, Taiwan [MOFA], 2008, August 4). For Ma, viable diplomacy's dual focus on continuing Taiwan's diplomatic work while simultaneously protecting its dignity meant improving relations with the PRC and building a diplomatic truce where the two nations would not fight over allies (see Chapter 3) (Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan [OP], 2008, August 4). Because of this policy, cultural diplomacy, especially with Taiwan's allies, became extremely important to the Ma administration: it was a means of fortifying relationships while highlighting Taiwan's participation in internationally appropriate foreign affairs as opposed to dollar diplomacy (OP, 2008, September 19, 2010, July 29). In fact, the first four uses of the phrase 文化外交, or "cultural diplomacy," in press releases from Ma's term referred to his 2009 visit to Central American allies and 2010 visit to Pacific allies. During these visits, the Ju Percussion Group and the Formosa Indigenous Song and Dance Troupe traveled with Ma's Central American

delegation and his Pacific delegation, respectively.¹²⁸ Clearly, Ma not only adopted cultural diplomacy from early in his term, but this diplomacy was also notably performative.

The YA project was developed in direct response to Ma's marriage of viable diplomacy and cultural diplomacy and operated through Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) (11/10a and 12/13 Interviews). Created in the second year of Ma's administration (2009), the program's initial mission was to "realize President Ma's 'viable diplomacy' and 'cultural diplomacy' policies; effectively utilize the Republic of China's advantages regarding culture, education, and technology; and increase the depth of exchange with allied countries" (MOFA, 2009, October 8; see also MOFA, 2010a). The project is also an example of long-term performative cultural diplomacy because, since the program began, performance has been used to represent Taiwan's culture(s) and demonstrate achievements garnered through exchange.¹²⁹

From the perspective of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, however, what is particularly noteworthy about the YA project is the Pacific's role in the program. Because the project was developed by MOFA's Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (*MOFA News and Report*, 2009, December), it initially focused on Taiwan's Pacific allies before later expanding to include other allies and, ultimately, both allied and non-allied countries (MOFA, 2009, October 8, 2011b; 11/8 and 11/10b Interviews). Pacific allies are also some of the most commonly visited nations within the project: in the 10 years of the program to date, Palau has been visited nine times, former ally Solomon Islands eight, and Tuvalu seven.¹³⁰ Only in 2017, when the program was redirected toward Southeast Asia as part of DPP President Tsai Ing-wen's New Southbound Policy, were Tuvalu/Pacific allies not considered possible destinations (MOFA, 2017), and even that decision was short-lived: Tuvalu, Palau, and Solomon Islands were reincorporated into the program in 2018 (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c).

Yet, the importance of Tuvalu/Pacific allies in the YA project has faded as the format of the program and its use of performance has changed, specifically after a major overhaul in

¹²⁸ See Office of the President, ROC, Taiwan, 2009, May 18, 2009, May 26, 2010, March 2, 2010, March 27-a. Ma's choice to have an indigenous performing group accompany him to the Pacific is discussed in the last section of this chapter.

¹²⁹ See 9/28, 11/10a, 11/19b, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/13 Interviews; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC, Taiwan (MOFA), 2012, 2013.

¹³⁰ No other countries have been visited eight or nine times; besides Tuvalu, Taiwan's African ally Swaziland (now Eswatini) is the only other country that has been visited seven times (MOFA, 2010b, 2011b, 2012; Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c).

program structure between 2013 and 2014. Below, I first consider the 2009-2013 version of the YA project, its uses of performance, and its relationship with Tuvalu before executing a more detailed assessment of the 2014-2016 program and how its performances both hindered and facilitated Tuvalu-Taiwan exchange. In the subsequent sections, I focus more on the 2014-2016 program because its complexity, the formalization and scale of its performances, and its links to domestic controversies clearly evince the actors and discourses exerting conflicting pressures on the program. They also more obviously show how these pressures were finally resolved in Tuvalu.

Decentralized Performative Exchange: The 2009-2013 YA Project

Although, when it was first instituted in 2009, the YA project was nominally overseen by MOFA, it was mainly implemented through different universities in Taiwan. In the first year of the program (2009), MOFA selected Fu Jen Catholic University and National Taiwan University to lead exchange in Pacific allies because these institutions had service learning experience or outstanding academic reputations. After this initial assignment, National Chengchi University (NCCU) requested to also participate in the 2009 project given its specialization in diplomacy; Tuvalu was ultimately reassigned from Fu Jen Catholic University to NCCU for that year (12/13 Interview; NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2009, September, p. 73).

After the first year of the program was successful, MOFA no longer assigned countries to universities. Universities instead applied to host programs in countries selected by MOFA, after which MOFA chose which university traveled to which country/countries (11/30 Interview; MOFA, 2009, June 26). Each university was expected to select six students and one supervising professor to develop a one- to two-week youth camp for each of the countries it successfully applied to visit. MOFA's suggested topics for this camp included "the current state of affairs in Taiwan and Chinese culture¹³¹ (including simple Mandarin education); sports (including martial arts); music, singing, dancing, and team building; computers, technology, and creative [projects]; public health; and Taiwanese delicacies" (MOFA,

¹³¹ During Ma Ying-jeou's administration, 中華文化, a term for Chinese culture with political connotations and connections to Taiwan's official name, 中華民國, or "the ROC," is adopted in YA discourse. For Tsai Ing-wen's administration, 華夏文化, a term for Chinese culture that references the broader and less political Han ethnic group, is used (MOFA, 2010a; L. Xu, 2017, p. 18, side 2).

2010a).¹³² When university groups returned to Taiwan, they were also expected to give a final performance for high-level Taiwanese officials (typically the president) to highlight their achievements.

Despite the range of activities suggested by MOFA, dance, music, and song became a major mode of exchange during YA camps. This was not only because universities required YAs to perform a talent as part of their application process (9/28, 11/10a, 11/28, 12/5, and 12/13 Interviews) but also because YA groups hosted end-of-camp presentations in the countries they visited that relied on dynamic rather than static forms (11/30 Interview). To this point, the student leader for the 2009 YA program in Tuvalu explained:

I think we use talents [to select YAs] because ... we're used to having a format [for our programs]. So, when you say you're doing viable diplomacy, well, what did you achieve? So, you have to have a presentation. But what can you present? Well, students should perform something... But you can't just have them recite a poem.

That's really strange and not very appealing. (12/13 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Additionally, although during the 2009-2013 YA project, MOFA screened applications from different university groups, the ministry engaged in only minimal monitoring of project implementation (9/28, 11/10a, 11/28, and 12/5 Interviews).¹³³ MOFA *did* task Taiwan's embassies and representative offices in countries hosting YAs with overseeing camp content (MOFA, 2010a, 2011a, 2012). However, whether due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., camp materials disappearing in the mail) or active decisions by group members (12/13 Interview), YAs often majorly changed their proposed camp programs before departing for or while in the country where they conducted exchange (NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2009, September, p. 52, 2010, pp. 38, 57).

For the YA program in Tuvalu, modifications made during camps focused on song and performance/dance and occurred when YAs realized that camps should not depend on unilateral flows of information. Thus, 2009 and 2010 YAs from NCCU explained changes to their camps in performative terms:

¹³² The 2013 YA project also basically followed this format but participating countries were divided into those requesting regular groups (similar to 2009-2012 groups) and those requiring specialized groups that held camps on subjects like information technology (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018a).

¹³³ See Legislative Yuan, ROC, Taiwan (LY), 2014, September 24; *Legislative Yuan Gazette* (LYG), 2013, October 9, p. 223.

[Because], at that time, we thought we should bring a lot of things. We were going to host a camp, right? So, at that time, we loaded the course schedule. But, later, we realized that, actually, there were many things that we could learn from them.... So, later, when we realized that, during our final presentation—the final presentation in Tuvalu—we studied dance with the students and asked them to teach us some things and put those into the final presentation (12/13 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also NCCU, 2009, September 21)

The opening performance [at the Tokotu maneapa (meeting hall)] was a siva by little kids. We realized that Tuvaluans were really extremely talented at dance. From a young age, they were really enthusiastic about performing. Also, in contrast to a standardized performance format, they really welcomed us onto the stage to dance with them. They hoped that audience members and performers could have fun together. This ... inspired us. Maybe, later, in the final presentation for the camp, we could have more exchange with the audience. (NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2010, p. 27)

I remember that, at that time, we wanted to accommodate their culture, so—our dances were all simple, and, during the indigenous Amis dance¹³⁴, we invited everyone up to dance. So, we hoped to integrate ourselves into their culture. (11/28 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

In 2010, this awareness of the need for bilateral dialogue led “NCCU and the Tuvalu Ministry of Education to each provide 50% of [YA camp] courses,” with performance/dance selected as an exchange activity by both sides.¹³⁵ Given this, in interviews and reports, 2010 YAs explained that aside from conducting their own performance/dance courses in that year, they also met with Tuvalu’s island communities on the capital Funafuti to learn dancing and weaving. They even presented the results of their performative learning to the Tuvaluan community (11/28 Interview; NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2010, pp. 3-65, 108).

Students at Chung Shan Medical University (CSMU), which is affiliated with Tuvalu’s sister hospital in Taiwan, traveled to Tuvalu as YAs in 2011 and 2012.¹³⁶ They similarly noted that

¹³⁴ Controversy over YAs (mis)representing indigenous cultures is discussed later in this chapter.

¹³⁵ See Embassy of the ROC, Taiwan in Tuvalu, 2010, August 16; National Chengchi University (NCCU) Office of Student Affairs, 2010, pp. 7, 11-13.

¹³⁶ No YAs traveled to Tuvalu in 2013 (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018a).

Tuvaluan performance/dance and relevant exchange were significant parts of their camp experience:

At night, at about 7 or 8, they would show us their culture. For example, their fatele. Their dancing. Every day went like that.... For the group performance, we would dance fatele with them[;] ... they would perform the dances we had taught them (9/28 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also CSMU College of Medicine, 2011, pp. 10, 12)

[We] probably chose one or two songs, and then we sang one or two songs together, and then they asked us to join some of their dance. [The] girls and the guys learned—well, they prepared, and then asked us to join them. Oh, yeah, some of the nights, we actually went back to the school and they would teach us some of the songs, to learn. (12/5 Interview)¹³⁷

The 2009-2013 version of the YA project in Tuvalu was by no means unproblematic, and final reports written by YAs demonstrate that participants either struggled with ethnocentric ideas similar to those described in Chapter 3 or abandoned these ideas in favor of idealized impressions of Tuvalu as a utopia.¹³⁸ However, because YA groups at the time were able to focus on a single country, reflect on local peoples and cultures, and adapt flexibly and with little government interference, the program moved toward bilateral cultural exchange rather than unilateral cultural promotion. Performance/dance played a major role in this movement: it was, at first, the means by which YAs envisioned exhibiting the achievements of their unilateral camp activities, then a medium through which YAs became convinced that more reflective exchange was necessary, and finally a platform through which YAs and their Tuvaluan counterparts conveyed the outcomes of their cultural interactions. By 2014, however, the relative freedom of the YA project and its performances was no longer viable.

Centralized Performative Promotion: The 2014-2016 YA Project

In the summer of 2013, when YA groups were leaving Taiwan for their various exchange destinations, Taiwanese media outlets began reporting that YAs were including indigenous

¹³⁷ See Chung Shan Medical University (CSMU), 2012, pp. 42-43, 48-57; Embassy of the ROC, Taiwan in Tuvalu, 2012, August 23, 2012, August 28.

¹³⁸ See CSMU, 2012, pp. 52, 58; MOFA, 2012, 2013; NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2009, September, pp. 64-115, 2010, pp. 25-68; 9/28 and 11/28 Interviews.

cultures, performance/dance, and dress in their camp programs often with little attention to accurate representation (12/6 Interview; Kunaw, 2013, August 16; *Liberty Times*, 2013, August 12). The significance of the controversy this caused and its relevance to performative cultural diplomacy in Tuvalu and Taiwan's other Pacific allies is discussed in the final section of this chapter. For this section, it is sufficient to note that media reporting on the issue, outrage on the part of indigenous groups, and action in Taiwan's Legislature to freeze MOFA's YA budget until the problem was addressed prompted a complete overhaul of the YA project in 2014.¹³⁹

Like the 2009-2013 YA program, the new version, which ran from 2014 to 2016 (before changing again in 2017)¹⁴⁰, relied on performance/dance and performative talents. Nevertheless, many other aspects of the program changed. Students rather than universities applied for the program and inter-university YA groups were formed directly by MOFA; MOFA held six weeks of centralized training for all YAs before groups could travel abroad; and YA groups visited four or five countries (or cities), not one. Furthermore, instead of hosting a camp with a final presentation, while in each country/city they visited, YAs engaged in forums; visits to government offices, NGOs, charitable organizations, and Taiwanese aid projects; and a standardized 90-minute performance about Taiwan (MOFA, 2014, 2015, 2016; L. Xu, 2017).

As noted in the previous section, the 2009-2013 YA project was highly problematic. However, the program overhaul, especially adjustments to the use of performance/dance, reduced the potential for change based on interactions with visited countries and rendered performances inward-looking reflections on Taiwan's cultural constitution rather than mediums for exchange. When I asked a YA who emceed the 2016 YA performances in Palau, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, and Tuvalu if she ever altered her lines to include local greetings or reflect customs in different countries, she summed up this phenomenon succinctly: "[I] never [changed anything] because [the performance] was purely about introducing Taiwan, so it had nothing to do with other countries" (10/6a Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 3/8 Interview).¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ See 11/8 Interview; LY, 2014, September 24; LYG, 2013, December 9, pp. 222-223.

¹⁴⁰ See the second section of this chapter for more on changes in 2017.

¹⁴¹ 10/31, 11/9, 11/19a, 12/2, 2/27, and 3/8 Interviews mention insufficient exchange in the 2014-2016 program.

Due to the rigidity and inward-looking nature of 2014-2016 performances, exchange with all countries visited through the YA project decreased.¹⁴² However, Tuvalu and other “developing” countries (typically allied nations) were affected most significantly because the theatrical facilities in those countries could never meet the technical demands of YA performances and came to be seen as challenges to be overcome rather than differences to be understood (L. Xu, 2017, pp. 40-41, side 1). Below, I discuss interviews with officials and directors involved in the 2014-2016 YA project to explore how problems they observed in the 2009-2013 program informed ideas on how 2014-2016 performances should be conducted. I first examine how the need to accurately and comprehensively represent Taiwan’s culture(s), which was triggered by controversy in 2013, created performances obsessively focused on “transmitting the beauty of Taiwanese culture” (L. Xu, 2017, front cover). Subsequently, I discuss how perceived flaws in 2009-2013 performances created an emphasis on “professional” stage performance. This emphasis disadvantaged countries like Tuvalu, which were seen as possessing “unprofessional” stage facilities, while prioritizing countries with facilities similar to those in Taiwan. This phenomenon reflects Taiwanese perceptions of low-quality allies, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. It also dovetails with the “professionalism” discourse Taiwanese officials use to assess Tuvaluan performances, as outlined in Chapter 4.

“I must emphasize ... that we hope to demonstrate Taiwan’s diverse culture”: Accurate and comprehensive cultural representation in the 2014-2016 YA project

In September 2013, after media outlets reported that YA groups had been inaccurately representing indigenous cultures abroad, a legislator asked the minister of foreign affairs a question that then became central to the 2014-2016 YA project: “If we’re not even clear as to what our own culture is, how do we have the right to represent the country [abroad]?” (*Legislative Yuan Gazette* [LYG], 2013, October 9, p. 223).

The 90-minute performances designed for the 2014-2016 YA program represent MOFA’s response to this question. In 2009-2013 performances, parts of Taiwan’s culture(s) had been presented according to the preferences of different YA groups. By contrast, from 2014 to 2016, directors hired by MOFA sought to comprehensively and accurately present all

¹⁴² For the 2014-2016 program, directors only changed performances to accommodate Muslim countries (10/6a and 11/19b Interviews).

elements the Taiwan government defines as constituting Taiwan's multicultural society. This is especially clear in how performances represent the people of Taiwan. From 2014 to 2016, performances were divided into several independent sections. Sections in the 2014 performance centered on the Chinese characters “山 mountain,” “人 people,” “中 middle,” “家 home,” “情 emotion,” “食 food,” “新 new,” “青春 youth,” and “愛 love” (11/19b Interview; MOFA, 2014, October 27), but the 2015 and 2016 performances both included sections arranged by ethnicity. They begin with a representation of Taiwan's landscape and then transition to segments on Taiwan's indigenous peoples, Hakka people, Holo people, and Chinese tradition (L. Xu, 2017, pp. 22-24, side 2; S. Yu, 2015).¹⁴³ Although not as overt, the 2014 performance is also careful to include the same groups (11/19b Interview; S. Yu, 2014). This dissection of the peoples of Taiwan maps almost directly onto the 四大族群, or “Four Ethnic Groups,” a discourse prevalent in Taiwan's politics since at least the early 1990s that defines Taiwanese society as composed of indigenous, Holo, Hakka, and Mainlander peoples.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, in 2016, the then director-general of MOFA's Department of NGO International Affairs, which has organized the YA project since 2015, explained:

I must emphasize ... that we hope to demonstrate Taiwan's diverse culture. Consequently, during performances, we specifically highlight indigenous, Holo, Hakka, Chinese, and other cultures We hope that legislators will support us in continuing to organize this program, which can aid our diplomatic expansion (LYG, 2016, December 15, p. 478)

Additionally, because Hakka and indigenous peoples are underrepresented or minority groups in Taiwan (F.-c. Wang, 2013, p. 81), MOFA officials are careful to note that, since 2014, Taiwan's Hakka Affairs Council and Council of Indigenous Peoples have helped screen YA performances (11/8 Interview). This illustrates official efforts to avoid cultural controversy.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ In 2015, the order is indigenous peoples, Holo people, Hakka people, and Chinese tradition; in 2016, Hakka people are represented before Holo people.

¹⁴⁴ See Suaiyung, 2011, p. 36; L.-j. Wang, 2004, pp. 304-305, 314-316. Holo, Hakka, and Mainlander peoples are all Han, but Holo and Hakka peoples began migrating to Taiwan in the 1600s, whereas Mainlanders arrived in Taiwan with KMT forces in the 1940s during/after the Chinese Civil War (Brown, 2004, pp. 9-10; H. Huang, 2017). For YA performances, I consider sections on Chinese tradition to represent Mainlanders because these people departed from mainland China more recently than Holo and Hakka peoples.

¹⁴⁵ The 2016 YA promotional book even details planning processes for the indigenous section of the performance; no other represented cultures are afforded this coverage (L. Xu, 2017, pp. 19-21, side 2).

Yet, criticism in Taiwan's Legislature about cultural representation in the YA project, especially representation of indigenous cultures, has surfaced at least twice since the program initiated culturally representative performances (LYG, 2015, February 13, p. 220, 2016, December 15, p. 474). Cultural tensions within the program itself are also apparent. For example, the initial outline for the 2016 YA performance did not include a representation of Chinese tradition, forwarding an alternative view of Taiwan's cultural composition detached from connections to mainland China. Objecting to this representation, MOFA immediately instructed directors to add a section on Chinese culture (12/18 Interview).

Although domestic dialogue about Taiwan's cultural representation abroad is both constructive and necessary, it has also created a situation much like that for Tuvaluan performance/dance in Taiwan: YA performances focus more on domestic discourse and developing domestically acceptable performative representations than on how performances can further international exchange. This inward focus has most evidently affected how MOFA personnel organize the program (11/8 Interview). However, it has also influenced performance directors (11/19b Interview), stage managers (10/31 Interview), and even YAs (11/19a Interview). Consequently, while 2014 YA application forms stated that performances would be choreographed "according to conditions in visited countries," by 2015, this language had been removed. By 2016, performances were portrayed as "inseparably linked" to "introducing Taiwan," "promoting Taiwan's traditions," and "selling Taiwan's unique culture" (MOFA, 2014; L. Xu, 2017, p. 13, side 2, p. 5, side 1).

Interestingly, this movement of YA performances toward unilateral promotion of Taiwan's culture(s) also indicates connections between the 2014-2016 program and an earlier project hosted through Taiwan's Ministry of Education: the Chinese Youth Goodwill Missions. The goodwill missions ran from 1974 to 1999 and were instituted to performatively promote Taiwan's "traditional Chinese culture" after the PRC replaced Taiwan at the UN (C.-Y. Chang, 2009, pp. 19-20, 31; Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission Website, 2018). Goodwill-mission selection and training processes are mirrored in the 2014-2016 YA project, directors for the 2016 YA performance danced with the goodwill missions when they were students, and the 2016 assistant director noted links between the cultural diplomacy goals of the two projects (12/18 Interview; L. Xu, 2017, p. 18, side 2). Even the China Youth Corps, an organization responsible for the goodwill missions, has participated in hosting auditions for the YA project since 2014 and organized the entire program in 2016 (12/18 Interview; T. Li & G. Yu, 2005, p. 741; MOFA, 2014, 2015).

When considered from the perspectives of cultural representation and exchange, however, YA ties to the goodwill missions are troublesome. First, as the assistant director for the 2016 YA performance noted, when the goodwill missions began and even into the 1990s, “China and Taiwan were not as clearly delineated, so a lot of the performances were Tang dynasty [dances] or that sort of thing” (12/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; T. Li & G. Yu, 2005, p. 901). Although this does not mean that current YA performances ascribe to outdated ideas of Taiwan’s culture(s), it does show the fraught nature of cultural representation throughout Taiwan’s history. It also demonstrates that seeking comprehensive cultural representation in the YA project leads to a domestic focus. That is, in attempts to define Taiwan’s culture(s), concepts of mainland China’s close connection to Taiwan collide with the need to represent other voices, especially those of indigenous peoples, a collision that incites fierce domestic debate. This tension was illustrated in Chapter 2 when I showed how Taiwan’s Austronesian diplomacy generates intense backlash from conservative portions of Taiwan’s Han majority. Second, throughout their history, the goodwill missions were targeted directly at the United States, with groups traveling to numerous U.S. locations almost every year (Chinese Youth Goodwill Association Website, 2018; T. Li & G. Yu, 2005, p. 741).¹⁴⁶ Yet, performing in the United States entails different theatrical facilities and aesthetics than those found in many of Taiwan’s current allies, including Tuvalu. This indicates difficulties that might arise when dispatching a single promotional performance to countries with varied performative philosophies and standards. As addressed in the next sub-section, these difficulties are clear in 2014-2016 YA performances because discourses of “professionalism” inherent in these performances fix standards to those in “developed” countries like the United States and imagine performances in “developing” countries as obstacles to success.

“[You] can’t accommodate the places that have the very, very fewest facilities”: “Professionalism” in the 2014-2016 YA project

After the 2013 controversy described above, MOFA surveyed Taiwan’s embassies and representative offices abroad to gather opinions on the YA project (11/8 Interview). A problem that emerged in this survey was misgivings regarding the varying quality of YA

¹⁴⁶ An Asia-Pacific delegation was added in 1985 (*United Daily News*, 1985, August 30). It did not travel every year, but it did visit Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Fiji in 1996 (MOFA, 1998).

groups from year to year and country to country, concerns echoed by the director of the 2014/2015 YA performances:

There was another reason [the project changed]. Before, when a lot of groups were traveling abroad—because MOFA wasn't checking, so a lot of the groups were maybe only going for fun, or their quality was bad. [Other] countries would complain about that. (11/19b Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 11/30 Interview)

For MOFA, this idea of uneven quality was most apparent in the end-of-camp performances arranged by 2009-2013 YA groups:

Official 1: The quality [of the performances] was difficult to control. For example, when [a professor] from the Department of Dance at National Taiwan University of Arts took groups abroad, their stage performances were undoubtedly strong because the six or seven students she was taking were definitely the strongest students in the Department of Dance. But, for example, some department at some non-arts university might form a group but their stage performances would not be as good ...

Official 2: So, we did a review, and, for the performance part, we had to improve. So, we started to progress, to become more and more professional, to become better and better (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Thus, when the YA program was reconfigured between 2013 and 2014, quality control became a major goal, and this objective was aimed not only at ensuring accurate cultural representation but also at developing “professional”-level stage performances. This is evident from the decision in 2014 to hold six-week intensive training camps for YAs before they traveled abroad. During these camps, MOFA hired directors, stage managers, dance teachers, and technical designers all in the hope of helping YAs create the “perfect performance” (L. Xu, 2017, p. 59, side 1; 11/19b and 12/18 Interviews).

Yet, as Chapter 4 and external tensions in Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy suggest, the standards for determining whether a performance is “perfect”/“professional” differ from country to country. Based on discussions with directors, stage managers, YAs, and performance/dance professors involved in the 2014-2016 program and a review of performance videos, it is clear that YA performances are designed for indoor stage facilities. These facilities must accommodate theatrical lighting and sound as well as a multimedia backdrop projected onto the back wall of the stage (L. Xu, 2017; S. Yu, 2014, 2015; 10/21, 10/31, 11/14, 12/2, and 12/18 Interviews). However, as YAs and stage managers who had

performed in Tuvalu (and Solomon Islands) noted, these facilities were rarely available, indicating that certain countries could not possibly enjoy the “perfect” performances YAs hoped to present (10/21, 10/31, 11/19a, 12/2, 2/27, and 2/28 Interviews).

When asked about this issue, the assistant director for the 2016 YA project insisted that performances were designed so that they could be completed without lighting or props and in varied conditions. Despite this, he then conceded that if countries did not have “proper” acoustic equipment or “professional [performance] venues,” “nothing could be done” to convey the performance as planned (12/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin]). Paradoxically, though, discourse from 2016 YA promotional materials consistently highlights the need to present the YA performance exactly as it was rehearsed in Taiwan to achieve full effectiveness:

Ambassador Qin Rixin mentioned that, one time, before a performance was about to begin, only the auxiliary lights at the sides of the stage could be used because the stage lights had malfunctioned. Cui Zheren, who was the stage manager, courageously climbed a three-story ladder to fix the lights. All [the YAs] were of the same mindset: every person was willing to exert their utmost effort [to deliver] a perfect performance. (L. Xu, 2017, p. 59, side 1)

This discourse has prompted a clear differentiation in how YA performances in “developed” and “developing” countries are described. Notably, “developing” countries that do not have the same facilities as Taiwan are characterized as causing immense hardships for YAs and their mission to faithfully present performances (L. Xu, 2017, p. 21, side 2; 2/27 and 3/8 Interviews). Narratives from 2016 promotional materials that discuss YA performances in Taiwan’s African ally Swaziland (now Eswatini) are illuminating in this regard:

The last large-scale performance in the Swaziland tour [for the Asia-Africa YA Group] left the deepest impression on the YAs because everyone thought of all possible ways to present the most perfect performance for the local people. However, the performance venue was an outdoor space and the facilities were not equivalent to those of a professional indoor performance venue. (L. Xu, 2017, p. 40, side 1)

Among the five large-scale performances during our exchange abroad, my deepest impression was of the Swaziland performance. Although there were no lights, no projections, no dressing rooms, and not even a professional stage, our intense energy was infectious (L. Xu, 2017, p. 39, side 1)

The “professionalism” of YA performances renders them rigid in their pursuit of “perfection,” and relevant discourse highlights how countries without Taiwan’s theatrical facilities are marginalized in performance planning and execution.

This prevalence of “professionalism” discourse and its marginalization of “developing” countries is best conveyed by the 2014/2015 YA director. She described how she planned performances and how she would improve the YA project as follows:

At that time, during the production, the first time—actually, it was because the production time was really too short—now, I have to get it to the point where it can be shown to the president [of Taiwan] and it can be shown to regular people. The disparity is that big. But I took a middle path. So, of course, from the beginning, I had to think that I had to make it the best to show to the president. Now, as to, for example, Tuvalu, those countries, if their facilities and venues were really not ok, then, in that six-week [training,] ... we would ... discuss how to adapt. But, if they really don’t have projectors, and then there’s also no covering from the sun, so, if you do the projections, no one will see them, then that’s how you perform. Nothing can be done.... So, we considered it, but you can’t accommodate the places that have the very, very fewest facilities and equipment because then how do you perform for the president

[...]

[If I were to change the program?] At first, we wouldn’t go to bad countries to perform. At first, we would only go to the best countries, like Europe—probably not allied countries. Also, we would go to the most famous countries and spend the most money to perform in the biggest theaters (11/19b Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Aside from concerns about cultural representation that rendered 2014-2016 YA performances domestically oriented and inflexible mediums for exchange, discourses of “professionalism” suggest that performances were rarely developed for countries like Tuvalu. This trend overlaps with Chapter 4 and Taiwan’s ambivalent reception of “unprofessional” Tuvaluan performance/dance. Thus, cultural-representation discourse indicates that the 2014-2016 YA program was less open to local exchange than the 2009-2013 project, but “professionalism” discourse even further negated consideration of Tuvaluan viewpoints in program planning. Yet, interviews with YAs who actually traveled to Tuvalu in 2014 and 2016¹⁴⁷ indicate that,

¹⁴⁷ YAs did not visit Tuvalu in 2015 (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018b).

from both logistical and cultural perspectives, Tuvalu exerted its own pressures on the program. These pressures not only profoundly changed YA performances but also produced a culturally significant experience for YAs.

Centralized Performative Promotion or Localized Performative Dialogue?: Tuvalu and the 2014/2016 YAs

As mentioned in the Introduction to this chapter, Clarke (2016) indicates four actors who make meaning with cultural diplomacy projects: policy-makers, policy implementers, cultural practitioners, and audience members (p. 154). In Chapter 6, I discuss how Tuvaluan audiences made meaning with the YA project. Here, I consider how Tuvalu, its people, and its culture influenced cultural practitioners from the 2014 and 2016 YA project—YAs themselves—and ultimately changed how YAs made meaning with the project and its performances. While the opinions of policy-makers and policy implementers, as well as some cultural practitioners (i.e., performance directors), were featured above, none of these actors traveled with the YA project to Tuvalu.¹⁴⁸ Consequently, in this section, I focus on the voices of YAs. I discuss how logistical issues and planning by the Taiwan Embassy in Tuvalu radically changed YA performances and experiences, as well as how Tuvalu’s culture and performance/dance directly impacted understandings of Tuvalu and the YA project. I finally explore whether YA experiences affected initial assumptions about Tuvalu.

“[There] was no itinerary for Tuvalu, so we could spend a lot of time in the local [community]”: Logistical issues and embassy planning in the 2014/2016 YA project

In 2014, YAs traveled to Tuvalu as part of the Asia-Pacific 1 Group, which also traveled to Australia (Brisbane and Sydney), Fiji, and Solomon Islands; Tuvalu was the third stop in the YA itinerary. For 2016, YAs traveled to Tuvalu as part of the Asia-Pacific Group, which also traveled to Palau, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia (Melbourne); Tuvalu was the last

¹⁴⁸ Three supervisory figures travel with YA groups: a higher level MOFA diplomat acts as the group leader, a professor of performance/dance or subjects relevant to visited countries acts as the deputy group leader, and a lower level MOFA diplomat acts as a secretary (11/30 and 12/18 Interviews). A stage manager, who is a student like the YAs, also travels with groups (10/31 and 12/18 Interviews). 2014 and 2016 YAs who traveled to Tuvalu noted that their deputy group leaders, who were dance or music professors (i.e., cultural practitioners), did not influence their performances (11/9, 12/2, and 2/27 Interviews).

stop for the YAs (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c). For both YA groups, the logistics of traveling to Tuvalu radically affected their experience in the country even before they arrived: in 2014, flights from Fiji to Tuvalu were not successfully booked for three of the 16 YAs and portions of the YA performance in Tuvalu had to be deleted or roles reassigned; a 2014 YA described performances in Tuvalu as the “crudest” of all their performances abroad (12/2 Interview; see also 2/27, 2/28, and 3/8 Interviews). Although, in 2016, all YAs arrived in Tuvalu, most of their props were not transported with them because they were too large for the smaller plane required for flights from Fiji to Tuvalu. Much of the 2016 performance, however, was reliant on large props. Consequently, of the original opening, indigenous culture, Holo and Hakka culture, Chinese culture, diverse culture, and ending sections of the performance, YAs only performed the opening, the Hakka portion of the Holo/Hakka culture section, and the diverse culture section. This amounted to less than half of the original performance (10/6a, 11/9, and 11/19a Interviews).

That full versions of YA performances could not be presented in Tuvalu in 2014 *and* 2016 demonstrates how imaginings of the performance in Taiwan seldom account for Tuvalu. It also indicates that, at the basic level of transport and travel, Tuvalu exerts its own pressures on the YA project that mold it into something quite different from the original design approved by policy-makers, policy implementers, and cultural practitioners. Especially for the 2016 YA performance in Tuvalu, it is interesting to consider how a show crafted to accurately represent the officially recognized scope of Taiwan’s culture(s) presented to Tuvaluans only Taiwan’s geographic location (the theme of the opening section), Hakka culture, and diverse contemporary culture. Accordingly, the version of Taiwan presented in Tuvalu and the performative information Tuvaluans could use for meaning-making were far removed from that for other countries.

From another logistical perspective, itineraries for 2014 and 2016 YA visits to Tuvalu were relatively relaxed compared to those for other countries YAs visited. Although performance training for the YA project is centralized in Taiwan, where YAs perform, who they perform for, and the places and people they visit when abroad are controlled by Taiwan’s embassies or representative offices in different countries (10/31 and 11/8 Interviews). Because YAs are expected to perform *and* engage in forums and visits to local government offices and charitable organizations during their trips, itineraries are constantly packed with activities. Yet, YAs from the 2014 and 2016 programs noted that fewer formal events were planned for

their trips to Tuvalu (10/20b, 11/9, 11/19a, 12/2, 2/27, and 3/8 Interviews).¹⁴⁹ This contrast made a significant impression on many YAs, especially because they felt it enabled them to participate in everyday life on Funafuti:

I think [the itinerary] was more relaxed, more free. And then we didn't have to specifically wear suits or anything. We didn't have to dress very formally.... And then the people there were also all very at ease.... In Australia—that was really formal; we were wearing high heels the whole time. [In Tuvalu,] we were relaxed and free, and then everyone was friendly with us. I remember. (2/28 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

We had [the feeling] that we were directly integrated into their [Tuvaluan] lives. For example, we'd play ball with the kids, and in the meeting halls, the kids would hug us and hang on to us, and we would keep them company. It was a little bit like being an international volunteer, but, then again, it wasn't like being a volunteer. It was simply that we wanted to play with them, that kind of feeling.... But, in other countries, it wasn't like that because in other countries we were always following the itinerary. But there was no itinerary for Tuvalu, so we could spend a lot of time in the local [community] (11/9 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

In Tuvalu, we played with the kids, and then with ... the Taiwanese [diplomats] that are there, and then ... we [interacted] with the local people. I think Tuvalu was the best, the most awesome. I think it most [directly] gave me that kind of Youth-Ambassador feeling ... but, in other places, we would just visit, and then we would just sit there. Like meetings, meetings. Ok, we listen, they finish talking, talking about the state of their country ... and then their students, and then how many people they have. Ok, that was it (11/19a Translated Interview [Mandarin])¹⁵⁰

The frequent comparisons YAs drew between Tuvalu and other countries they visited demonstrate how experiences in Tuvalu changed their overall assessment of the YA project.

¹⁴⁹ 2014 YAs were also frequently accompanied by the Taiwan Embassy's Tuvaluan administrator, whereas, in other countries, they were accompanied by Taiwanese diplomats. YAs described this experience as unique and developed friendships with the administrator and her husband (12/2, 2/27, 2/28, and 3/8 Interviews).

¹⁵⁰ The "Humanitarian care: Love without borders" chapter of the 2016 YA promotional book describes YA visits to nursing homes, orphanages, and refugee camps. A section on "visits to orphanages and exchange with children" includes 15 pictures, eight of which feature YAs with Tuvaluan children (L. Xu, 2017, pp. 64-69, side 1). While demonstrating the frequency of exchange in Tuvalu, this section also frames YA interaction with Tuvaluan children as humanitarian aid. YAs, however, explain that children engaged with them as a normal part of their daily lives.

These experiences convinced them that the kind of flexible interaction found in Tuvalu should be more widely implemented throughout the program.¹⁵¹

“[They] danced, and, then, when they finished dancing, it was our turn to dance”: Tuvaluan culture and performance/dance in the 2014/2016 YA project

Although transportation issues and a more relaxed itinerary affected the 2014 and 2016 YA project, as well as YA impressions of Tuvalu, Tuvaluan culture and performance/dance were also active in changing the program. As indicated in YA reactions to their Tuvalu itinerary, the local cultural context of Funafuti had a major influence on experiences in Tuvalu. As one YA of indigenous Paiwan background noted,

It was like an indigenous community in Taiwan. It gave me the feeling that it was an indigenous community made into a country.... They [Tuvaluans] are also very accepting. And then ... you have [a feeling that], “It’s like I belong here.” (11/9 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Other YAs similarly explained:

For me, my deepest impression was that the people [in Tuvalu] were really all very endearing, and then very welcoming.... I remember that, at that time, they would all—when we were leaving, they would all keep hugging us and stuff like that, and then they didn’t want us to go, and then they really hoped we could go back to see them again. (2/28 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[I think everyone liked] Tuvalu [the most]. I think it’s because, there, it was really—everyone was so nice to us, and then—how should I say it, they treated you as if you were an old friend who was coming to visit, that kind of feeling. [It] was really awesome. (10/20b Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Being together with the local kids was a really special experience. Actually, when we went to other countries, there was nothing like that. Even when we went to kindergartens [in other countries], sometimes, possibly, [the kids] might be controlled

¹⁵¹ 2014 YAs also explained that local interaction was key to their experiences in Fiji and Solomon Islands (2/27 and 2/28 Interviews). However, YAs noted that they felt more like guests than part of the community in Solomon Islands (2/28 Interview) or that they felt safer or less busy in Tuvalu than in Solomon Islands and Fiji (2/27 and 3/8 Interviews).

by the head of the school or ... “There are guests coming.” And then, “Be better behaved.” Stuff like that. So, [the kids] were more controlled. But, for Tuvalu, although the kids were not very specifically controlled, they were also all like, “There’s foreigners coming here.” And then they were very enthusiastic and played with us.... [And] then the people there are all nice and welcoming. They were so happy when they saw us. (11/19a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Aside from how general experiences of life in Funafuti influenced YAs, in 2014 and 2016, Tuvaluan performance/dance also intersected with YA visits, whether during welcoming activities or fatele and siva performances held throughout YA trips (10/6a, 10/20b, 11/9, 11/19a, 12/2, 2/27, 2/28, and 3/8 Interviews). This underscores the importance of performativity and performance/dance to Tuvaluan diplomacy, as noted in Chapters 2 and 4. The prevalence of performative/dance culture in Tuvalu and its significance in domestic diplomacy also meant that Tuvaluan performance/dance became as much of a performative discourse in YA visits as YA performances themselves. For example, in 2014, one YA performance in Funafuti was held jointly with Tuvaluan performance/dance as a type of performative exchange:

But they have a really special ritual. I think it’s like if you think someone dances well, you spray him with perfume. I think I have the deepest impression of that. So, the group of us went up there and just sprayed at random. This one’s pretty, spray this one. This one dances [well], this one [has] muscles, spray this one. We used the perfume for exchange because ... , first, when we were eating, they danced, and, then, when they finished dancing, it was our turn to dance (12/2 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 2/28 Interview)

Although 2016 YAs did not engage in direct performative exchange, because of the participatory nature of Tuvaluan dance (Beaulieu, 2009, p. 58; Moyle, 2002), all YAs were requested to join fatele held during their visit. Performative interaction even occurred during YA performances:

YA 1: They, like this, they encircle that [wood box], and then a lot of people sit there, and then sometimes ... there was singing, and then ... there was dancing on the sides. [The dancers] circled them like this ... on the outside. And then we were on the very sides, there, imitating their dancing.

YA 2: Right, they wanted us to learn dancing with them. (10/6a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

When we were in Tuvalu, it was even more different [than performances in other countries]. Although we only performed three items, when we were performing the diverse culture [section], they came up and danced too. They also danced in the audience.... They have one type of dance that's like this [*hums fatele rhythm*], because I went up and danced.... At that time, I watched how they did their hands really closely. They're basically like this: left, right, left, right, and then walk, and then sing and dance, and then below them there's the accompaniment. They hit [*hums fatele rhythm*]. I still remember it. It was really enthusiastic and passionate. (11/19a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Because performance/dance is critical to Tuvalu's domestic diplomacy and cultural representation, when the YAs arrived in Funafuti, they could not maintain the unilateral performative projection they had trained for in Taiwan. Instead, Tuvalu's performative/dance culture pushed back, inextricably inserting itself within YA experiences and even changing YA ideas on how performance should be used in the program. Consequently, when asked how he would improve the YA project, one performer remarked that YAs should hold joint performances in each country they visit that integrate Taiwanese and local youth (11/19a Interview; see also 2/27 and 3/8 Interviews). This not only recalls performative concepts that informed the 2009-2013 YA project but also highlights how Tuvalu challenges ideas of performative cultural diplomacy inculcated in YAs in Taiwan.

“[They’ve] probably never seen such a large performance in their entire lives”: Reinforcing, complicating, and overcoming assumptions in the 2014/2016 YA project

Whether because it radically changed YA performances or because it allowed direct interaction with local communities, the Tuvalu portion of the 2014 and 2016 YA project influenced participants in a major way. YAs from the 2016 program, who had returned more recently, were especially effusive, describing Tuvalu as their favorite stop of all the countries they visited (10/6a, 10/20b, 11/9, 2/27, and 3/8 Interviews) and even presenting laptop screens displaying pictures of Tuvalu (11/9 Interview). Yet, aside from noting the impact

Tuvalu had on YAs and their opinions of the YA project, we must also consider whether and how the program changed assumptions about Tuvalu.

As noted in Chapter 3, if Taiwanese citizens are aware of Tuvalu, it is because of climate change, and this discourse is often tied to ethnocentric or negative impressions of the country linked to perceptions of its vulnerability. YAs for the 2014 and 2016 programs reflected this discourse, explaining that they either had not heard of Tuvalu before the YA project or knew of Tuvalu because of climate change (10/6a, 10/20b, 11/9, 11/19a, 12/2, 2/27, 2/28, and 3/8 Interviews).¹⁵² Traveling to Tuvalu and experiencing Tuvaluan culture did change the impressions of many YAs, with the majority describing highly positive views of the country. With regard to climate change, one 2016 YA even contrasted his initial ideas—based on media reporting—of how dangerous Tuvalu was because of its immediately imminent disappearance with his actual experiences in Funafuti (11/19a Interview).

However, because YAs stayed in Tuvalu for a very short period (typically three days), they sometimes exchanged their initial assumptions about the country for new, albeit positive, ones. These assumptions are similar (although not directly connected) to discourse in Taiwanese non-fiction that ties idyllic imaginings of Tuvalu to advocacy against climate change (see Chapter 3). Accordingly, in their new assumptions, YAs oversimplified their Tuvalu experience, idealizing the country as a utopia full of carefree citizens:

I would probably say that I liked Tuvalu the most.... I've never experienced a country that was so simple.... [They] don't have any pressure from work (10/6a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

I really don't remember [what we learned about] Tuvalu [during YA training]. Or, maybe it's that, after I went to Tuvalu, I felt like Tuvalu was really too wonderful and forgot everything from before. I think Tuvalu is like heaven. I absolutely couldn't bear to sleep [while I was there].... Actually, I really liked [all of the countries we visited], but Tuvalu was just an extremely magical [place] (11/9 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Additionally, even after traveling to Tuvalu, some YAs maintained ethnocentric or negative views of the country, views the Taiwanese media normally associates with climate change:

¹⁵² Several YAs also tied ethnocentric or negative characterizations to their initial perceptions of Tuvalu, explaining that they originally thought Tuvalu was 落後, or “backwards,” or underdeveloped (10/6a, 12/2, and 2/28 Interviews).

Although the living environment [in Tuvalu] is not very advanced, [Tuvaluans] are mainly dependent on foreign imports for drinking water and food, information on the island circulates by word of mouth, the only news media is Tuvalu's radio station, and there's really a gap in the standard of living between ... [Tuvalu] and Taiwan, my time in Tuvalu was the most unforgettable experience of my entire trip (L. Xu, 2017, p. 28, side 1)

[After the performance,] you know, there [in Tuvalu], they don't have ... our resources, they don't have those. So, I was very happy I could bring them some—at least, they've probably never seen such a large performance in their entire lives.... It was like being a doctor in a foreign country. You see that [this person] is very hungry, and then when he's had a bit of water and eaten something, his eyes will brim with tears. To you, that's a very common thing, but they feel it's a very, very different thing. (12/2 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

In the 2014 and 2016 YA project, Tuvalu mediated Taiwan-government goals and directly intervened in the YA experience. In this way, it transformed from an insignificant or negative presence for Taiwanese policy-makers and policy implementers into the most significant and suitable site for the program from the perspective of many YAs. However, as with the 2009-2013 program, whether cultural understanding was attained is doubtful. This demonstrates that, in performative cultural diplomacy, old assumptions may be reconfigured into new assumptions or existing assumptions reinforced through new experiences, and that, in this case, it may be difficult to let "Tuvalu ... just be Tuvalu" (T. Wu, 2012, p. 185).

Cultural Replication or Representation?: Taiwan's Indigenous Performance/Dance in Tuvalu and the Wider Pacific

In this section, I examine an issue mentioned throughout this chapter: indigenous performance/dance and representation in the YA project. Here, I contemplate how objections raised regarding indigenous performance/dance in the YA project reflect back on issues of cultural representation discussed above. I subsequently illustrate that, due to Austronesian diplomatic discourse outlined in Chapter 2, aside from the YAs, indigenous performing groups have also been invited to participate in performative cultural diplomacy projects in Tuvalu, Taiwan's other Pacific allies, and the wider Pacific. The projects these performing groups participate in and the networks they form contextualize controversy over the YA

program. Examining interactions between these groups and the Taiwan government also suggests why groups gravitate away from official programs while the YA project and its contested representation of indigenous peoples is one of Taiwan's most enduring official performative cultural diplomacy events. In the Conclusion to this chapter, I consider how indigenous aversion to official programs evinces broader patterns of indigenous exchange in the Pacific and highlights movement away from Taiwan's Pacific allies toward non-allied settler colonies. This trend ties into phenomena from Chapter 2.

“[Confused] cultural exchange is, in fact, harmful to Taiwan’s diverse cultures”: Indigenous representation in the YA project

Performative/dance representation of Taiwan's indigenous cultures has featured in both the 2009-2013 and 2014-2016 YA project. For the 2009-2013 program, MOFA recommended indigenous performance/dance as a potential aspect of YA camps (MOFA, 2010a, 2011a), and YA groups often did choose indigenous dance as a medium for exchange (Kunaw, 2013, August 16). Yet, two major issues emerged because of this trend. First, in recommendations for the program, MOFA would problematically suggest that indigenous performance/dance was representative of Chinese culture (MOFA, 2010a, 2011a; see LYG, 2016, December 15, p. 474), subsuming indigenous cultures within Taiwan's mainstream Han identity (H. Huang, 2017, pp. 845-847). Second, YA groups would sometimes decide that they should “share [i.e., teach] the song and dance of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan” with/to foreign participants despite having no indigenous students in their delegations (NCCU Office of Student Affairs, 2010, p. 52). Members of indigenous performing groups in Taiwan explain that non-indigenous peoples can present indigenous performance/dance (11/14 and 11/20 Interviews). However, the 2009-2013 YA project was harshly criticized because YA groups did not study indigenous cultures, performance/dance, or dress with indigenous communities and MOFA seemed unaware that YAs were presenting speculative versions of indigenous cultures abroad (12/6 Interview). When this issue was finally acknowledged by the government and the media in 2013, well-known Paiwan choreographer Bulareyaung Pagarlava conveyed deep misgivings about Han stereotypes of indigenous cultures. He expressed concern that “if foreigners see the clothing and performances of the YAs[, they’ll] think that’s what indigenous culture is” (He, 2013, August 12).

After the YA project was overhauled in 2013 to include centralized training and large-scale performances representing Taiwan's multiple cultures, MOFA's general commitment to Taiwan's Legislature was that indigenous cultures would be introduced in performances. Furthermore, the ministry would contact the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) so that CIP personnel or suitable teachers could guide performance training and ensure accurate content (Legislative Yuan, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, September 24). This commitment was fulfilled from 2014 to 2016.¹⁵³ Yet, disparities in the backgrounds and involvement of indigenous teachers (10/23a, 11/14, 12/18, 12/19a, and 3/8 Interviews; F. Hsu, 2014), the sometimes stereotypical views of indigenous performance/dance held by directors (11/19b Interview), and varying levels of attention to detail by companies responsible for YA training have generated mixed feelings about the accuracy and suitability of indigenous representation (11/14 Interview; LYG, 2015, February 13, p. 220).

Beyond questions of proper representation, however, other problems continue to plague the YA program. These include the program's negative reputation in indigenous communities (11/9 and 12/18 Interviews) and a lack of indigenous participation (LYG, 2014, November 17, pp. 254-255).¹⁵⁴ Additionally, the format of 2014-2016 YA performances has consistently situated indigenous peoples in the beginning of performances after an opening section depicting Taiwan's natural environment. All other Taiwanese ethnic groups follow after the indigenous section, which reinforces stereotypes of evolutionary development where indigenous peoples are tied to nature and a past disconnected from the contemporary period (L. Xu, 2017, p. 18, side 2; see L. T. Smith, 1999; T. Teaiwa, 2005). The 2014 performance, in which each section of the program, including that for indigenous performance, centered on a Chinese character, further subsumed indigenous cultures under the assimilatory control of Han society (S. Yu, 2014). Given these persistent problems, in 2016, a group of legislators recommended dismantling MOFA's YA budget, noting that this "confused cultural exchange

¹⁵³ Despite inviting youth from "indigenous, Hakka, and other ethnic groups" to audition for the 2017 YA project (MOFA, 2017, April 21), the only culture represented in that year's performance was Chinese culture (12/18 Interview). Performances by indigenous YAs were only added after some YAs complained (9/24a Interview). Similarly, indigenous cultures were barely represented in 2018 performances and were even confused with representations of Hakka culture (8/30a and 8/30b Interviews).

¹⁵⁴ Program supporters blame the latter problem on indigenous youth (11/19b and 12/13 Interviews), but it is more likely the result of prejudicial YA audition requirements. Interviewees note that foreign-language requirements and online voting systems used during YA auditions discourage indigenous participation or encourage stereotypical performances (11/20, 11/29, and 12/6 Interviews). Furthermore, because group auditions are not allowed, many indigenous performative/dance types cannot be presented.

is, in fact, harmful to Taiwan’s diverse cultures and ethnic equality” (LYG, 2016, December 15, p. 474).

“[If] the government doesn’t take you, it’s very difficult to go”: Indigenous performing groups in Tuvalu/the Pacific and intersections with the YA project

As the YA project has transmitted indigenous representations to Tuvalu and Taiwan’s other Pacific allies from 2009 to 2016, indigenous performing groups have also participated in performative cultural diplomacy in the same countries. Following the promotion of Austronesian linguistic ties in Taiwan in the 1990s (see Chapter 2), presidential visits to Pacific allies by both Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou have featured indigenous performing groups. For example, during Chen’s 2005 trip to the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu, the Amis Kakeng Musical Group performed during the president’s stop in the Marshall Islands to “deepen substantive cultural exchange between the two countries” (OP, 2005, April 27).¹⁵⁵ After the YA project began, President Ma traveled to all of Taiwan’s Pacific allies in March 2010; the Formosa Indigenous Song and Dance Troupe (FISDT) accompanied Ma to “realize the president’s concept of ‘cultural diplomacy’ ” and “highlight the deep relationship between Taiwan and Austronesian cultures” (OP, 2010, March 2).¹⁵⁶ Additionally, 2011 witnessed numerous official cultural projects in the Pacific as Taiwan celebrated its centennial (12/19b Interview). Some of these projects were not related to indigenous cultures: in 2011, hand puppetry troupes visited each Pacific ally (except the Marshall Islands) and Fiji, while the National Kite Association visited all Pacific allies and Fiji in 2012.¹⁵⁷ However, in 2011, MOFA requested that the indigenous New Century Culture Arts Group participate in celebrations for Marshall Islands’ Constitution Day and the president’s birthday

¹⁵⁵ See S. Tsai, 2005, May 1; 11/16 Interview. Kakeng also participated in an official delegation to the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture in Palau when Taiwan first attended in 2004; the group’s leader additionally reports performing during The First Taiwan-Pacific Allies Summit in Palau in 2006, which was attended by President Chen (11/16 Interview).

¹⁵⁶ For the first visit by an indigenous troupe to Tuvalu, Taiwan’s *Foreign Affairs Yearbook* reports that, by 1999 (well before the FISDT trip), an (unspecified) indigenous performing group had already traveled to Tuvalu with the head of the CIP’s Department of Education and Culture (MOFA, 2000).

¹⁵⁷ See MOFA, 2011, November 25, 2012, August 13; Nauwakarawa, 2011, December 9. Although MOFA initially reported that the Taiyuan Asian Puppet Theatre Company would travel to Kiribati, Fiji, and Tuvalu, because the plane to Tuvalu was overbooked, the company never actually performed there (Personal communication, 2018, February 26). Similarly, the National Kite Association reports that they did not travel to the Pacific; other kite fliers replaced them (Personal communication, 2017, November 15).

(10/23a Interview). In 2012, the ministry invited Amis singer-songwriter Suming to perform in Fiji, Kiribati, and Palau (12/19b Interview; *Taiwan Today*, 2012, November 19).

Consequently, both the YAs and indigenous groups have propelled representations of indigenous cultures into Taiwan's Pacific allies at the behest of the government, and, in many of these projects, emphasis has rested on ties between Austronesian-language speakers in Taiwan and the Pacific. Yet, aside from this diplomatic overlap, many indigenous groups who have traveled to Pacific allies also have domestic ties to the YA project and were involved in changes to its indigenous performances. For example, during the 2013 controversy over YAs inappropriately representing indigenous cultures during exchange, the CEO of FISDT at the time—who had traveled with President Ma's 2010 delegation to Taiwan's Pacific allies—voiced her outrage on Facebook and in a letter to the minister of foreign affairs. She recommended several indigenous dance teachers she believed could improve the project. One of these teachers, Regen Necal, ultimately assisted with the 2014 YA performance. Necal is the head of the New Century Culture Arts Group, which traveled to the Marshall Islands for MOFA in 2011 (12/6 and 12/19a Interviews; F. Hsu, 2014). In its relationship to Pacific allies, then, the YA project and controversy over its indigenous representation are encompassed in domestic and regional contexts where indigenous performing groups are also sent to Pacific allies *and* form domestic networks that influence YA performances.

However, it is also important to note that, while indigenous performing groups who previously assisted the Taiwan government with performative cultural diplomacy have continued exchange in the Pacific, they have rarely done so through the government. They have also rarely returned to Taiwan's Pacific allies. Amis singer-songwriter Suming, who traveled on a MOFA centennial project to Fiji, Kiribati, and Palau in 2012, has since traveled to Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia for documentary film projects, Guam for the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture, and New Zealand for the 2017 Waiata Māori Music Expo (12/19b Interview; Suming Facebook Page, 2017, September 7). All of these projects were arranged independently, none have involved Taiwan's Pacific allies, and the majority were conducted in settler colonies. In describing his 2012 cooperation with MOFA, Suming noted how rushed his itinerary was and his shock when the Taiwan ambassador to Palau at the time referred to Palauans as 土人, or "savages."¹⁵⁸ During his interview, Suming wondered, "If

¹⁵⁸ For some, 土人 is considered a neutral term for indigenous peoples. In Taiwan, however, it is offensive. Consequently, it is translated as savages here.

they're savages, then what are [my band and I]? Taiwanese savages?" He later explained his preference for independent projects in Pacific countries, which provided more opportunity for exchange (12/19b Translated Interview [Mandarin]). FISDT, which has not yet returned to the Pacific since its trip with Ma Ying-jeou in 2010, similarly noted that the government's itinerary permitted no time for exchange with local citizens or performers. Members at the time also recalled that MOFA interfered with their performances, requesting that the Truku group's headhunting sacrifice be removed because it was not "cheerful" enough for a diplomatic venue.¹⁵⁹

The Amis Kakeng Musical Group, which performed during Chen Shui-bian's trip to the Marshall Islands in 2005, has also continued cultural exchange in the Pacific since that time. The group has traveled to New Zealand, Tahiti, American Samoa, Samoa, and Guam, none of which are allies and most of which are settler colonies. During an interview, the head of the group, Sawtoy Saytay, explained that Kakeng now functions independently and only sometimes cooperates with MOFA, the CIP, and the Ministry of Culture (11/16 Interview; see also 10/23a and 11/14 Interviews). Saytay further indicated that Kakeng was meant to undertake an official cultural diplomacy project in Taiwan's allies Tuvalu and Kiribati in approximately 2012, but that the trip was cancelled when a new minister of foreign affairs was appointed. Kakeng was unable to complete the project independently (11/16 Interview).

While the YA program has remained an annual fixture of Taiwan's cultural diplomacy in Tuvalu/Taiwan's Pacific allies and one of the government's regular representations of indigenous cultures, indigenous performing groups have moved away from official projects. They now engage in independent programs in the region. Yet, although many of these groups still pursue Pacific cultural exchange, particularly with non-allied settler colonies, projects in Tuvalu and other Pacific allies remain almost completely under the purview of the government, especially MOFA (11/8 Interview). As the current chairman of FISDT explained, "for the Pacific [allies], if the government doesn't take you, it's very difficult to go. Because it's not convenient and you have to transfer back and forth, back and forth" (11/10c Translated Interview [Mandarin]). Consequently, the broader context of controversy over indigenous representation in the YA project indicates the place of indigenous groups in Taiwan's performative cultural diplomacy. However, the trajectories of these groups also underscore the prominence of the YAs in diplomacy with Tuvalu and other Pacific allies.

¹⁵⁹ See 11/24 and 12/19a Interviews; Loa, 2010, March 19; Xie & S. Xu, 2010, March 18.

This suggests that, since approximately 2012, YA depictions of Taiwan's culture(s), particularly indigenous cultures, have rarely been challenged by comparative or competing performative narratives in Tuvalu/Pacific allies.

Conclusion

In examining the YA project, YA performances, and YA experiences in Tuvalu, I highlighted three major themes. First, especially as critical domestic attention accrued to the YA project in 2013, anxiety about how Taiwan's culture(s) should be appropriately represented rendered the project more inward- than outward-looking. This demonstrates how Taiwan's socio-cultural understandings of itself act as a potent force in performative cultural diplomacy, becoming more significant to projects than understandings of target countries (see Mark, 2010; Rawnsley, 2012). This phenomenon is also clearly reflected in Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy (see Chapter 4). Second, Tuvalu is seemingly insignificant in YA performance planning, especially given Taiwan's discourses of accurate cultural representation and "professionalism." Yet, Tuvalu and its performative/dance culture have consistently transformed YAs from the purveyors of performative cultural diplomacy into its recipients (11/9 Interview). Although YAs are meant to promote Taiwan, because they execute this task in foreign contexts, they are continually exposed to unfamiliar cultures, and their sense of being uniquely immersed in Tuvaluan life left them more deeply impressed by Tuvalu than Tuvalu was, perhaps, by them. Finally, while YAs were significantly affected by their experiences in Tuvalu, pre-existing assumptions about the country were not easily overturned. Ethnocentric or negative perspectives remained for some, and, for YAs who developed positive ideas of Tuvalu, these views were sometimes hyperbolic, with Tuvalu constructed as a utopia, heaven, or paradise.

Additionally, YAs are not the only purveyors of Taiwan's culture(s) abroad. For Tuvalu and Taiwan's other Pacific allies, where government projects emphasize Austronesian diplomacy and Taiwan's indigenous populations, YA representations of indigenous cultures sometimes exist alongside representations transmitted by indigenous performing groups at the government's behest. Despite this, as these groups have transitioned toward independent exchange in the Pacific, they have also rarely returned to allied nations. As a result, the YA project has become the sole arbiter of indigenous representation in Tuvalu/Pacific allies. This phenomenon reflects trends in Chapter 2. That is, although Pacific allies are the official

targets of Austronesian diplomacy, Taiwan's discourse conflates terms like Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous, revealing its conceptual affinity with settler colonies where "there is articulation of ... Pacificness and indigeneity" (Te Punga Somerville, 2018, p. 102). Thus, while the Taiwan government maintains official performative projects in Pacific allies, indigenous performers migrate away from allies and often undertake projects in non-allied settler colonies.

Similar to analysis of Tuvaluan performances in Chapter 4, this chapter demonstrates the various cultural and individual pressures exerted on performative cultural diplomacy projects as they move through domestic planning and foreign execution phases and interact with a range of actors. However, this chapter further indicates the fluidity of performative cultural diplomacy projects despite the barriers erected to control them. Especially when encountering cultures and conditions for which projects were not designed, adaptation is necessary, and programs become amalgamations of cultural and performative standpoints emerging from project purveyors *and* recipients. Yet, even within this adaptive process, it is difficult for the purveyors of performative cultural diplomacy to change their existing assumptions about the cultures with which they interact or avoid developing new assumptions. This raises questions about how recipients of performative cultural diplomacy, who are much less invested in projects than purveyors, engage with performances and the assumptions that may attach to them. Given this, in the next chapter, I discuss audience reactions to performative cultural diplomacy projects. I consider how participants in performative cultural diplomacy conceptualized audience reception and how different Tuvaluan and Taiwanese audiences understood and interacted with performances.

Chapter 6:

Reinforcing, Complicating, or Overcoming Assumptions?: Audience Reception and Tuvalu-Taiwan Performative Cultural Diplomacy

[This] Asia-Pacific Day is a forum that MOFA [Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs] organizes to get our people to ... express ... culture as a way of promoting understanding, ... and, so, it clears the way for more conducting of diplomacy—good diplomacy, for example. [But] that's MOFA's perspective—that's what they think. That's what the state policy says. To me, the question is always how does the public ... perceive of that goal? (10/20a Interview)

Introduction

In this chapter, I use interviews, news articles, blog posts, speeches, and audience-questionnaire results to analyze audience reception for the performative cultural diplomacy case studies examined in this thesis. Discussing audience reception is critical because, as Mason (1996) notes, “a performance ... consists of both the work of the actor ... and its reception” (p. 302), an idea that applies equally to Taiwanese, Tuvaluan, and other Pacific contexts.¹⁶⁰ Mark (2010) has additionally highlighted reluctance to prioritize cultural diplomacy because “impact on the behaviour of audiences” is uncertain (p. 63), and Clarke (2016) explains that “whether the meanings audiences make with cultural [diplomacy] line up with the meanings policy-makers seek to project” is never predetermined (p. 156). Consequently, here, I consider how conceptions, discourses, and assumptions outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 affect audiences. I explore the meaning-making processes of audiences and how these processes compare to those for performative cultural diplomacy participants described in Chapters 4 and 5.

Below, I first analyze how The Association of Tuvalu Students in Taiwan (TATST), the Tuvalu Youth Troupe (TYT), and the Youth Ambassadors (YAs) conceptualized audience

¹⁶⁰ See Alexeyeff, 2009; Besnier, 1995, p. 146; H.-y. Lin, 2015, p. 172; H.-f. Liu, 2009, pp. 127-143.

responses for their performances. Subsequently, I contemplate what audiences felt was communicated through performances, how different audience types made meaning with performances, and how audience assumptions about Tuvalu/Taiwan affected reception (and vice versa). Specifically, I begin by showing that TATST, TYT, and YA participants believed their performances did not create audience understanding but did elicit curiosity, encouraging audiences to engage in self-learning about Tuvalu/Taiwan. I then examine Taiwanese audience reactions to TATST/TYT performances. I evaluate how general audiences understood TATST performances while also considering how specialized audiences (e.g., VIP guests, special-interest news reporters, and tour guides) received the TYT and sometimes shaped performance meanings based on institutional agendas. Similarly, for Tuvaluan audience responses to YA performances, I outline general-audience reception and explore how Taiwan's "professionalism" discourse potentially impeded understanding of performance content. I also contemplate the responses of specialized audiences (e.g., Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists) to demonstrate how they interpreted performances through holistic assessments of the YA program. Finally, I discuss divergent ideas of what makes performative cultural diplomacy successful. I further consider which audience types find performances effective and whether performative cultural diplomacy reinforces, complicates, or overcomes assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations.

Performances as Understanding or Curiosity?: TATST, TYT, and YA Impressions of Audience Reception

During interviews, TATST, TYT, and YA participants clearly highlighted the overarching goal of their performances: communicating culture. However, they just as clearly explained that this goal was rarely achieved and that performances had other potentially more important effects. This manifests an interesting contrast to phenomena in Chapters 4 and 5 because, although TATST, TYT, and YA performances incite sometimes extreme domestic conflict over cultural representation, participants do not see the outcomes of these debates as enhancing audience understanding. This suggests that much of the effort invested in planning and contesting performative cultural diplomacy is for the benefit of domestic rather than foreign audiences (Mark, 2010; Rawnsley, 2012).

“The main goal of the YAs is actually, it’s like we said, it’s to ... make other countries see Taiwan”: Overarching goals of TATST, TYT, and YA performances

When TATST, TYT, and YA participants discussed their performances for the Asia-Pacific Culture Day (APCD), Nan Ying International Folklore Festival (NYIFF), and other events, they frequently stated that their main goal was to show or explain their culture to Taiwan/Tuvalu.

For example, and as suggested in Chapter 4, Tuvaluan officials responsible for the TYT explained that “[the trip to Taiwan] was a great opportunity for Tuvalu to showcase ... culture” (Personal communication, 2018, May 4; see also 11/10b and 5/20 Interviews). Several Tuvaluan planners/performers expressed markedly similar views:

[It’s] also good for us, Tuvalu, to show our culture, and, because we are small, and we want the people, the world to know us (10/30 Interview)

[From] our performance in the Asian festival [APCD], we contribute ... to deliver to people and to explain to people ... our country and our cultures. (4/15 Interview)¹⁶¹

Officials and planners/performers for the YA program noted comparable goals. For example, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) representative explained:

[YA performances] utilize the youth dynamism of our university students.... [Our] young friends can help us communicate many of Taiwan’s current achievements like democracy, freedom, charity, etc. (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

YA performers similarly maintained that the first iteration of the program (2009-2013) promoted “cultural exchange” (9/28, 11/28, and 12/13 Interviews) and clarified that, for later iterations,

[the] main goal of the YAs is actually, it’s like we said, it’s to ... make other countries see Taiwan.... [We] exhibit our culture (9/24a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Like TATST/TYT participants, YA officials and planners/performers saw their main performative goal as conveying Taiwan’s culture(s) and values abroad. For all three projects, communicating culture was a critical objective.

¹⁶¹ See 10/29, 4/17c, 4/27, 5/9a, 5/11b, 5/18, 5/21, and 7/6 Interviews.

“Cause they don’t even understand the words. So, it’s just to show them. Just for a show”: The (un)importance of audience understanding to TATST, TYT, and YA performances

Although showing culture is crucial to TATST, the TYT, and the YAs, participants for each project also agreed that target audiences did not understand their performances. This suggests the difficulties participants encountered when attempting to achieve overarching objectives.

In interviews, most TATST/TYT participants explained that Taiwanese audiences could not or did not understand performances. Many felt this was because audiences did not know the Tuvaluan language and, thus, could not appreciate the songs they performed, but some also believed that performance planning hindered comprehension:

[The] Tuvaluans, they know the words, they know the dance.... I don’t know about the Taiwanese here.... Deep inside, they don’t understand the words. If only they understand, they would have the same feelings as us. (10/29 Interview)

20 minutes [is better for the audience to watch than an hour].... Cause they don’t even understand the words. So, it’s just to show them. Just for a show. Because if it’s too long, it might get them sleepy. (7/6 Interview)¹⁶²

[Before] we perform, we have ... a introduction.... [And] I don’t think the introduction [really introduces] So, I think those things are not—we don’t help the audience ... (4/15 Interview)

For YA performances, some officials/planners asserted that performances were intelligible to audiences. For instance, one MOFA representative noted that “[everything] in the performances is centered on foreign audiences” (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin]).

Furthermore, an assistant director explained that

[when] we were planning the program, we had already considered that [audiences might not understand].... So, that’s why we spent so much time on the projections ... : we hoped that pictures and text would be easy to understand. Like that. And then we had emcees (12/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 11/14 Interview)

However, performers were more skeptical about the clarity of performances:

¹⁶² See 8/20, 8/27, 10/25, 4/17c, 4/22, and 5/21 Interviews.

Because I think our performance just went, went, went—very quickly. Now, I’m not sure if the audience truly and thoroughly understood the many things we were hoping to convey (3/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

There were some [parts] that they couldn’t understand. I think maybe they were just watching for the excitement (11/19a Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 10/6a Interview)

That TATST, TYT, and YA participants felt performances were difficult for foreign audiences to understand signals that, although performances may have *showed* culture, watching performances alone did not explain culture to audiences. As a result, many participants deemed performances effective not if they increased understanding but if they encouraged audiences to engage in self-learning about Tuvalu/Taiwan.

**“I don’t know if they really understood or not, but, at least, they liked it”:
Eliciting audience curiosity in TATST, TYT, and YA performances**

When discussing the effectiveness of performances, a number of TATST/TYT participants emphasized not audience responses to performances themselves but how audiences acted after performances. To this point, participants saw audience members who asked questions or conducted independent research about Tuvalu after performances as indicating performative effectiveness:

I mean, to me, what they see, they come to us, they ask, and then maybe they go to [the] Internet and then find out, you know? And then search about Tuvalu cultures and everything. Because I have a lot of friends, they ask me questions, and also some of my friends, ... they go and ... search, and then come ... up to me ... [and] then what they didn’t understand, they ask me the questions. (4/15 Interview)¹⁶³

[Most] of the audiences, because they are happy with what [the TYT is] showcasing about Tuvalu The evidence is that, after their performances, the audiences will ... come up to the stage or meet them outside along the corridors to ask them a lot of questions about Tuvalu So, ... [they] would think ... they have done a good work. (5/12 Translated Interview [Tuvaluan])

¹⁶³ See 8/20, 8/27, 10/29, 11/4, 5/11b, 5/30a, and 7/6 Interviews.

This demonstrates that participants saw performances not as communicating culture but instead as exciting curiosity in audiences that could *eventually* lead to the communication of culture.¹⁶⁴

For YA performances, planners/performers indicated that whether audiences understood performances was not as important as whether performances made lasting impressions:

[Audiences should] get an impression: “Oh! It turns out Taiwan’s food is quite fun.” ... And then, “Oh, it turns out Taiwan has mountains” ... I think they probably didn’t know what we were doing (11/19b Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[Whether] they understand or not isn’t the most important thing. [The most important thing] is whether or not you were moved.... [We’re] mainly conveying a feeling. (12/18 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

I don’t know if they really understood or not, but, at least, they liked it (10/20b Translated Interview [Mandarin])¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, officials remarked that, although performances might not elicit immediate understanding, the impressions they created would motivate interested audience members to learn more about Taiwan:

[Because] they came to watch our performance, then they start to understand Taiwan.... Because, at the venue, we provide some information about scholarships to Taiwan. Of course, those people who want to [understand] more will ... come and ask. (11/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

While TATST, TYT, and YA participants initially articulate their main performative goal as showing culture, they doubt that performances communicate culture in an intelligible way. Instead, performances pique audience interest and it is only with additional audience effort that understanding can be achieved. With this in mind, in the following sections, I discuss whether TATST, TYT, and YA assessments overlap with audience response. I also consider the diverging patterns of audience reception that emerge in connection to Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy.

¹⁶⁴ An exception was an organizer for the 2014 NYIFF (where the TYT performed) who hoped introductions and improved planning could increase performance intelligibility (10/18 Interview).

¹⁶⁵ See 10/31, 12/2, 2/27, 3/8, and 4/25a Interviews.

Shaping the Meaning(s) of Tuvaluan Performance/Dance: Taiwanese Audience Reception of TATST/TYT Performances

Because the APCD is an annual event that TATST has participated in every year since 2013, during the 2017 APCD, which was held while I was in Taiwan, I distributed questionnaires to survey audience reception. Unfortunately, because the TYT has only performed at one NYIFF (in 2014), I could not circulate questionnaires for the event. Aside from questionnaires, I also collected newspaper articles, blog posts, reports, speeches, and performance videos that showed how audiences received TATST/TYT performances.

Clarke (2016) contends that “[cultural diplomacy] policy-makers are faced with ‘multidirectional flows’ ... of information [that cause] interference from cultural background noise” (p. 148). Below, I highlight two types of audiences for TATST/TYT events to examine the “background noises” influencing audience members. One audience type is general audiences, or people who attended TATST/TYT performances for entertainment purposes but had no unique ties to these events. I use blogs and news articles about different iterations of the APCD and questionnaires distributed at the 2017 APCD to investigate this type of audience. Subsequently, I use TYT performances to outline reception for a second audience type, that is, specialized audiences, or audiences who had a special reason for watching and commenting on performances. Here, specialized audiences include VIP guests at performances, special-interest news reporters, and staff from performance events who were not officials/organizers. Reflecting on the previous section, I determine whether audiences engaged with performances as TATST/TYT participants predicted and discuss how specialized audiences were uniquely positioned to make meaning with Tuvaluan performance/dance. I also draw connections to Taiwanese diplomatic conceptions and discourses about Tuvalu from Chapters 2 and 3.

“Friendly, Passionate, Happy”: TATST and general-audience reception of Tuvaluan performance/dance

When describing audiences, Myers (1994) notes that “if ... performers ... bring a sense of audience and intention [to performances, then] audience participants bring ... preexisting ... cultural frames” (p. 682), which is certainly true of Taiwanese audiences at the APCD. As discussed below, Taiwanese blog posts and articles from general-interest newspapers demonstrate audience engagement with Pacific booths at the APCD and the cultural frames

audiences applied to the event.¹⁶⁶ Audience-questionnaire results show that similar frames may have influenced responses to TATST performances.

General-interest newspapers and blogs

For newspaper and blog descriptions of the APCD, few articles detail Pacific performances alone, with most emphasizing festival booths. However, these articles all evince two themes common to general-audience interaction with the Pacific: reductive discovery and continuity of preconceived assumptions. Although the preconceived assumptions reflected here are not identical to those in Chapter 3, demonstrating instead generalizations of Pacific Islands as carefree tourist destinations, themes of reductive discovery and continuity of preconceived assumptions indicate broader contexts that help explain responses to TATST performances.

For reductive discovery, news articles on the APCD reveal stark contrast between descriptions of East/Southeast Asian countries and Pacific nations, where reporters are often “discovering” Pacific nations (especially Pacific allies) for the first time:

Aside from countries that I was originally familiar with, such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, and Palau, as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji ... , there were also several Pacific countries you never really hear about, like Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

These very small countries, which you can't even see on a map, ... displayed various handicrafts with a South Seas flavor. (Xiao, 2015, November 10)

Personal blogs are even more direct in describing discovery processes:

I thought the event was about Southeast Asian countries, Japan, and South Korea, countries I was familiar with, but the scope was much larger When I was walking around the booths, I saw some people with dark skin and I hadn't heard of some of the countries; I didn't even know where they were. (Afachun blog, 2013, September 29)

I'd never heard of Nauru; [I] discovered that Nauru is an extremely small island nation. (Unattributed blog, 2013, September 29)

In articles, reporters and bloggers demonstrate familiarity with East/Southeast Asia but employ phrases such as “never really hear about,” “hadn't heard of,” and “discovered” to

¹⁶⁶ Although this section discusses general-audience reception, newspaper articles are included because they are from general-interest news sources and article themes coincide with those in blog posts.

describe Pacific nations/allies. These discoveries, though, are frequently reductive because, after learning about Pacific countries, writers quickly generalize them as possessing a “South Seas flavor” or characterize Pacific participants as “people with dark skin.”

Continuity of preconceived assumptions extends from the reductive-discovery theme and suggests the difficulty in cultural diplomacy of making a new culture rapidly intelligible. Here, bloggers and reporters consistently explain brief cultural encounters by reverting to preconceived ideas. This is clearly illustrated in a 2015 article:

[The] most eye-catching item was the Marshall Islands handicrafts.... It was like I could imagine people sitting in the sun and looking at the sea on a small island soaked in sunlight, making beautiful handcrafted products as they enjoyed a simple life.

[...]

I searched for information on travel to the Marshall Islands However, I discovered a saddening fact: the remote Marshall Islands were formerly subjected to dozens of U.S. nuclear tests [If] travelers are worried about safety, [however,] there is still “the pearl of the South Pacific,” Tuvalu, to choose as a destination.

Tuvalu ... demonstrates a rich Polynesian cultural flavor. Like the majority of small, tropical islands, smiles, hula, and joyful music are its representative works. (Xiao, 2015, November 10; see also Unattributed blog, 2013, September 29)

In this article, the reporter attempts to process displays at the Marshall Islands booth but also reverts to imaginings of sun-soaked islands and simple Pacific life. Even after describing the nuclear history of the Marshall Islands, the reporter advises readers to disregard this new information because, fortunately, Tuvalu is safe for travel. Yet, in discussing Tuvalu, the reporter again clings to preconceived assumptions, equating the country to any “small, tropical [island].” This description seems more positive than media reporting on Tuvalu and climate change outlined in Chapter 3, but it does reflect popular non-fiction in Taiwan that portrays Tuvalu—and the Pacific more broadly—as paradise to advocate against climate change (again see Chapter 3). In this way, the writer recognizes that new information is being introduced at the APCD but then employs pre-existing impressions to interpret this information, reinforcing rather than overcoming impressions. The aforementioned trends are also apparent in questionnaire findings from the 2017 APCD.

*Questionnaire results*¹⁶⁷

Questionnaire findings from the TATST performance at the 2017 APCD coincide with themes of reductive discovery and continuity of assumptions outlined above. However, they also show that performances may have influenced audience understandings of Tuvalu and confirm TATST/TYT expectations regarding how audiences engaged with performances. During the 2017 APCD, I distributed questionnaires before the TATST performance.¹⁶⁸ Questionnaires posed 23 questions, 16 of which were multiple choice and seven of which required audiences to write in answers. Content included five questions about respondent background, two about the APCD or similar events, four about prior knowledge of Tuvalu, six about reactions to the TATST performance, and six about attitudes toward and the availability of information on Tuvalu and Taiwan's other allies. Altogether 41 questionnaires were collected.

Before outlining results, I must reiterate that, in 2017, Tuvaluan and I-Kiribati students presented a joint APCD performance in commemoration of two students who passed away that year (9/24b, 10/12, 10/14, 10/16, 10/22, and 11/10b Interviews). TATST and I-Kiribati students presented one item from Tuvalu and one from Kiribati as a combined group, after which TATST and then I-Kiribati students performed separate items. Due to technical difficulties, TATST items could not be completed during the joint performance and female TATST members performed separately later in the day. Although the combined Tuvalu-Kiribati performance differed from previous TATST performances, because this was my only opportunity to collect questionnaires, results are included here as an indicator of audience reception.

First, for basic audience understandings of Tuvalu, 73.17% of respondents had heard of Tuvalu before the APCD; however, 85% were slightly or not at all familiar with the country. Furthermore, when asked to identify what topics they associated with Tuvalu, of the 22 participants (53.66%) who responded, several identified Tuvalu using the ocean/Pacific Ocean (6), described Tuvalu as an island (4), or referred to Tuvalu in the context of climate change (3). This is consistent with discussion in Chapter 3 about Taiwan's unfamiliarity with

¹⁶⁷ Because not all questionnaire respondents specified their nationality, I do not know if they were all Taiwanese. However, because most respondents answered the questionnaire in Mandarin (4.88% responded in English), it is likely that the majority were from Taiwan.

¹⁶⁸ Questionnaire texts in Mandarin and English can be found at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nK_rpuyamGJTUwKIB_1YIH4sqSJ0UY3S/view?usp=sharing.

Tuvalu and the dominance of climate change in characterizing Tuvalu for those aware of the country.

Regarding attitudes toward the TATST performance¹⁶⁹, 90.24% of respondents enjoyed the performance a great deal or somewhat, and 27 respondents (65.85%) explained why. Here, 10 respondents reported enjoying cultural aspects of the performance or explained that the culture represented in the performance was new/unique, eight enjoyed performers' enthusiasm/passion or the fact that they smiled, and four enjoyed musical elements.

Clearly, responses to the TATST performance were positive, but descriptions fixated on the "newness" of the performance or performers' enthusiasm. This suggests that respondents understood the performance only on a surface level and coincides with the reductive-discovery theme discussed above. This is further underscored by the fact that, when asked whether the TATST performance enhanced familiarity with Tuvalu, only 7.32% of respondents strongly agreed, while the majority (73.17%) either agreed or somewhat agreed, and 14.63% neither agreed nor disagreed. Accordingly, performances may not have been highly beneficial to understanding Tuvalu. Yet, when asked if they would attend an event like the TATST performance again, 95.12% of participants responded definitely or probably yes, and, when asked whether they were interested in learning more about Tuvalu, 78.05% responded definitely yes or yes. As TATST/TYT participants predicted, although audiences did not comprehensively understand Tuvalu through performances alone, performances did pique audience interest.

Finally, for the last two questions in the survey, respondents were asked to provide three words to describe Taiwan's Pacific allies and three to describe Tuvalu. These questions were posed to gather information on audience assumptions about Tuvalu/Pacific allies and determine whether the TATST performance influenced impressions of Tuvalu. For these questions, 28 respondents (68.29%) described Pacific allies while 29 (70.73%) described Tuvalu.

In discussing Pacific allies, many respondents provided positive words such as enthusiastic/passionate (12) or friendly/kind (10), with several offering neutral terms such as small island/island country (6) or negative words (e.g., poor or fat) (5). For Tuvalu, respondents selected a similar array of terms, with 13 identifying Tuvalu as

¹⁶⁹ When answering questions about performance enjoyability and other similar queries, respondents may have been referring to the Tuvalu-Kiribati performance, the individual TATST performance later in the same day, or both. For brevity, I use the phrase TATST performance throughout my discussion.

enthusiastic/passionate, 10 characterizing it as friendly, five describing it as an island/in the ocean, and four adopting negative terms. A difference, though, was that eight respondents linked Tuvalu to smiling or happiness, terms that did not appear in descriptions of Pacific allies. This signals that the TATST performance influenced descriptions of Tuvalu because, in questions on performance appreciation, respondents explained that they enjoyed the TATST performance because of performers' smiles/happiness. However, this trend also suggests that performances may have engendered only cursory understandings of Tuvalu. The fact that terms used to describe Tuvalu overlapped significantly with those adopted for all Pacific allies indicates that audience members either superimposed impressions of the TATST performance onto Pacific allies or used imaginings of Pacific allies to characterize Tuvalu. Consequently, the TATST performance presents one of two possibilities. It either reflects the reductive-discovery phenomenon found in blogs and news articles—where any understanding of Tuvalu gained through performances was then extrapolated to describe all Pacific allies, or the continuity-of-preconceived-assumptions phenomenon—where new information gleaned from the TATST performance could not displace pre-existing knowledge of Pacific allies. Importantly, these results dovetail with TATST/TYT assessments of audience response because TATST/TYT participants believed that audiences were unable to understand Tuvalu based on performances alone and hoped instead that performances encouraged self-learning.

“Tuvalu and Buddha’s Light Youth Engage in Dance Exchange”: The TYT and the specialized-audience reception of VIP speechmakers and special-interest reporters

In contrast to my handling of TATST performances, I was unable to analyze general-audience reception for TYT performances because I could not distribute audience questionnaires at TYT events and news and blog coverage is insufficient.¹⁷⁰ However, records of specialized-audience attendance at TYT performances provide a different perspective for exploring phenomena in audience meaning-making. In this sub-section, I contemplate specialized audiences at the TYT’s performance for the Cyuanhua Temple Association, which include VIP guests who made speeches at the performance and special-interest reporters who covered the event. I demonstrate how these audiences interpreted TYT

¹⁷⁰ See *Apple Daily*, 2014, October 4; Hong, 2014, September 30; Sister Jing’s Kitchen, 2014, October 5.

performances for others and examine how institutional agendas affected performative understandings. In the next sub-section, I consider a type of specialized-audience member who did not interpret performances for others but who had a unique opportunity to develop comprehensive performative understandings: temporary staff for the NYIFF. These specialized-audience types demonstrate the complexity of performative cultural diplomacy audiences and show that performance effects change based on the audience members analyzed (see Ness, 1992, p. 167).

VIP speeches

As noted in Chapters 1 and 4, after the 2014 NYIFF concluded, the TYT presented a final performance in Miaoli in central Taiwan. This performance was co-hosted by the Tuvalu Embassy and the Cyuanhua Temple Association but was funded by the association, which had also partially financed TYT travel to Taiwan (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2014, October 8; Taupo, 2014, October 13). As the local sponsor, the association was the main organizer for the performance, and, as a result, the audience for the event was largely association-invited guests. Because the association manages an important Buddhist temple in Miaoli (Embassy of Tuvalu, ROC, Taiwan, 2015, March 3), attendees included noteworthy religious and political figures (11/5a Interview); these people contributed to shaping the messaging and tone of the event.

During the TYT performance, four speeches were given: two planned speeches by the chairman of the Cyuanhua Temple Association and the then Tuvalu ambassador to Taiwan and two unplanned speeches by VIP guests—the current Magistrate of Miaoli County Hsu Yao-chang, who was then a legislator, and the current Director of Miaoli’s International Culture and Tourism Bureau Albert Lin, who was then deputy director-general of the bureau. Because both Hsu and Lin made impromptu speeches, their statements are most telling of the event’s significance to specialized-audience members (as opposed to organizers like the Cyuanhua Temple Association chairman or the Tuvalu ambassador). These speeches also demonstrate how specialized audiences were able to interpret the TYT performance for wider audiences. For example, during his speech, Hsu first incorrectly identified Tuvalu as “the Republic of Tuvalu” and later forgot the name of the country altogether but *was* able to explicitly emphasize the importance of utilizing culture to enact people-to-people diplomacy. Lin focused more on Tuvaluan aspects of the performance, explaining to the audience that Tuvaluan dancing demonstrates various facets of daily life. However, like Hsu, Lin also referenced the Cyuanhua Temple Association and the TYT performance as exemplary of

people-to-people diplomacy, remarked on the importance of enhancing Taiwan's cultural exchange, and discussed how the TYT event might expand Taiwan's horizons (Baijiacun, 2014).

These extemporaneous speeches posit the TYT performance as diplomatic or cultural exchange that can enhance Taiwan's international standing but do not specifically articulate the significance of exchange *with Tuvalu*. Speeches thus allowed certain audiences to interpret for other audiences the meanings of the TYT performance and diverted attention away from Tuvalu, directing it instead at Taiwanese contexts. The status of Hsu and Lin as Taiwanese politicians and officials is integral to this meaning-making process because both hope to improve Taiwan's global status, especially vis-à-vis the PRC, which drives their discursive practices. Because of Taiwanese perspectives on low-quality allies, both VIPs fail to see Tuvalu as distinctly important to Taiwan's international enhancement, reflecting discussions from Chapter 2. Interestingly, this tendency toward sidelining the TYT and Tuvalu to promote Taiwanese agendas is also apparent in special-interest news coverage.

Special-interest newspapers

Reporting on the TYT's performance for the Cyuanhua Temple Association is limited. However, two articles—one by *Religious News*, “the only dedicated religious newspaper in [Taiwan]” (*Religious News Website*, 2018; Lei, 2014, October 31), and one by *Life News Agency*, a Buddhist news organization (*Life News Agency Website*, 2018; *Life News Agency*, 2014, October 15)—are conspicuous examples of how special-interest newspapers interpreted TYT performances for wider audiences. Additionally, the religious emphasis of the articles indicates that the Cyuanhua Temple Association's involvement in the TYT performance contributed to meaning-making that was specifically religious in tone.

For example, in *Religious News*, descriptions of the TYT are copied directly from the performance program and are rapidly disregarded in favor of the article's main subject: VIPs who attended the TYT event. Listing guests invited by the Cyuanhua Temple Association and none of the diplomatic VIPs invited by the Tuvalu Embassy, the report centers on the attendance of Teacher Da Yuan, a religious figure associated with Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist teachings (Yao-chi-sheng-he-yuan Facebook Page, 2018). Lengthy descriptions are devoted to Da Yuan, detailing gifts she presented to the Tuvalu ambassador and the TYT and her participation in Tuvaluan dancing. In highlighting Da Yuan's presentation of red envelopes, a monetary gift common in Taiwan, *Religious News* even explains that “TYT

members had never received red envelopes before and felt that this was an extremely new experience; they were very excited.” This exoticizes the TYT and ignores the fact that the troupe had already received red envelopes earlier in the performance (Baijiacun, 2014; Lei, 2014, October 31). Here, the TYT becomes a somewhat nativized oddity that serves only to underscore Da Yuan’s selflessness in supporting the Cyuanhua Temple Association’s performative event.

A *Life News Agency* report also shows how the TYT was used to promote a religious agenda. The title of the report, “Tuvalu and Buddha’s Light Youth Engage in Dance Exchange,” suggests that the TYT performance was a cooperative endeavor by the troupe and the youth division of the Buddhist organization Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA). In fact, BLIA Youth were only general-audience members who volunteered to dance with the TYT during their performance. Nevertheless, pictures at the beginning of the article foreground the BLIA: captions proclaim that “Buddha’s Light and Tuvalu Youth exchanged through dance and experienced an unforgettable night” and “Buddha’s Youth were extremely invested in studying traditional dance with Tuvalu Youth” (*Life News Agency*, 2014, October 15). Much like *Religious News*, *Life News Agency* appropriates the TYT performance to feature a religious group that was not an intended focus, exaggerating the importance of this group while de-emphasizing the TYT.

As special-interest newspapers, *Religious News* and *Life News Agency* showcase the attendance of religious figures/groups at the TYT performance but do not see the performance itself as significant. VIP speeches interpret the TYT performance differently than these newspapers, but sidelining the TYT to foreground Taiwan’s domestic and international contexts is a consistent theme. In this way, both examples demonstrate how specialized TYT audiences could interpret the event with minimal reference to Tuvalu, the TYT, or understandings of TYT performances. Similar to general-audience reception for TATST events, specialized-audience responses show that TATST/TYT participants were correct in assuming that audiences did not understand performances. However, specialized audiences further illustrate that, when special interests are involved, performances may not pique audience curiosity or encourage self-learning but may instead lead to appropriated performative meaning. This practice is similar to trends in official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese discourse discussed in Chapter 3, where diplomatic allies fortify national identity rather than understandings of allies themselves. Yet, as demonstrated in the next sub-section, not all specialized audiences co-opted meaning when interpreting TYT performances.

“[Because] we saw them every day [We] were constantly being influenced by them”: The TYT and the specialized-audience reception of performative cultural diplomacy staff

At the 2014 NYIFF, two Taiwanese tour guides accompanied the TYT during their 10-day participation at the festival. The guides were temporary staff and not officials/organizers for the event. When I interviewed one of the two guides (the other could not be contacted), she explained that “[we] probably [understood the TYT the best;] it was ... the two of us with them every day” (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin]). Consequently, during her interview, the guide provided detailed interpretations of TYT performances:

The most unforgettable thing [to me]? Actually, for their dancing, ... I think it made a deep impression on me. The dancing and also the music (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[The TYT] is more, they are that type—how do you say it? That kind of song and dance where everyone is together. So, they resonate with or get a reaction from some people. Now, in addition, they—because before and after the dance, ... they greet the audience.... They like to interact with the audience. Now, you can imagine that, originally, their dances ... maybe they were done in a village and everyone [danced] together. (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The guide also compared her experiences to those of general audiences and officials/organizers:

I do feel that maybe [the audience didn’t understand their performances].... [Because] we saw them every day.... [We] were constantly being influenced by them. Now, but, to the audience, ... for example, if it’s a large performance event, ... maybe they only saw that dance one time.... [Maybe] there’s no way they can experience it so deeply (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

[Also,] for the [official in charge], she had to be simultaneously aware that over 30 groups were in Taiwan. (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Here, the tour guide demonstrates knowledge of TYT performances and explains why she had a deeper connection with performances than general audiences or NYIFF officials/organizers. This analysis dovetails with interviews cited in Chapter 4, where a 2014 NYIFF organizer could not remember TYT performances. However, it also illustrates how,

as a specialized-audience type who interacted intensively with the TYT, NYIFF staff/tour guides could potentially enact closer readings of TYT performances than other audiences. The tour guide was also able to develop personal relationships with TYT members, which may have aided her cultural and performative understandings. Both TYT members and the tour guide commented on this phenomenon:

TYT member: Before [we did] the alofa, we inform first to [the tour guides] that we are going to perform a alofa [And the tour guides] ask, “What is that?” And we showed, “This is how we present gifts to ... the guest of honor. Like that.” “Oh, really? [And] then what—” And then we showed them, like, “Come, you, [one of the tour guides], you’re the guest of honor.” And then, “Oh.” “Then, if we gonna present you, then you just stand and then just get ready.... ” And then [one of the tour guides said], “Oh. That’s really nice.” (5/18 Interview; see also 5/14 Interview)

NYIFF tour guide: It was very meaningful, or I gained a lot from it.... Because, actually, the Tuvalu group, ... when [they were going to] leave us, they came to our room one by one, ... and then they took some of the [things] they were wearing, ... and they gave them all to us.... [To] them, that [showed] that you were saying farewell to a friend. So, we were really moved because[,] through their actions, they showed that they were reluctant to part with us (11/23 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

The tour guide did express some ideas on the TYT that reflect assumptions about Pacific performance/dance similar to those described by the 2014 NYIFF organizer in Chapter 4. For example, she noted that most Pacific dance resembles hula (11/23 Interview). However, her comprehensive analysis of TYT performances and interactions with troupe members again indicates that she represents a specialized audience who could make in-depth meaning with Tuvaluan performance/dance through extended engagement with the TYT and their performances.

Clearly, multiple audience types exist for Tuvalu’s performative cultural diplomacy and they interact with performances in myriad ways. For example, general-audience reactions to TATST performances at the APCD demonstrate how generalizations or preconceived assumptions populated ideas of Tuvalu/Pacific allies even after the event. For specialized-audiences at TYT performances, those asked to interpret performances for others (i.e., VIP guests and special-interest reporters) used institutional agendas to shape meaning, while those

engaging with the TYT over a longer period (i.e., the NYIFF tour guide) were able to develop deeper understandings. This suggests that performative cultural diplomacy has multiple effects, ranging from negative (or negligible) to positive, but that optimal outcomes are achieved when audiences and performing groups interact closely.

Making Taiwanese Performance/Dance Significant: Tuvaluan Audience Reception of YA Performances

In this section, I shift attention to Taiwan’s performances in Tuvalu/the Pacific. I first use news articles, interview findings, and questionnaires to investigate how general Tuvaluan (and Pacific) audiences responded to YA performances. Subsequently, I explore the reception of specialized audiences: officials and journalists from Tuvalu and Taiwan’s other Pacific allies. These discussions connect to analysis from Chapters 2, 4, and 5, which I illustrate throughout the section.

“Yeah, I liked the performance. They really perform well”: The YAs and general-audience reception of Taiwanese performance/dance

Analysis in Chapter 5 shows that YA performances are akin to what Kempf and Hermann (2005) term “ethnic performance,” or “a configuration of music and dance [that involves] the audience [in] constructing [an ethnic] reality” (p. 375). This is because YA performances seek to prove to audiences that Taiwan’s multicultural society—composed of four set ethnic groups—is a reality. Yet, based on general-interest news articles, interviews, and questionnaires from Tuvalu/the Pacific, whether performances effectively created this reality is doubtful. Instead, performances effected vague or minimalistic reactions and reinforced existing knowledge of Taiwan.

General-interest newspapers and interviews

From 2009 to 2016, the YAs visited Taiwan’s six Pacific allies at that time (as well as the non-allied Fiji, Guam, and Hawai‘i); Pacific media reporting on the program is available for most of this period.¹⁷¹ Here, I focus on reporting from 2014 to 2016, when the program

¹⁷¹ See Bilua, 2015, September 9; Carreon, 2010, June 30; *IslandTimes*, 2016, August 26; Lalue, 2014, September 22; Oceania Television Network, 2011, July 15; Seru, 2013, July 29; *Solomon Times Online*, 2009, July 30.

centered on large-scale performances. Additionally, during interviews with Tuvaluan citizens, I asked their opinions of Taiwan’s performative events in Tuvalu and several commented on 2014 and 2016 YA performances. Based on articles and interviews, one major phenomenon emerged: descriptions of YA performances were vague or minimalistic and only briefly highlighted the quality or enjoyability of performances.

For example, although Pacific media reporting provides basic information on YA performance content, emphasis rests on how “good” performances were with little explanation of what this means:

Tuvalu: *Fenui* team witnessed the fantastic live performance Members of the public who witnessed the performances ... commented that this has been the best performances [*sic*] so far delivered by youths from Taiwan ... (Lalua, 2014, September 22)

Solomon Islands: THE VISITING Taiwan Youth Ambassadors displayed an outstanding performance to the delight of the crowd (Bilua, 2015, September 9)

Similarly, several Tuvaluan interviewees remembered that they liked YA performances but could not recall why even after I asked follow-up questions about what made performances enjoyable:

[I thought the performance] was good, great. Yeah.... I love it. (4/22 Interview)

Yeah, I liked the performance. They really perform well. They’re really good. (4/15 Interview; see also 5/30a Interview)

That interviewees remember liking YA performances but not why they liked them or what performances were about confirms the assessment of YAs outlined in the second section. That is, whereas audiences enjoyed performances, they potentially did not understand content. Questionnaire findings from the 2018 YA performance in Tuvalu’s capital Funafuti confirm this view.

Questionnaire results¹⁷²

As mentioned in Chapter 5, after 2016, the YA program was overhauled for a second time (the first overhaul was in 2013). In this iteration of the program (2017 to present),

¹⁷² Because not all questionnaire respondents specified their nationality, I do not know if they were all Tuvaluan. However, because most respondents answered the questionnaire in Tuvaluan, it is likely that the majority were from Tuvalu (participants were given questionnaires in the Tuvaluan language unless they asked for English-language questionnaires).

performances are one-third the length of the 2014-2016 performances analyzed in Chapter 5, and YAs only visit two countries instead of four or five (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c). In 2017, YAs traveled exclusively to Southeast Asia in accordance with President Tsai Ing-wen's New Southbound Policy. However, in 2018, each YA group visited one Southeast Asian country and one Pacific ally including Tuvalu (see Chapter 5) (Youth Taiwan Website, 2018c). Although the 2018 YA performance was only 30 minutes and is not analyzed in this thesis, aspects of the performance (e.g., attempts to showcase Taiwan's diverse cultures) were similar to those for 2014 to 2016. Consequently, I distributed questionnaires after the 2018 performance in Funafuti and use results here to map general-audience reception.

Questionnaires were highly similar to those distributed during the TATST performance at the 2017 APCD.¹⁷³ They included 23 questions, 17 of which were multiple choice and six of which required audiences to write in answers. Content included six questions about respondent background, two about the YA program or similar events, four about prior knowledge of Taiwan, six about reactions to the YA performance, and five about attitudes toward and the availability of information on Taiwan. Altogether 94 questionnaires were collected.

Results for multiple-choice questions about the YA performance were largely similar to those for the TATST performance. However, disparities emerged in questions where respondents had to write in answers. Consistent with the TATST questionnaire, a majority (89.01%) of Tuvaluan audience members had heard of Taiwan before the YA performance. Yet, for familiarity with Taiwan, 50.55% felt extremely or moderately familiar with Taiwan. By contrast, 85% of TATST audience members felt slightly or not familiar with Tuvalu, demonstrating more widespread recognition of Taiwan in Tuvalu than vice versa.

More intriguing are the contexts in which YA audience members described having heard about Taiwan. Whereas TATST audiences identified Tuvalu based on geographic features or climate change, almost a third (17) of the 59 YA audience members who answered this question explained that they knew about Taiwan because of its assistance to Tuvalu, especially regarding scholarships, infrastructure, and development. This indicates the divergent contexts in which Tuvalu and Taiwan know each other and evinces an uneven balance where the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship informs Tuvalu's knowledge of Taiwan, while this relationship is less important to Taiwan's understandings of Tuvalu. This also overlaps

¹⁷³ Questionnaire texts in Tuvaluan and English can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ABdoA2T0-dE4LJeENMht6Nta2nP7m9fX/view?usp=sharing>.

with trends from Chapter 3, where Tuvaluan interviewees knew of Taiwan because of its local presence in Tuvalu and not as an international entity.

For reactions to the YA performance, nearly 100% of audience members enjoyed the performance a great deal or somewhat, were definitely or probably interested in attending a similar performance again, and were definitely or probably interested in learning more about Taiwan after the performance. The first two results are comparable to those for TATST audiences, while the percentage of YA audience members interested in learning about Taiwan after the performance was almost 20 points higher than that for TATST audiences. Furthermore, 76.74% of YA audience members strongly agreed that the performance helped them become more familiar with Taiwan, which is almost 70 points higher than the 7.32% of TATST audience members who strongly agreed. In contrast to YA assessments and interview findings, then, questionnaires suggest that Tuvaluan audiences not only enjoyed the YA performance and hoped to learn more about Taiwan because of it but also that they understood the performance.

In spite of this, responses written in by audiences about why they enjoyed the performance and what activities would help them understand Taiwan more than the performance signal that the performance did not increase familiarity to the extent multiple-choice responses imply. First, 73 respondents (77.66%) explained why they enjoyed the performance, with the majority writing that the performance was good/nice (23) or that they had seen new things/cultures and traditions in the performance different from those in Tuvalu (22). However, one respondent wrote that he/she did not understand the performance and only three identified what about the YA performance was new to them. Additionally, for the 56 audience members (59.57%) who explained what activity would help them understand Taiwan more than the performance, approximately one-fifth (11) wrote that showing Taiwan's cultures and traditions would be more beneficial. Because the YA performance was meant to communicate cultures and traditions, that respondents considered learning about these topics more useful than the performance indicates that performance content was unclear. Therefore, despite most respondents strongly agreeing that the YA performance enhanced familiarity with Taiwan, whether content was fully intelligible is difficult to determine.

Finally, when asked to list three words describing Taiwan, 64 audience members (68.09%) responded. About half (30) described Taiwan using the term help or helpful, one-third (21) using the term love/kindness, one-third (20) using the phrase very good/nice, and one-fourth

(14) using the word friend. Of the 42 different terms provided, only three directly referred to the YA performance. Consequently, approximately one-third of respondents identified the context in which they knew Taiwan before the performance in terms of help/aid and half used the term help/helpful to describe Taiwan after the performance, with only a minority using the performance itself to characterize Taiwan. Although the performance may have reinforced the assistance/aid context in which Tuvalu knows Taiwan (see Chapter 3), it did not complicate or expand understandings. This phenomenon is somewhat consistent with news and interview content about YA performances where performances are described as good or enjoyable with little comment on substance.

“Yeah, they were banging stuff and—And, I think, I’m not sure if there was a dragon”: The YAs and lasting impressions of Taiwanese performance/dance for general audiences

Despite minimalistic audience impressions of YA performances, however, two general-audience members I interviewed did convey more comprehensive analyses of these performative events. These interview findings overlap with assessments of audience response communicated in some YA interviews. They also suggest that performances were most impressive to audience members because of the technically difficult acrobatics they contained.

As noted in Chapter 5, the 2016 YA performance in Funafuti was not presented in full because large props could not be transported from Fiji. As a result, the one Tuvaluan interviewee who analyzed the performance in depth had not seen it in Funafuti but during a school trip in Taiwan’s capital Taipei. This interviewee’s interpretations were admittedly different from those of Tuvaluans who saw the Funafuti performance, but I include them to show how Tuvaluan audiences might have described the full 2016 show:

[They] had a lot of different culture. [Cause] I saw they’re dancing with cloth. So, I think they perform something of the sea. And also monsters. Something like—but I didn’t really know about it. The wedding part. They were wearing their traditional costume? And, I feel like—so she was wearing—the red one. And she was carried by someone The bride.... [Some] of the students spoke English very good.... So, ... we can understand some of what they’re showing us.... Some of the dancing, I don’t really understand what they’re trying [to do]—but they’re trying to show us ... their

past youth ... and today's youth. [It's] something like that. Cause, at the end, they [show] this dance, hip hop dance. (10/25 Interview)

Although unable to decipher performance details, this interviewee is aware of different performance sections and able to interpret overall meaning, seeing the YA performance as representing how youth have lived in Taiwan from past to present.

Interestingly, this interpretation is similar to how one 2016 YA described audience response:

I think all of the cultures of Taiwan are included Although maybe they won't really understand what we are doing for the very detailed parts, I think, generally speaking, it should be ok.... They'll know, "Oh. Maybe this is one of the ways brides get married." But, actually, maybe, that's the matchmaker—they won't know that's the matchmaker. (10/6a Translated Interview [Mandarin])

For Tuvaluans who saw the full 2016 performance, YA assessments of reception seem accurate. That is, the performance's general storyline was intelligible while the intricacies of performed cultures were difficult to grasp.

Another Tuvaluan interviewee, who saw the 2014 YA performance in Funafuti, also expressed more detailed impressions than those in the previous sub-section. While unable to summarize the entire performance, the interviewee highlighted certain aspects as particularly memorable:

[They] put on different cultural aspects, and I remember one of them was a show—it was an item about night markets. [They] were banging stuff and—And, I think, I'm not sure if there was a dragon—all I can remember was there's a whole bunch of acrobatics and I was like, "Wow.... " ... The acrobatics and the coordination, and, I think, just the overall planning [was impressive.] ... I was there with my friends from Taiwan, and I only remember the night market because they made a big deal about it ... (10/19 Interview)

Although some of this interviewee's impressions were shaped by Taiwanese friends, his focus on the performance's "night market," or Taiwanese food, section coincides with how the 2014/2015 YA director imagined audience response:

[Audiences abroad liked] the part about food because [*makes clanging noises*] and everybody's happy.... I think audiences liked the food and Chinese-culture sections the best.... To foreigners—there are people who don't really know that Taiwanese

and Chinese people are different; they just think you're Chinese. When they hear kong, kong, kong, kong, kong, kong, kong, kong, they think, "Oh. Right, right, right. Kungfu. Li Xiaolong—Bruce Lee is coming." (11/19b Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 10/31 Interview)

It seems counterintuitive that the director of a performance meant to demonstrate Taiwan's unique culture(s) would capitalize on foreign inability to distinguish Taiwan from the PRC. Yet, the director's reference to Bruce Lee's popularity not only corresponds to Tuvaluan impressions of Taiwan outlined in Chapter 3, but her assessment of the performance's night market section also matches the Tuvaluan description quoted above. Moreover, descriptions by both the Tuvaluan interviewee and the director are predicated on the idea that the YA performance does not encourage understanding but instead piques interest in certain aspects of Taiwan. This is consistent with how YAs generally assess the effects of their performances.

However, a point raised by the Tuvaluan audience member for the 2014 YA performance warrants further consideration. That is, the interviewee explained that "all I can remember was there's a whole bunch of acrobatics and I was like, 'Wow....'" (10/19 Interview). In Chapters 4 and 5, I discussed Taiwan's fixation on "professionalism" both in assessing international performing troupes and redesigning the YA program. One of the ways "professionalism" is judged by many Taiwanese interviewees is based on the technical proficiency of performers and performances (10/18, 11/8, 11/9, 11/30, and 12/18 Interviews). For the YAs, this is apparent in the insertion into performances of technically difficult acrobatics (Hsiao & Cheng, 2016; S. Yu, 2014, 2015). This emphasis has also clearly made an impression on Tuvaluan/Pacific audience members, including officials at Tuvalu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Environment & Labor (MFATTEL) and the Palau ambassador to Taiwan:

MFATTEL assistant secretary: That gymnastics one. I'm like, "Oh my—" We don't have any Tuvalu gymnasts, so, when they have gymnastics, and we see that, it's very amazing. (4/20 Interview)

Palau ambassador: [The] way they dance and do the tricks, you know, oh my—you know, the kids just go [*imitates amazement*]. (3/1 Interview; see also 7/6 Interview)

These quotes demonstrate that the implementation of Taiwan's "professionalism" discourse potentially creates lasting impressions of YA performances in Tuvalu and the wider Pacific.

However, that one interviewee could only “remember [that] there’s a whole bunch of acrobatics” in performances (10/19 Interview) indicates that “professionalism” may have hindered audience attempts to decipher performance content. After the 2018 YA performance in Funafuti, organizing personnel noted that some audience members were disappointed because the performance did not include acrobatics like those in the 2014 and 2016 shows (Personal communication, 2018, August 30). If audiences are most impressed by the technical skill exhibited in YA events, content may become secondary, signaling why news articles, interviews, and questionnaires suggest performances were difficult to fully understand.

“[They] also kind of show us how very advanced Taiwan is in terms of ... youth empowerment”: The YAs and the specialized-audience reception of officials and journalists

Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists constituted specialized audiences for YA performances.¹⁷⁴ Aside from journalists, these audience members typically did not have the opportunity to interpret performances for others like specialized TYT audiences described in the third section. However, they could comment on the YA program to the Taiwan government or even request that the program be discontinued. Consequently, meaning-making for specialized audiences often involved determining whether and how the overall YA project should be conducted in Tuvalu and the wider Pacific, and these audiences rarely focused on YA performances alone.

For positive responses to the YAs, although personnel at Tuvalu’s MFATTEL noted that YA performances were “eye-opening,” “educational,” and “informative” (4/20 Interview), they also highlighted the significance of the overall YA program in promoting youth empowerment:

[When] these Youth Ambassadors from Taiwan come, they also kind of show us how very advanced Taiwan is in terms of ... youth empowerment ... (4/20 Interview)

¹⁷⁴ Journalists are used to discuss specialized-audience response whereas news articles are used for general-audience response because the journalists I interviewed were in senior positions and had the same ability as officials to make recommendations on YA performances even if this was not reflected in their articles.

Tuvaluan journalists and the Palau ambassador to Taiwan similarly emphasized the program as crucial not for bringing performances but for exemplifying youth empowerment and independence:

Tuvaluan journalist: But with Taiwan Youth Ambassadors ... [, you] know, they taught Tuvaluan youths confidence and independence. You know, in them, we see youth being independent because, culturally, [Tuvaluan] youths of that age would still be under strict rules [It] shows us a totally different perspective of youth living. (4/26b Interview)

Palau ambassador: [The YAs] are also a very important part of cultural exchange because, when they go, [they] usually go to high schools, elementary schools, so they really inspire ... our youth to come to Taiwan. (3/1 Interview)

Thus, specialized audiences assess the YA program holistically, and they consider its communication of values like youth independence more critical than its performative communication of information about Taiwan.

Furthermore, when proposing improvements to the YA program, officials and journalists saw performances as merely indicative of broader problems with the project, that is, the short time YAs spent in Tuvalu/the Pacific and insufficient Tuvaluan/Pacific input in YA itineraries. Specific recommendations were never made regarding how performances should be improved:

[The 2009-2013 YA program, in which YAs stayed for a longer time,] stopped and then it went—because, when they come in as a group to dance, it’s like they come and dance, and they don’t really engage on a people-to-people level.... But the group that [came from 2009 to 2013], and they go and they spend time with the Marshallese students of the same age for ... that whole week. [Those Taiwanese students] pass on ... information [about the Marshall Islands], as opposed to like a group comes and then they dance, and then we watch and then they go. Yeah, it’s limited.... [For the 2009-2013 groups,] they get a really good idea of who we are (12/4 Interview)

If only ... the Tuvaluan youths plan their program.... [And] they would just come not expecting anything or to go anywhere[;] ... just go where they are directed. You

know, maybe, they can ... go on a boat to one of the islets and stay there for hours.
(4/26b Interview)¹⁷⁵

These critiques illustrate that, rather than using performances to enhance understandings of Taiwan in Tuvalu and the wider Pacific, YAs should attempt to more thoroughly understand the countries they visit. Critiques thus echo criticisms raised about Taiwan's presidential visits to Tuvalu and other Pacific allies, as described in Chapter 2, and YA experiences in Tuvalu, as outlined in Chapter 5. That is, comprehensive appreciation of what Tuvalu and other Pacific nations are and what they can offer Taiwan is overlooked in Taiwan's official planning processes for diplomatic projects. Here, specialized-audience assessments of performative cultural diplomacy are similar to those from TATST/TYT and YA participants: performances are seldom what cement understandings of culture; rather, it is other methods, such as self-learning, asking questions, long-term exchange, or person-to-person interaction, that promote comprehension.

In summary, YA performances did not challenge or extend pre-existing knowledge of Taiwan for general audience members. Furthermore, although performances did leave lasting impressions for some, Taiwan's emphasis on "professionalism" may have limited comprehension. For specialized audiences (i.e., officials and journalists), the YA program was rarely important because of its performances, and audiences recommended that YAs should strive to better understand Tuvalu and the wider Pacific. Consistent with the previous section, this analysis suggests that performative cultural diplomacy has varied effects and includes multiple audience types. Yet, it also indicates that, for the YA program, which contains a range of activities, performance is seldom considered the most critical aspect of exchange.

Performances as Persuasive, Unpersuasive, or Ambiguous Diplomatic Modes?: The Effects and Effectiveness of TATST, TYT, and YA Performances

Given analysis conducted in this chapter, I conclude here by considering what it means for TATST, TYT, and YA performances to be effective; for whom and how performances were

¹⁷⁵ See 10/12, 4/17b, and 4/20 Interviews.

effective; and how performances reinforce, complicate, or overcome assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations.

Clarke (2016) notes that “[diplomats] committed to cultural diplomacy [recognize] no doubt the difficulties of assessing ... effectiveness” (p. 160). This is certainly true for TATST, TYT, and YA performances where official statements, interviews with officials and planners/performers, and audience feedback on what constitutes effective performative cultural diplomacy converge and diverge in complex ways. For example, according to government statements cited in Chapters 4 and 5, we see a disconnect between official performative goals and actual performative effects: whereas government statements assert the importance of “[communicating the] cultural foundations” of Tuvalu/Taiwan (*The MOFA Quarterly*, 2013, December, p. 24), discussions with officials and planners/performers reveal that eliciting audience interest or making an impression is seen as peak effectiveness for performances (10/20b, 11/8, 12/18, and 5/11b Interviews). Additionally, according to interviews and questionnaires, although performances rarely achieved official goals (10/19, 10/25, and 4/25b Interviews), they did seem to pique audience interest. Before judging the effectiveness of performative cultural diplomacy vis-à-vis audience reception, then, we must understand that even what it means for performative cultural diplomacy to be effective is contested. Accordingly, TATST, TYT, and YA projects may all have attained certain standards of success.

However, besides contemplating conflicting meanings of effectiveness, we must also consider the varied characteristics, perspectives, and positionalities of audience members and how audience differences determine to whom and how performances are successful. Clarke (2016) argues that “it is necessary to problematise the identity of ‘producer’ and ‘consumer’ with regard to cultural diplomacy” because “consumers ... [also] make meaning with [cultural products]” (p. 154; see also Mark, 2010, p. 79). It is clear from this chapter not only that all audience members interpret performances, but also that different audience types exist. Some have the power to make meaning with performances for others, some make meaning with performances based on institutional agendas or other contexts, and some have enhanced opportunities to interact with performances. At times, this creates situations in which performative meanings are reinterpreted, as with VIP guests and special-interest reporters for the TYT.¹⁷⁶ It also creates situations where performances are assessed based not on content

¹⁷⁶ See Baijiacun, 2014; Lei, 2014, October 31; *Life News Agency*, 2014, October 15.

but according to understandings of larger cultural diplomacy projects, as with Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists for the YAs.¹⁷⁷ Yet, some audience members, such as the NYIFF tour guide, were able to interact with performances and develop understandings consistent with both officially stated and participant goals for events (11/23 Interview). Here, again, although not uniformly effective, we can say that TATST, TYT, and YA performances were successful in some way for some people.

A broader question for audience reception and TATST, TYT, and YA performances is whether these performances have affected the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship and its underlying assumptions. I contend that, for performative cultural diplomacy *participants*, performances complicate Tuvalu-Taiwan relations because they include more people and ideas in the relationship and increase opportunities for Tuvalu-Taiwan interaction. Furthermore, projects complicate relationships because they illuminate differences in Tuvalu-Taiwan conceptions of diplomacy and performance as well as domestic tension over how to represent nation and culture. This is especially clear because, in the TATST/TYT examples discussed in Chapter 4, Tuvaluan and Taiwanese participants saw disparate improvements as necessary for the same projects: Tuvaluans focused on how to present *fatele* abroad and Taiwanese officials/organizers emphasized “professionalism.” In the YA example from Chapter 5 (and this chapter), this phenomenon is evident in how Taiwanese improvements center on performative “professionalism” and “proper” cultural representation, while Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists recommend that YAs better understand the countries they visit.

However, whereas performative cultural diplomacy may complicate Tuvalu-Taiwan relations for participants, if this diplomatic mode is to truly complicate or challenge assumptions for audiences, the process will be extremely gradual. This is because audience size at TATST, TYT, and YA events is not directly equivalent to the number of audience members interested in performances (because not all viewers leave performances hoping to learn more about Tuvalu/Taiwan). Nor is it reflective of audience members who may be affected by performances but are not readily apparent in performance spaces (e.g., tour guides, stage technicians, and others who interact with performances but may not answer questionnaires or appear in audience attendance counts). From the analysis in this chapter, we can see that some audience types were capable of undertaking in-depth meaning-making with performative events, but these cases are in the minority. Rather than taking this as indicative

¹⁷⁷ See 10/12, 12/4, 4/17b, 4/20, and 4/26b Interviews.

of “ineffective” diplomacy, it is more constructive to understand that, given complex audience composition, performative cultural diplomacy cannot possibly create the same effects in all people. This diplomatic mode may work best, then, when conducted intensively and with small numbers (see Henry, 2008, p. 58).

A final issue to consider in audience reception is not simply how audiences understand TATST, TYT, and YA performances, but also how TATST, TYT, and YA participants understand audiences. Just as Clarke (2016) argues that the production and consumption of performative cultural diplomacy is not separate because audiences consume *and* produce meaning, so too, TATST, TYT, and YA participants generate and absorb meaning when interacting with audiences. Yet, as suggested in the second section, participants seem somewhat distanced from audiences:

[But] I don't know about the Taiwanese here. Yeah, they're really just happy about the dancing. It's nice to them, but I don't know deep inside of them [how they feel] (10/29 Interview)

I don't really know [if audiences liked any items more than others] because we don't understand Taiwan language. (5/18 Interview)

I felt like ... what we were doing on stage was unilateral, and then we didn't see any feedback from the audience (3/8 Translated Interview [Mandarin])

Complicating understandings of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations through performative cultural diplomacy entails not only heightening audience comprehension of performances but also participant comprehension of audiences. This does not demand that participants change performances to suit audiences but requires that they become more aware of audiences and their socio-cultural contexts so that performative cultural diplomacy is a bilateral process where both sides benefit from opportunities for engagement.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I used news articles, blog posts, speeches, interviews, and audience-questionnaire results from TATST, TYT, and YA performances to analyze audience reception for Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy. I first considered the overarching objectives of TATST, TYT, and YA projects as expressed by participants. I examined how stated goals of showing culture are belied by the belief that audiences do not

understand performances and that performances are most effective when they encourage audiences to engage in self-learning. Subsequently, I discussed audience reception for TATST/TYT and then YA performances, highlighting the different audience types who attended events and how they interpreted performances. In both sections, I demonstrated the role general and specialized audiences played in performative cultural diplomacy events. I examined how general audiences often responded to performances as participants expected, but specialized audiences, who had unique access to events or the power to interpret or make decisions about events for others, sometimes responded in ways that departed from the intentions of performance participants. Finally, I addressed special issues in analyzing audience reception. I contemplated varied ideas of effectiveness and multiple audience types in Tuvalu-Taiwan performance/dance and the difficulty of using performative cultural diplomacy to complicate assumptions on a large scale.

In this chapter, I did not definitively determine whether performative cultural diplomacy influences audience understandings of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. However, I did highlight how performance “[captures] complexity of experience and [brings] to light latent tensions, contradictions, and interrelations often occluded in other forms of representation.” This leaves audiences “with [meanings that] are explicitly multiple, dynamic, and open to contestation” (Beausoleil, 2014, p. 28). Furthermore, some audience members (i.e., VIP guests and Tuvaluan/Pacific officials and journalists) might have interpreted performative cultural diplomacy in ways that exemplify or reinforce tensions and distance in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. Yet, others (i.e., bloggers, other general audiences, and tour guides) attempted but failed to complicate assumptions, successfully complicated assumptions, or even broadened understandings. This indicates that performances have far-reaching effects that can positively influence Tuvalu-Taiwan relations (even if they cannot be fully controlled).

In the five substantive chapters of this thesis, I considered the following: varied meanings of diplomacy in Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific; discursive histories of Tuvalu-Taiwan relations and the assumptions underlying these relations; case studies of Tuvaluan and Taiwanese performative cultural diplomacy groups; and audience reception for case-study performances. In the next and final chapter, I synthesize major findings. I also examine how I used Pacific Studies and Performance/Dance Studies to broaden International Relations research, explore the possibility for including Taiwan in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies, and provide recommendations for performative cultural diplomacy. In this way, I delineate

both the theoretical and practical findings of this research, demonstrating its significance within Pacific Studies and International Relations.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion: Reconceptualizing International Relations, Taiwan, and the Practice of Performative Cultural Diplomacy

I was privileged to be part of the prime minister's delegation to the state visit to Taiwan. We visited ... the eastern part of Taiwan.... [We] were welcomed by the traditional—there was a tribe.... [And] I was surprised too because we [both] said “lima,” “lima” for figure five and “lima” for hand.... I've heard of Tuvaluans, maybe our ancestors came from Taiwan. So, I was thinking, maybe we are part of that, you know? And I was saying[,] they did us a performance, eh? Welcoming for prime minister and delegation. They did the performance, and the way they were ... dancing and the people themselves, the ladies, just like Tuvaluans too. (5/30b Interview)

Introduction

In this Conclusion, I summarize major findings from the five substantive chapters in this thesis and outline the theoretical and practical contributions of the research. After synthesizing main findings, I explore how I used Pacific Studies and Performance/Dance Studies to broaden International Relations (IR). I show that, by integrating a Pacific Studies research framework and ideas of diplomatic contingency/complexity relevant to Performance/Dance Studies, I highlighted multiple interactions between Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific. These levels of interaction belie generalizations found in IR analysis of Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations. Subsequently, I discuss Taiwan's place in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. I contemplate phenomena that evince both Taiwan's connections to and distance from the Pacific and consider possibilities for including Taiwan in Pacific Studies. Finally, I outline recommendations for the practice of diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy developed using diplomatic conceptions and case studies discussed in previous chapters.

A Holistic Reassessment: Summarizing Major Findings and Revisiting Research Questions and Themes

In this section, I summarize major findings from Chapters 2 to 6 and then revisit questions and themes outlined in Chapter 1. I illustrate how findings from each chapter answer initial research questions and interconnect to demonstrate the salience of research themes.

Summarizing major findings

In Chapter 1, I introduced my research questions and structure. Subsequently, in Chapter 2, I identified cultural, social, and political ideas of diplomacy discussed during interviews with Tuvaluan/Pacific and Taiwanese diplomats, officials, and citizens. Here, I sketched concepts of bartering/exchange, building/maintaining friendships, and properly building/reinforcing inter-island relationships described as socio-cultural contexts for diplomacy by Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Palau diplomats in Taiwan. I also outlined Tuvaluan diplomatic concepts, especially building friendships, properly reinforcing inter-island relationships, and exchange, that overlap with views expressed by other Pacific diplomats. I then used the Tuvaluan alofa to illustrate additional socio-cultural considerations in Tuvaluan diplomacy, including communication/cooperation, non-confrontation, and hospitality. In the second half of Chapter 2, I examined how Taiwan's competition with the PRC creates negative socio-political conceptions of diplomacy in which allies are viewed as disloyal and low quality. Furthermore, I demonstrated how Taiwan's relations with the Pacific are distinguished by Austronesian diplomacy, where linguistic connections between Pacific peoples and indigenous peoples in Taiwan are used to strengthen ties. However, I also highlighted contested understandings of Austronesian diplomacy in both Taiwan and the Pacific.

In Chapter 3, I outlined Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, sketching relevant official and popular discourse and underlying assumptions. For official discourse, I showed how early rhetoric on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations contained various narratives about trans-local engagements. Although understandings of diplomacy at this time were disparate, they could also underscore unified national identities, which foreshadows how diplomatic discourse is used today. For official discourse from 2000 to present, Tuvalu and Taiwan use statements about each other to characterize themselves for different contexts and to achieve varied objectives. Official discourse also demonstrates recurring motifs throughout time. Specifically, Tuvalu

consistently articulates Taiwan to fisheries transgressions that unify Tuvalu and the Pacific region in mutual outrage. For its part, Taiwan regularly contemplates whether it is superior or equal to Tuvalu and the broader Pacific. In the second half of Chapter 3, I examined Tuvaluan and Taiwanese popular discourse. I showed that official Tuvaluan efforts to characterize Taiwan and a popular tendency away from such characterizations differentiate Tuvalu's official and popular rhetoric but that official and popular Taiwanese discourse both subjectively characterize Tuvalu. Consequently, while Tuvaluans are aware of Taiwan's presence *in* Tuvalu and have positive opinions of this presence, Taiwan's media actively develops generalizations of Tuvalu as an *international entity*. In these generalizations, Tuvalu is viewed ethnocentrically and tied to climate change and Taiwanese sovereignty claims.

By focusing on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, Chapter 3 acted as a pivot between overarching discussions of diplomatic conceptions in Chapter 2 and examination of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy case studies in Chapters 4 to 6. Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy from Chapter 2 are not uniformly apparent in official discourse on Taiwan, which shifts between expressions of friendship and enmity depending on Tuvalu's target audience and whether Taiwan is seen as upholding ideals critical to Tuvaluan diplomacy. However, Taiwan's official (and popular) discourse corresponds to its negative socio-political conceptions of diplomacy and Austronesian diplomatic rhetoric. Moreover, constructions of Taiwan/Tuvalu in Tuvaluan/Taiwanese official and popular discourse suggest phenomena in case-study analysis from Chapters 4 to 6. That is, at the official level, Taiwan's performative cultural diplomacy is unstable because Taiwan consistently reorients itself based on changes of government. This is apparent in adjustments to the Youth Ambassadors (YA) program that occurred in 2016 after Taiwan's ruling party changed (see Chapters 5 and 6). By contrast, Tuvalu's official policies on performative cultural diplomacy are less conspicuously affected by changes in leadership. At the popular level, participants in Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy possessed few pre-formed assumptions about Taiwan before traveling there, while Taiwanese participants were influenced by Taiwan's more solidly formed and often negative discourse on Tuvalu, which dovetails with findings from Chapter 3.

Chapters 4 to 6 transitioned from conceptual and discursive trends in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations to analysis of three Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy case studies, audience reception for these case studies, and links between case studies and Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 4, I analyzed performances by The Association of Tuvalu Students in Taiwan (TATST) and the Tuvalu Youth Troupe (TYT) at the Asia-Pacific Culture Day (APCD) and

the Nan Ying International Folklore Festival (NYIFF). I explored internal and external tensions created when Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy projects are enacted in Taiwan. By first examining the diplomatic and culturally representative nature of the Tuvaluan performative/dance form *fatele*, I demonstrated the consistent use of performative cultural diplomacy in Tuvalu's domestic context. However, when outlining the Tuvalu Embassy's protocols for developing performing groups in Taiwan and Tuvalu-government methods for forming international performing troupes, I showed how tensions arise internally among Tuvaluans in Taiwan. This is because performing groups in Taiwan cannot present live *fatele*, which challenges domestic expectations. I also illustrated how tensions arise externally because official Tuvaluan and Taiwanese standards for performative cultural diplomacy are highly divergent: Tuvalu focuses on equitable island representation and Taiwan on "professionalism."

Chapter 4 connected to Chapters 2 and 3 because Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy described in Chapter 2, especially principles found in the *alofa* (which includes *fatele*), are reflected in the importance of *fatele* to Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy and tension over changes to *fatele* in Taiwan. Furthermore, consistent with Chapter 3, few TATST/TYT participants had pre-formed assumptions about Taiwan when they traveled there, and changes made to performances to suit Taiwanese tastes were minimal. Additionally, although TATST/TYT members left Taiwan with positive impressions of the country, their experiences rarely elicited strong reactions. By contrast, in Chapter 5 (discussed below), Taiwan's YA project was marked by intense performer reactions to Tuvalu. This indicates differing cultural, social, and political contexts for Tuvalu and Taiwan and the varying extents to which these contexts shaped performative cultural diplomacy.

In Chapter 5, I examined Taiwan's YA project and the program's direct interactions with Tuvalu. Here, I highlighted three themes. First, anxiety over how Taiwan's culture(s) should be appropriately represented abroad rendered the YA program more domestically than internationally oriented. Similar to circumstances in Tuvalu's TATST/TYT projects, this theme demonstrates how the socio-cultural understandings Taiwan holds of itself are more significant to performative cultural diplomacy than understandings of target countries. Second, Tuvalu was insignificant in YA performance planning because focus centered on domestic concerns about cultural representation and "professionalism." Despite this, during program execution, Tuvalu transformed YA performers from purveyors into recipients of performative cultural diplomacy. This reflects the significance of Tuvalu's

performative/dance culture to the country's domestic diplomacy, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 4. It also shows that, although YAs are meant to promote Taiwan abroad, their sense of being especially immersed in Tuvaluan life left deep impressions on them. Third, YAs' pre-existing assumptions about Tuvalu were not easily overturned. Negative ethnocentric perspectives remained for some, and even when YAs developed positive ideas of Tuvalu, their views were often hyperbolic.

Chapter 5 also showed that YAs are not the only purveyors of Taiwan's culture(s) abroad. For Tuvalu and Taiwan's other Pacific allies, where Taiwan-government projects emphasize Austronesian diplomacy, YA representations of indigenous cultures sometimes exist alongside representations by indigenous performing groups contracted through the Taiwan government. Yet, as these groups have transitioned toward unofficial exchange in the Pacific, they have also rarely returned to Taiwan's Pacific allies, instead pursuing projects in non-allied settler colonies. This echoes phenomena in Chapter 2, where Taiwanese policies meant to develop ties with the Pacific through Austronesian connections neglect allies in favor of settler colonies, which have more in common with Taiwan.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I analyzed audience reception for TATST, TYT, and YA performances. I first considered performance objectives discussed by participants, examining how stated goals of showing culture were belied by the belief that audiences did not understand performances and that performances were most effective when audiences engaged in self-learning. Subsequently, I focused on audience reception itself, highlighting the role of general and specialized audiences in performative cultural diplomacy events. I examined how general audiences responded to performances as participants expected, but specialized audiences, who had greater access to or interpretive power over performances, reacted in ways that sometimes departed from what participants anticipated. For overcoming assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations, I argued that the audience type most affected by performative cultural diplomacy was temporary NYIFF staff who engaged with the TYT and their performances more intensively than other audiences.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that tensions over the planning of Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 are not reflected in audience experience, indicating the domestic orientation of projects and their distance from audiences. Furthermore, the chapter shows that pre-formed assumptions and reductive generalizations populate how general audiences interpret performative cultural diplomacy. This is especially

true when planners/performers see performances as incomprehensible and are, thus, not invested in enhancing audience understanding.

Given this overview of Chapters 2 to 6 and phenomena connecting these chapters, I next review research questions and themes forwarded in Chapter 1. I then examine how I answered questions and illustrated themes.

Revisiting research questions and themes

In Chapter 1, I posed eight research questions. The first two questions were the main queries to be answered in this thesis:

1. What are Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, how do conceptions of diplomacy as expressed by non-Tuvaluan Pacific diplomats contradict or bolster these conceptions, and how do these conceptions compare with those expressed by Taiwanese diplomats in Tuvalu or other Taiwanese officials?
2. What is the diplomatic relationship between Tuvalu and Taiwan and what assumptions is it predicated on?

The next four questions focused on methodology, positing that *how* this research was conducted would provide unique answers to main queries:

3. How can a focus on performative cultural diplomacy highlight Tuvaluan conceptions of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics while simultaneously evincing the complex communities involved in Tuvaluan diplomacy, especially in Taiwan?
4. How can a focus on performative cultural diplomacy similarly highlight conceptions of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics held in Taiwan while also demonstrating disparate understandings of relations with Tuvalu/the Pacific, especially concerning ideas of indigeneity?
5. How does a focus on performative cultural diplomacy reflect, overcome, or complicate assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations?
6. How can focusing on the experiences of participants in performative cultural diplomacy projects reflect inherent complexities and underscore the importance in Pacific Studies of “[incorporating] multiple voices into ... narratives” (Wesley-Smith, 1995, p. 128)?

The final two questions centered on overarching theoretical concerns to be addressed using overall findings:

7. How can using Pacific Studies to focus on the stories of performative cultural diplomacy participants expand conceptions of IR beyond the narrow analyses sometimes found in international politics research (Salesa, 2016, p. 127)?
8. What is the potential for future collaboration between Pacific and Taiwan Studies?

Subsequently, I also outlined the major themes I observed when answering research questions:

1. Tuvaluan, Pacific, and Taiwanese understandings of diplomacy, as well as conceptualization, acceptance, and implementation of culture as a mode of diplomacy, are disparate, especially between Tuvalu/the Pacific and Taiwan. These disparities are key to understanding how performative cultural diplomacy is expressed by Tuvalu and Taiwan.
2. The cultural, social, and political understandings Tuvalu and Taiwan hold of themselves are the most potent force in performative cultural diplomacy. These understandings create socio-cultural/socio-political protocols for implementing projects that are distinct and the importance of which may not be understood in target cultures. Simultaneously, anxiety over cultural, social, and political understandings of self and the necessity of upholding protocols in performative cultural diplomacy leads to projects that are more inward- than outward-looking.
3. Although Tuvalu and Taiwan both accept performance/dance as a means of showing culture and effectively promoting cross-cultural understanding, the two countries do not see performance/dance as showing culture in the same way. For example, regardless of what Tuvalu chooses to present in Taiwanese performative contexts, participants in all projects agree that Tuvaluan fatele represents/is Tuvaluan culture. Participants in Taiwanese projects have no sense that a certain dance type directly communicates Taiwanese culture. Thus, varied Tuvaluan and Taiwanese ideas of performance/dance, its ties to culture, and *how* it is effective in forming cross-cultural understanding show that socio-cultural/socio-political contexts must be considered when analyzing Tuvalu-Taiwan relations and performative cultural diplomacy.
4. Tuvalu and Taiwan maintain distinct understandings of indigeneity and its importance in performative cultural diplomacy, with indigeneity forming a salient concept in Taiwanese society and performative cultural diplomacy that is then assumed to have immediate

resonance throughout the Pacific. In discussing this theme, I reference terms like Austronesian, Pacific or oceanic, and indigenous to demonstrate how Taiwanese society conflates these concepts. That is, in Taiwan, a nation including people who speak Austronesian languages is seen as equivalent to a nation in the Pacific or Oceania and a nation with citizens who immediately recognize themselves as indigenous (see Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, 2017; 11/29 and 3/1 Interviews). Conversely, Pacific or Oceania is a more meaningful concept for Tuvalu (and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan), and recognition of concepts like Austronesian or indigenous varies from person to person and depending on a country's history and ethnic or cultural composition (10/12, 10/14, and 10/19 Interviews).

Synthesizing research questions, research themes, and major findings

As discussed below, findings from Chapters 2 to 6 address and illustrate research questions and themes outlined in the previous sub-section.

For research questions, in Chapters 2 and 3, I mapped answers to my main questions about Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan conceptions of diplomacy, the constitution of the Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomatic relationship, and the assumptions underlying Tuvalu-Taiwan relations. In Chapters 4 to 6, I not only recalled arguments in Chapters 2 and 3 but also used TATST, TYT, and YA case studies to engage these arguments. This process involved applying the four methodological questions posed in Chapter 1. That is, through discussion of TATST, TYT, and YA case studies, I highlighted phenomena in Tuvaluan and Taiwanese diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, performance, and aesthetics. I especially showcased differing views on how to represent nation and culture through performance/dance and whether “professionalism” and indigeneity are important to this process. Furthermore, through case studies, I demonstrated how participants in performative cultural diplomacy, particularly officials, planners, performers, and audiences, form fluid groups who challenge monolithic perspectives on diplomacy, culture, and performance. Attention to the conflicting voices emerging from these groups verifies the diplomatic conceptions and assumptions posited in Chapters 2 and 3 but also shows that the diverging experiences of performative cultural diplomacy participants can change conceptions and assumptions. In other words, because participants interact with projects in different ways, assumptions in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations can be simultaneously reinforced, complicated, and overcome. Ideas of diplomacy and

performance can also shift as participants interact with each other and people external to projects. Finally, the grounding of this thesis in interviews with performative cultural diplomacy participants validates insistence in Pacific Studies on “[incorporating] multiple voices into ... narratives” (Wesley-Smith, 1995, p. 128). This is because interviews were crucial to illustrating the diverse actors involved in Tuvalu-Taiwan diplomacy and their varied perspectives.¹⁷⁸

For research themes, motifs outlined in Chapter 1 have been referenced throughout this thesis. First, in Chapter 2, I demonstrated differing conceptions of diplomacy in Taiwan, Tuvalu, and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan. However, this theme also emerged in Chapter 3 in my discussion of diverging discursive characterizations of the Tuvalu-Taiwan relationship. The theme was further explicated in Chapters 4 to 6 because I highlighted differing ideas of how culture and performance should be inserted into diplomatic projects and showed how diplomatic conceptions affect assessments of performative cultural diplomacy. For example, for Tuvaluan performative projects in Taiwan, Taiwan emphasizes “professionalism” while Tuvaluan participants contest how cultural forms like *fatele* should be appropriately represented abroad. For Taiwanese projects in Tuvalu, Tuvalu recommends that Taiwanese participants learn about Tuvalu *from Tuvaluans* whereas Taiwan again emphasizes performative “professionalism” and the necessity of presenting culture(s) according to domestic ideals. These trends reflect Taiwanese diplomatic conceptions of the need to “improve” low-quality allies and the importance of performativity and reciprocity to Tuvaluan diplomacy, as discussed in Chapters 2, 4, and 5.

Second, given tensions that arise in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy, it is clear that participants are more affected by cultural, social, and political understandings of their own nations and cultures than those of target audiences. This creates projects that are inward-looking, and, although Tuvaluan and Taiwanese projects evince this phenomenon in different ways, it is common to TATST, TYT, and YA examples. That is, while the importance of *fatele* and the efforts Tuvaluan performative cultural diplomacy participants exert to present *fatele* in limited foreign contexts are significant to Tuvalu, this is not a shared context that Taiwanese audiences can easily appreciate. For Taiwan, efforts to enhance performative “professionalism” in the YA project are certainly appreciated by Tuvaluan audiences, but they also hinder audience understandings of performative representations of

¹⁷⁸ Answers to the last two questions posed in Chapter 1 are explored later in this Conclusion.

Taiwan's culture(s). Understandings are further thwarted because cultural representations fixate on Taiwanese and not Tuvaluan standards. For both Tuvalu and Taiwan, then, performative cultural diplomacy projects are domestically oriented; despite performing for foreign audiences, project participants rarely consider how audiences (mis)understand performances.

Third, aside from differing views on diplomacy and how performative cultural diplomacy should be enacted, disparities also exist in Tuvaluan and Taiwanese ideas of performance itself, as demonstrated in Chapters 4 to 6. Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy projects all seek to communicate culture through performance/dance. However, given Tuvalu's more homogenous constitution, consensus regarding a performative/dance form that represents Tuvaluan culture (i.e., *fatele*) is evident, and, although implementing this form abroad is difficult, selecting it as a mode of performative cultural diplomacy is not. For Taiwan, which is officially defined as a multicultural society and includes diverse indigenous populations, no one performative/dance form is fully representative. Consequently, performative cultural diplomacy must be purposefully crafted to represent as many cultures as possible. This demonstrates that the relationship between culture and performance is differently constituted for Tuvalu and Taiwan. It also shows why domestic tensions over Tuvalu's performative cultural diplomacy projects center on *how* performative forms are conveyed while tensions in Taiwanese projects center on *what* performative forms convey.

Finally, Chapters 2 and 5 engage with themes concerning distinct understandings of indigeneity in Tuvalu and Taiwan; how these understandings affect conceptions of diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy; and how Taiwan conflates the terms Austronesian, Pacific or oceanic, and indigenous. Given analysis in Chapter 2, it is clear that indigeneity/indigenous and Austronesian are meaningful classifications in Taiwan; the conceptual importance of indigeneity to Taiwan is further highlighted in conflict over indigenous representation in the YA program outlined in Chapter 5. However, for Tuvaluan and other Pacific diplomats, officials, and citizens in Taiwan, indigeneity (and Austronesia) is rarely a salient issue. Some diplomats/officials do find Austronesian diplomacy and Taiwan's indigenous kinship with the Pacific persuasive, but they typically only reference Austronesia and indigeneity when directly engaging with Taiwan's diplomatic discourse. This suggests a broader divide between independent Pacific nations and settler colonies regarding how they understand Pacific indigeneity. I discuss this in the fourth section of this chapter.

Based on this summary of how I addressed my main and methodological research questions and illustrated relevant themes, in the next two sections, I answer the overarching theoretical queries posed in the final two research questions from Chapter 1.

Theoretical Directions in IR: Expanding IR Research through Pacific Studies and Performance/Dance Studies

In this thesis, I used Pacific Studies and Performance/Dance Studies as an innovative means to expand IR research. To demonstrate this, I first discuss how I illustrated interactions between Tuvalu/the Pacific and Taiwan that belie generalizations common to IR analysis of Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations. Subsequently, I examine how my Pacific Studies research framework and focus on diplomatic contingency/complexity through Performance/Dance Studies facilitated discussion outlined in the first sub-section.

“[Recent] developments have elevated the South Pacific’s significance to key Asia-Pacific powers”: Expanding IR research by overcoming generalizations in Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations

In Chapter 1, I discussed generalizations that currently populate research of Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations, especially given recent attention to the “rise of China” in the Pacific. Two themes commonly emanate from this body of research: the use of Taiwan-PRC competition to explain all Taiwanese and Chinese activity in the Pacific region, a theme frequently accompanied by degrading descriptions of Pacific nations, and general suspicion of Taiwan and its diplomatic motives.

Atkinson (2007) illustrates the first theme concisely, simultaneously deriding Pacific nations and positing Asia’s “new” role in the Pacific as incited by Taiwan-PRC competition:

The South Pacific has long been viewed as a backwater in international affairs. However, recent developments have elevated the South Pacific’s significance to key Asia-Pacific powers The first of these developments has been the worsening economic and political malaise of many countries in the South Pacific.... The South

Pacific has also developed into a key theatre in an increasingly profligate China-Taiwan diplomatic rivalry. (p. 351)¹⁷⁹

For the second theme, general suspicion of Taiwan and its Pacific diplomacy, Atkinson's quote indicates that, if Pacific nations are designated as incompetent and weak in Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations, Taiwan is conniving and insincere. This theme is further highlighted in reviews of Taiwan's participation at important Pacific events like the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FESTPAC):

[There] were *invited* guest performances ... by indigenous groups from Taiwan. The Taiwanese government representative stressed Taiwan's Pacific links by introducing the indigenous Taiwanese as living representatives of the original Austronesians At stake here was Taiwan's agenda to gain United Nations support from Pacific countries for its claim for independence from China. (Glowczewski & Henry, 2007, p. 214; see also Moulin, 2005, pp. 515-516)

Accordingly, Taiwan's motives for engaging the Pacific are understood as merely strategic or disingenuous.

My discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 on Taiwan's socio-political conceptions of diplomacy and official and popular discourse on Tuvalu lends some credence to suspicion of Taiwan's motives in the Pacific. However, analysis in Chapters 2 through 6 also moved beyond generalizations outlined above. In these chapters, I demonstrated that Taiwan-PRC competition is, indeed, significant to Tuvalu-Taiwan relations but also illustrated the sometimes extreme unimportance of this competition, especially in performative modes and when Tuvalu enacts performative projects in Taiwan. I further highlighted more positive contexts for Tuvalu (and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan) that demonstrate well-developed socio-cultural conceptions of diplomacy. These contexts also show Tuvalu's proactive and diverse participation in its own performative cultural diplomacy and its ability to change Taiwan's performative cultural diplomacy. When illustrating Taiwan's strategic motives in the Pacific, particularly its purposeful cultivation of Austronesian diplomacy, I examined the socio-political contexts undergirding these motives. I also described how Taiwan's indigenous peoples engage in performative cultural exchange with Pacific peoples independent of the government. This evinces the complex layers constituting Taiwan's presence in the Pacific region.

¹⁷⁹ See Chan, 1997; Hu, 2015; Langa'oi, 2010; O'Keefe, 2015; Rawnsley, 2012; Topo, 2014; Y. Zhang, 2007.

Finally, numerous interviews were completed for this research and a range of interviewees—from diplomats/officials to student performers—were able to comment on Tuvalu-Taiwan relations or performative cultural diplomacy. Given this, it is clear that generalized understandings of Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations overlook the various peoples and ideas intertwined in these relationships. In these generalizations, the views of all but the most senior government leaders are discounted and opportunities to understand how varied Tuvaluan and Taiwanese perspectives enrich Pacific-Taiwan-PRC diplomacy diminished. As Wesley-Smith (2010) notes,

it is ... worth remembering that the small-scale, face-to-face nature of politics [in small island states] often provides a major disincentive to maverick action in island societies. Most island leaders do not act in this fashion, and those that do often pay a high price. (p. 37)

This observation is also somewhat true of Taiwan's political situation. Thus, it may be tempting to argue that "China and Taiwan can easily buy the support of ... key [Pacific] decision makers" (Langa'oi, 2010, p. 174). Yet, the case studies in this thesis show that Taiwan (and the PRC) are not homogenous entities where all parties hope to "buy" Pacific support or see this as a positive means of relationship-building. Tuvaluan decision-makers are equally diverse and are not the only people determining how relationships with Taiwan develop.

**“[Policy is] shaped by ... local cultural politics and social circumstances”:
Expanding IR research through a Pacific Studies research framework and
Performance/Dance Studies**

The challenges this thesis poses to generalizations found in research on Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations are clearly important. However, just as critical is *how* I challenged generalizations and the contributions of Pacific Studies, Performance/Dance Studies, and diplomatic contingency/complexity to this process.

In Chapter 1, I outlined the Pacific Studies framework structuring my research. The framework, as elucidated by T. Teaiwa (2010, 2017a), entails attention to indigenous ways of knowing, comparativity, interdisciplinarity, and a critical empowerment rationale. Problems regarding the use of the term indigenous in T. Teaiwa's "indigenous ways of knowing" will be addressed in the next section. Regardless, in this thesis, my use of indigenous/local ways

of knowing to analyze divergent Tuvaluan, Pacific, and Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy has been highly beneficial to expanding IR research. This process also involved other Pacific Studies precepts, that is, comparativity, interdisciplinarity, and a critical empowerment rationale, because I juxtaposed Tuvaluan, Pacific, and Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy; inserted Pacific Studies precepts into IR; and moved to de-Westernize definitions of diplomacy.

More specifically, in Chapter 2, I highlighted recent work in IR and Diplomatic Studies that demands deconstruction of diplomacy's Eurocentric foundations and recognizes multiple ways of knowing diplomacy.¹⁸⁰ This dovetails with T. Teaiwa's (2010) emphasis on indigenous/local ways of knowing in Pacific Studies. Using this point of commonality, I examined how Tuvalu and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan contemplate diplomacy from a general perspective but also ground ideas of diplomacy in localized contexts. I also explored Taiwan's socio-political conceptions of diplomacy and issues in Taiwan's Austronesian diplomacy, especially its tenuous relationship with Tuvalu/Pacific allies. This discussion highlights the value of applying a Pacific Studies framework to IR research. Based on Chapter 2 alone, we see how attention to indigenous/local ways of knowing demonstrates myriad thought processes obscured by the general term diplomacy. Understanding how Taiwan, Tuvalu, and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan differently conceptualize diplomacy also provides insight into conflicts in Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations. That is, although Taiwan, Tuvalu, and other Pacific nations may clash over policy, they also conflict over what diplomacy means and how it should be conducted. This conflict emerges from the varied cultural, social, and political contexts prevalent in these locales.

Chapter 1 not only advocated adoption of a Pacific Studies research framework but also addressed the importance of using diplomatic contingency/complexity—or awareness of the multiple forces and variances inherent in diplomatic practice—to broaden the scope of IR. This discussion was outlined in greater detail in Chapter 4. Academics who study cultural diplomacy underscore the varied factors that mold this diplomatic mode and argue that relevant “policy [is] shaped by accident and accommodation, organisational culture and personalities, [and] local cultural politics and social circumstances” (Paschalidis, 2009, p. 286; see also Clarke, 2016; Mark, 2010). Moreover, scholars of Performance/Dance Studies

¹⁸⁰ See Adler-Nissen, 2015; Constantinou, 2006, 2013; Henrikson, 2005; Marsden, Ibañez-Tirado, & Henig, 2016; McConnell, Moreau, & Dittmer, 2012; Neumann, 2002.

have examined connections between culture, performance/dance, and diplomatic and political concerns. They emphasize that, when performance/dance acts as a diplomatic tool, it clearly evinces multiple layers of meaning.¹⁸¹ This illustrates why Performance/Dance Studies and performative cultural diplomacy are particularly suited to highlighting diplomatic contingency/complexity and broadening understandings of IR.

To this point, in Chapters 4 and 5, I adopted a Pacific Studies framework to contemplate the indigenous/local epistemologies informing how Tuvalu, Taiwan, and Taiwan's indigenous peoples undertake performative cultural diplomacy. However, I also used Performance/Dance Studies and performative cultural diplomacy to illustrate the multiple levels on which diplomatic projects operate. This involved examining how Tuvaluan and Taiwanese diplomats, officials, planners, performers, and even observers engaged with their own country's performative projects *and* how participants from the two countries interacted. In Chapter 6, I considered how varied audience types were interpolated into performative projects and even appropriated the meanings of these projects. These discussions show the range of people necessary to conducting performative cultural diplomacy and overturn assumptions from the previous sub-section where Tuvalu-Taiwan or Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations can be explained using generalizations alone.

Given the above, analysis in this thesis challenges sweeping assumptions about Pacific-Taiwan-PRC relations, which demonstrates the specific analytical contributions of this research. It also more broadly shows how adopting a Pacific Studies research framework and emphasizing diplomatic contingency/complexity through Performance/Dance Studies enables a different perspective for understanding IR research. This exemplifies the overarching theoretical applications of this thesis.

Theoretical Directions in Taiwan Studies: Exploring Taiwan's Place in the Pacific Region/Pacific Studies

The theoretical applications of this thesis also extend beyond new perspectives on IR and call attention to Taiwan's place in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies as well as phenomena that indicate both Taiwan's connection to and distance from the Pacific. Below, I examine possibilities for including Taiwan in Pacific Studies while also considering why, at a

¹⁸¹ See Chao, 2012; Henderson, Mallon, & K. M. Teaiwa, 2011; Henry, 2011; Y.-h. Hsu, 2013; Ness, 1992; Tamisari, 2016; K. M. Teaiwa, 2012.

conceptual level, Taiwan is removed from this field and the Pacific region more broadly. Critically, I highlight an important ancillary finding of this research: the national and cultural divides that determine how Pacific students in Taiwan form social groups. This finding demonstrates how focus on Taiwan, especially Pacific student communities in the country, can enrich Pacific Studies.

**“This is a very classic line: ‘Many father but one mother, Taiwan’ ”:
Taiwan’s connections to the Pacific region/Pacific Studies**

For connections to the Pacific region/Pacific Studies, Taiwan, especially its indigenous populations, is very much aligned with Pacific settler colonies like New Zealand and Guam, locations where indigenous peoples engage with similar institutions and socio-cultural issues to those encountered in Taiwan (see Chapters 2 and 5). Thus, many indigenous interviewees from Taiwan emphasized relevant connections:

I will never forget my exchange ... last year with an artist from Guam. This is a very classic line: “Many father but one mother, Taiwan.” This sentence—but if you put it with the Māori—because, the last time, we went to the Māori television station, their high-level supervisor [said]: “Our ancestors went to Taiwan before. That is, they went from [Point A] to Taiwan and then to New Zealand.” ... I agree with his logic. (11/16 Translated Interview [Mandarin]; see also 9/30, 11/9, 11/24, and 12/19b Interviews)

From outside of Taiwan, Chamorro authors like Craig Santos Perez (2017) have demonstrated acceptance of Austronesian ties with Taiwan in their writing. Additionally, Māori scholar Alice Te Punga Somerville (2018), who is cited throughout this thesis, observes that connections between “the Indigenous” and “the Pacific” are naturalized in Taiwan, Hawai‘i, and New Zealand. Along with Guam and other sites, these are all places where “there is articulation of ... Pacificness and indigeneity” (pp. 100, 102; see also H. Huang, 2014).

Because Taiwan is in the Pacific and ideas of shared identity or kinship exist among indigenous peoples in Taiwan, Guam, and New Zealand (and, perhaps, Taiwan, Hawai‘i, Tahiti, and New Caledonia),¹⁸² Taiwan can and should be examined in Pacific Studies. Taiwan would then join a network of Pacific settler colonies linked by settler-colony status

¹⁸² See 9/30, 11/9, 11/16, 11/24, and 12/19b Interviews.

and Austronesian-language ties but divided by the different Sinophone, Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone language systems imposed by colonizers.

The mixed response Taiwan encounters when using Austronesian diplomacy—and conflations of Austronesian, Pacific, and indigenous—to strengthen relations with independent Pacific allies and partners¹⁸³ is also useful in reflecting similar problems of conflation in Pacific Studies (see Te Punga Somerville, 2018, pp. 99-102). That is, Taiwan’s attempts to assert its settler-colony status and Austronesian-language heritage when bolstering ties with independent Pacific nations is valuable in considering what indigeneity means and how it is interpreted in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. This is particularly true because, although “accounting for indigenous ways of knowing” is a key tenet of Pacific Studies (T. Teaiwa, 2010, p. 117), many interviewees from the independent Pacific did not identify as indigenous (10/19, 12/4, 3/1, 5/11b, and 5/20 Interviews). Even if we assert that, by virtue of being first peoples, most Pacific populations are indigenous regardless of whether they accept this classification, acknowledging how Pacific peoples view themselves is crucial to Pacific Studies. What analysis of Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations demonstrates, then, is that, in Pacific Studies, we *should* account for indigenous epistemologies while also recognizing that not all Pacific peoples understand their knowledge as indigenous (Blascheck & T. Teaiwa, 2017, p. 375).

Taiwan is a valuable addition to Pacific Studies not only because it *is* a Pacific settler colony but also because its diplomatic situation requires that it maintain extremely close official links with independent Pacific nations that possess different perspectives on indigeneity. Consequently, tensions between the independent Pacific and settler colonies are particularly evident in the Taiwan case. Yet, despite Taiwan’s value to the Pacific region/Pacific Studies, certain barriers block Taiwan’s inclusion in the region and relevant academic contexts.

“Who says Taiwan is a ‘small’ nation? [All in all,] Taiwan is a rather ‘big’ nation”: Taiwan’s distance from the Pacific region/Pacific Studies

Because of Taiwan’s socio-political conceptions of diplomacy and assumptions about Tuvalu/Pacific allies (see Chapters 2 and 3), the country maintains a problematic relationship with the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. Conversely, assumptions about Taiwan in Pacific

¹⁸³ See 8/20, 8/27, 9/24b, 9/30, 10/13, 10/19, 10/20a, 10/30, 11/9, 11/10b, 11/19, 11/21, 11/24, 12/19b, 3/1, 4/15, 4/25b, 5/11b, 5/20, 5/24a, and 5/30b Interviews.

Studies limit acceptance of the nation. These trends contribute to distance in Taiwan's relationship with the Pacific and the Pacific Studies field.

For Taiwan's relationship with the Pacific region/Pacific Studies, issues of narcissism and ethnocentrism trouble serious attempts to characterize Taiwan as a Pacific nation or part of Pacific Studies. Taiwan/Taiwan Studies is enveloped in decades of work aimed at making Taiwan visible, often with the goal of distancing it from the PRC. These efforts are driven by embittered feelings that Taiwan is an unfairly neglected entity in international society. For example, H.-L. Wang (2000) describes how Taiwan's former Minister of Culture Lung Ying-tai reacted when she encountered difficulty traveling with a Taiwan passport:

At first Long [*sic*] thought she was discriminated against because Taiwan was 'a small nation', but she soon realized that people from other 'less important', 'smaller' nations enjoyed better treatment than did those from Taiwan.... Long [*sic*] states indignantly: Who says Taiwan is a 'small' nation? In terms of population, Switzerland is only one-third of Taiwan; in terms of territory, Taiwan is about of the same size as Holland and Switzerland; and in terms of wealth ... we are much richer than most nations in the world.... *Taiwan is a rather 'big' nation*—but why is my passport a disrespectable, unwelcome mark? (p. 97)

Lung's reaction dovetails with Taiwanese conceptions of diplomacy from Chapter 2, where Taiwan sees itself as better than other nations, especially its allies. This view then engenders frustration when the country is ignored internationally and reinforces Taiwan-centric ideas. To underscore this point, Leo (2015) cites scholar Ren Hai's argument:

[the] more the Taiwanese engage in their contest with the Other (China) in their various discourses, the more they insist on representing the marks of essential differences to keep the Other (China) out of their national life. Placing the notion of 'Taiwanese' at the center of a discourse of (national) identity is an attempt to free Taiwan nationalism from its ties to a universalistic path of 'Chinesization' (p. 132; see also B.-y. Chang, 2004, p. 41)

Due to this embattled desire to highlight Taiwan as uniquely significant, it is unlikely that Taiwan/Taiwan Studies would support subsuming the country in the Pacific region or Pacific Studies. In addition, as noted in Chapters 2 and 3, instances in which official and popular discourse assert Taiwan's superiority over its allies suggest layers of ethnocentrism that

would further dissuade Taiwan from seeking inclusion in the Pacific (see Damm, 2012, p. 85; 9/19 and 9/27 Interviews).

Notably, even when Taiwan academics do position themselves within Austronesian, Pacific, or Indigenous Studies, this is again done to reaffirm Taiwan's unique significance.¹⁸⁴ This trend also produces statements about Taiwan's Austronesian/Pacific/indigenous status that are dubious from a Pacific Studies perspective. For example, academics highlight Taiwan as different by melding indigenous peoples into Taiwan's Han population. They define most Han Taiwanese as indigenous in some way and, consequently, negate the possibility for indigenous sovereignty or unique indigenous worldviews:

[The] biggest elephant in the room has to be indigeneity, as some say that over 80 percent of Taiwan's population might have Austronesian ancestry

[....]

Kiantek Sim ... argues that up to 88 percent of all Taiwanese people have some indigenous Austronesian ancestry (Sim, 2003). It is not clear whether his argument has a scientific basis, but it is not far-fetched to suggest that a large number of Han Taiwanese today are descendants of mixed marriages and unions ... (Shih, M. Harrison, Chiu, & Berry, 2018, p. 225; see also Chiu, 2008, p. 612)

For this reason, many Taiwan scholars, and Taiwanese society itself, may not be sufficiently aligned with a Pacific Studies consciousness to meaningfully participate in this field or the Pacific region.

From the perspective of the Pacific, especially academics who study the Pacific, unexamined assumptions also influence opinions about whether Taiwan should be included in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. For example, in Chapter 1, I described Hau'ofa's (2008) positioning of Taiwan outside of Oceania (p. 53). In this mapping, Taiwan holds an imagined space at the edge of the Pacific, occupying a place in the Pacific Rim but excluded from conceptions of the Pacific as defined in Pacific Studies.

A major factor here is linguistic divisions in which Sinophone and Anglophone regions in the Pacific are as much if not more divided than Francophone and Anglophone spaces (see H. Huang, 2014). However, as noted in the previous section, linguistic disparities are not the

¹⁸⁴ See Blundell, 2011, p. 79; Brown, 2004, pp. 2, 35-36; Damm, 2012; Munsterhjelm, 2014, p. 89; Shih, M. Harrison, Chiu, & Berry, 2018, p. 214; L.-j. Wang, 2004, p. 306.

only issue. As demonstrated in FESTPAC reviews, Taiwan's participation at the festival is considered political, and Taiwan's indigenous peoples are sometimes viewed as insincere when they attend this type of event (regardless of whether their participation is tied to the government).¹⁸⁵ This reinforces ideas of immutable distance between Taiwan and the Pacific and disadvantages Taiwan's indigenous peoples because they, and Taiwan, are imagined as "Asian," foreign, and other. T. Teaiwa's (2010) suspicion of the Asia-Pacific category in area studies illustrates this phenomenon:

[In] an Asia-Pacific coupling, some notable hazards tend to plague the Pacific part ... The inherent arrogance and snobbery of size, power, and wealth leave small Pacific nations at the mercy of the whims of the governments of the "Asia Pacific" "Asia" and "Pacific" are terms that weigh differently in significance and sit uncomfortably together in the shades of colonialism and postcoloniality. Japan's singular historical position as the only non-European formal colonial presence in the Pacific islands has since given way to a host of neocolonial Asian trade and aid players in the region.... Today our governments are avidly pursuing the so-called untied aid beneficence of new donors like the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia (pp. 118-119)

Although some of T. Teaiwa's analysis dovetails with my discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, her argument also shows that, because Taiwan is viewed as part of Asia and a threat to Pacific empowerment, it is effectively barred from the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. Furthermore, in T. Teaiwa's description, she rapidly pivots from discussing Japan's role in the Pacific in World War II to contemplating "neocolonial Asian trade and aid players" (including Taiwan). In this way, she almost elides Taiwan into Japan's "position as the only non-European ... colonial presence in the Pacific." This effaces histories of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan and other "non-Pacific" locations during World War II and underscores assumptions in Pacific Studies about insurmountable barriers between the Pacific and Taiwan.¹⁸⁶

This discussion of distance in Taiwan's relationship with the Pacific region/Pacific Studies is not meant to negate Pacific-Taiwan connections outlined in the previous sub-section. Rather,

¹⁸⁵ See Glowczewski & Henry, 2007, p. 214; Moulin, 2005, pp. 515-516; K. M. Teaiwa, 2014a, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ It is critical to note that, in 2014, Taiwan hosted the biennial Pacific History Association conference, a major regional/international venue for presenting research pertaining to Pacific Studies (see Taiwan Society for Pacific Studies Website, 2014). This might be viewed as a watershed moment for recognition of Taiwan in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. However, in my experience speaking about Taiwan at conferences and seminars centered on the Pacific, the country is still very much marginalized in imaginings of Pacific spaces.

it evinces obstacles that exist, from Taiwanese and Pacific perspectives, to immediately including Taiwan in the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. However, even if Taiwan's indigenous peoples engage more with Pacific settler colonies than independent nations, the links they have already forged with Pacific peoples are a powerful testament to their agency in circumventing constructed boundaries. Although academic networks and institutions may be the last to formally recognize these bottom-up trajectories, their existence is indicative of theoretical changes that must occur in the future.

“[So far] the Tuvaluans are really close with the Kiribati, the Nauruans, and the Solomon Islands”: Taiwan's ancillary contributions to Pacific Studies

Finally, an important addendum to discussion of Taiwan and/in the Pacific is necessary here. That is, aside from providing the main findings in this thesis, interviews with student performers from Taiwan's Pacific allies also revealed how these students form social groups in Taiwan. The composition of these groups is valuable to future research on international Pacific student communities and intra-Pacific connections.

As discussed in the previous sub-sections and Chapters 2 and 5, divisions between independent Pacific nations and settler colonies, especially over conceptions of indigeneity, warrant further consideration in future Pacific Studies research. However, interviews with Pacific students in Taiwan show that divisions also exist among Taiwan's Pacific allies. Specifically, most Tuvaluan students explained that, in Taiwan, they socialized with students from Kiribati, Nauru, and Solomon Islands but not students from Palau and the Marshall Islands:

[The] Tuvaluans are really close with the Kiribati, the Nauruans, and the Solomon Islands. [Interviewer: And not Marshall Islands or Palau?] [Not] really. [Interviewer: Why do you think that is?] I have no idea, but ... even when we go play in the same billiard club, they'll, those islands, they will stick to themselves, while the Kiribati and the Nauruans and Tuvaluans, they will just mingle.... [Even] we all, we usually play volleyballs in the weekend. (9/24b Interview)

The Tuvaluan students, you can tell that they are close with the Kiribati students and Solomon students—some Nauruan students.... Marshallese and Palau, no.... [The] obvious thing that we figured, “Oh. Marshallese, they don't really want to come and

join us,” is because when we have volleyball competitions in Tamkang [University,] the Tuvaluans and the Kiribati and Solomon students mix in one team, but when the Marshallese come, ... only the Marshallese in that team.... I think it’s because we’re all laidback.... [Or], maybe because they have this American culture. (5/11b Interview)¹⁸⁷

During her interview, the Kiribati ambassador to Taiwan explained her belief that Nauru, Tuvalu, and Kiribati enact diplomacy differently from Palau and the Marshall Islands because of diverging colonial histories (see Chapter 2) (10/12 Interview). The current Tuvalu ambassador forwarded a similar idea:

[There are close] connections because, before, Tuvalu was with the Kiribati, former Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Many people stay there, so they have a connection with them. And, also, Nauru, we used to go there to work.... And, also, now, we still have some people there in Kiribati and also in Nauru, Tuvaluan people. (11/10b Interview)

Given the above, Tuvaluan students highlighted affinity with students from Nauru, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands, and the Tuvalu and Kiribati ambassadors emphasized long-term engagement between Tuvalu, Nauru, and Kiribati. This suggests that colonial histories and more recent Pacific communities bypass Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian categories often adopted to sub-divide the region (Fry, 1997b; Tcherkézoff, 2003). These findings indicate that reconsidering historical connections between Nauru, Tuvalu, and Kiribati in future research is more promising than examining Nauru and Kiribati in relation to other Micronesian nations. The ties Tuvaluan students in Taiwan maintain with students from Nauru, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands also suggest further avenues of study regarding why these attachments form while relationships with Palauan and Marshallese students do not. Admittedly, these findings are not the focus of this research. Even so, they are outlined here to indicate the value to Pacific Studies of considering Pacific communities in Taiwan. These findings also more generally recommend examining Pacific student and diplomatic communities worldwide so as to rethink national and sub-regional distinctions in the Pacific.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ See 10/9, 10/13, and 4/15 Interviews; for exceptions, see 8/27, 11/4, 4/27, and 5/21 Interviews.

¹⁸⁸ For example, Tuvalu currently sends scholarship students to Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as Vanuatu, Samoa, Cuba, Morocco, India, Taiwan, and Japan (4/17b Interview). Examining how students form communities with Pacific or other peoples in these locations is an important topic for future research.

Findings from this thesis, specifically those from Chapters 2, 3, and 5, are crucial to examining Taiwan's engagements with the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. Yet, certain factors also contribute to distance between Taiwan and the region. Although Taiwan's role in the Pacific/Pacific Studies is contested, this research provides space for contemplating how Taiwan might be integrated into the Pacific and its relevant academic contexts. Ancillary contributions to Pacific Studies derived from interviews with Tuvaluan/Pacific students and diplomats in Taiwan further highlight this potential. These contributions suggest that national and sub-regional Pacific distinctions can be reconsidered by examining Taiwan's Pacific communities.

Practical Directions in Diplomacy and Performative Cultural Diplomacy: Recommendations for Future Planning and Execution

I conclude here by outlining recommendations for the practice of diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy formulated using case studies and diplomatic conceptions discussed in this thesis. These recommendations are not comprehensive but reflect how themes in the thesis suggest modifications that can be made to diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy as conducted between Tuvalu and Taiwan as well as in other diplomatic relationships. Specifically, I examine how the domestically oriented nature of performative cultural diplomacy, as well as disparate conceptions of diplomacy and performance/dance in Taiwan, Tuvalu, and the wider Pacific, can be addressed in diplomatic relations and performative cultural diplomacy projects.

First, there is a need in diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy to understand the intense impact domestic views have on diplomatic conceptions and practices. As highlighted in Chapters 2, 4, and 5, diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy are often less focused on engagement with foreign actors than on ensuring that foreign engagement is supported by domestic audiences. Rawnsley (2012), H. Wang and Lu (2008), and other scholars have indicated this trend,¹⁸⁹ and case studies examined in this thesis verify scholarly suppositions. Yet, Tuvaluan and Taiwanese practitioners rarely considered whether domestic influence on diplomacy/performative cultural diplomacy rendered it more or less effective when interacting with people removed from domestic situations.

¹⁸⁹ See B.-y. Chang, 2004; Chung, 2012; H.-L. Wang, 2004.

In the general practice of diplomacy, it may be difficult to avoid domestic influence on diplomatic ideas. Nevertheless, if diplomats understand that the expectations of their citizens and those of diplomatic partners differ, instances of tension might be mitigated. In Taiwan, for example, it may be acceptable to portray allies negatively in domestic settings (especially because many allied diplomats do not understand Mandarin). However, Taiwanese officials should be aware that engaging with allies according to domestic standards is unnecessary when they are removed from domestic contexts. Furthermore, Taiwanese diplomats should understand that Tuvalu and other Pacific nations represented in Taiwan value hospitality and maintaining relationships by demonstrating care and concern. If this is recognized, when these countries make requests about hosting officials or citizens in Taiwan (see Chapter 2), their requests will not be disregarded as avarice but appreciated as emanating from different socio-cultural ideals for diplomatic conduct.

From the perspective of performative cultural diplomacy, if what domestic audiences deem appropriate for projects is vastly different from what diplomatic partners or foreign audiences consider compelling, these projects will not effectively enhance cultural understanding. Because projects that are large scale and require substantial expenditure tend to attract intense public scrutiny,¹⁹⁰ governments should consider arranging smaller projects for diplomatic partners whose cultural, social, and political expectations differ from those of domestic audiences. These projects might then attract less domestic attention, which would allow for increased focus on foreign expectations and greater flexibility in project organization.

The above recommendation is not meant to imply that performative cultural diplomacy should circumvent domestic oversight, which, in the YA case study, was critical to identifying problematic depictions of indigenous peoples (see Chapter 5). Neither does it imply that performative/dance forms should be changed to please foreign audiences. However, if performative cultural diplomacy is to become a diplomatic mode that clearly conveys information, we must recognize that effectively communicating with foreign audiences necessitates strategies different from those required for domestic ones. Similarly, projects that satisfy domestic understandings of nation and culture are not automatically intelligible or acceptable in non-domestic settings.

Second, as long as appropriate oversight is available (especially when contested topics are represented), performative cultural diplomacy projects should be more specifically targeted

¹⁹⁰ See Kunaw, 2013, August 16; *Liberty Times*, 2013, August 12; H.-L. Wang, 2004, pp. 794-795.

and conducted over longer periods. Based on findings from Chapter 6, standalone performances are enlightening to neither performers nor audiences and require audiences to engage in independent research. In addition, the more audience members a project attracts, the higher likelihood that it will be co-opted by external parties and subjected to alternative interpretations. Regardless of audience size, performative cultural diplomacy projects seem to only deeply impact a small number of people. Therefore, modifying projects so that they are small and long-term will allow for enhanced interaction between performers and audience members that can effect concrete mutual understandings. To illustrate, the NYIFF tour guide discussed in Chapter 6, who attained the deepest understandings of the TYT and their performances, was also one of the only audience members who interacted with the troupe intensively and over a longer period.

Aside from altering the scale and length of performative cultural diplomacy projects, methods for enhancing audience understanding should also be introduced. For example, verbal introductions for performances can be added or improved or the number of cultural items presented in a performance reduced. For the Taiwan/YA case study, if practitioners and audiences think performing all aspects of Taiwanese society is overwhelming (see Chapter 6), repeatedly adopting this model is counterintuitive. Instead, a different aspect of Taiwan's culture(s) could be presented each year, which would allow more time for this aspect to be thoroughly elucidated. For the Tuvalu/TATST and TYT case studies and performative/dance forms like fatele, more effort could be exerted to enhance performance introductions and translations. In this way, the fatele lyrics and actions so significant to Tuvaluan planners, performers, and observers would become more intelligible to Taiwanese audiences.

Finally, performative cultural diplomacy practitioners must always remember the varied perspectives of audiences, as well as the unexpected people who may become audience members. This is especially true when considering temporary staff/volunteers for performative cultural diplomacy projects and how these people develop in-depth understandings of projects because they watch multiple performances and interact with project participants. Consequently, performing groups must be aware that they are *always* representing their country when abroad and that formal performances are not the only occasions when they communicate culture. As discussed above, the NYIFF tour guide demonstrates the existence of latent audience members who are not typically considered part of general audiences, and shows how both performances *and* extra-performance interactions create cultural understanding. While I was in Tuvalu, it was also evident from the visits of the

Taiwan YAs and a South Korean drumming troupe that Tuvaluan stage technicians, liaison personnel, and even people living in performance venues¹⁹¹ developed opinions of what “being Taiwanese” or “being Korean” meant based on how performers behaved both on and off stage.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I summarized findings highlighted throughout this thesis and demonstrated links between findings and research questions and themes from Chapter 1. I also discussed theoretical and practical applications of the research. From a theoretical perspective, I explained how my Pacific Studies research framework, as well as engagement with diplomatic contingency/complexity through Performance/Dance Studies, created new possibilities for conducting IR research. I also showed how research findings provided an interface for rethinking Taiwan’s positionality, especially its connection to or distance from the Pacific region/Pacific Studies. From a practical perspective, I made recommendations for implementing diplomacy and performative cultural diplomacy based on interviews and participant observation conducted for this research. Overall, I demonstrated how the Pacific Studies perspective applied throughout this thesis yields findings beneficial to academic and extra-academic contexts and critical to broadening understandings of IR, diplomacy, and Taiwan.

In Chapter 1, I noted that participants in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy, most of whom are not diplomats, are often incorporated into what is reductively considered “unified” diplomatic action. Given the analysis in this thesis, however, it is clear that actors ranging from diplomats to audience members articulate various ideas, identities, and contexts to performative cultural diplomacy projects, diplomacy, Tuvalu, and Taiwan, producing diplomatic action that is anything but unified. This phenomenon does not provide easy answers for improving Tuvalu/Pacific-Taiwan relations or enhancing practices in performative cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, by delineating Taiwanese, Tuvaluan, and other Pacific diplomatic conceptions; outlining how Tuvaluan/Taiwanese assumptions intervene in Tuvalu-Taiwan relations; and demonstrating problems of conflicting domestic and foreign demands in Tuvalu-Taiwan performative cultural diplomacy, I underscored

¹⁹¹ The Taiwanese and South Korean troupes performed on the capital at the fale kaupule, or “meeting house,” for the island of Vaitupu. During the Taiwanese performance, a portion of Vaitupu’s outer-island population was living in the fale kaupule awaiting Tuvalu’s 40th Independence Day celebrations.

contexts in which Tuvalu, Taiwan, and their diplomacy could be reimagined. These contexts suggest methods for similarly deconstructing other diplomatic relationships so as to contemplate the varied actors and layers of cultural, social, and political meaning they contain.

Finally, I must provide an addendum here concerning the recent severing of ties between Taiwan and two of its diplomatic allies, Solomon Islands and Kiribati, which occurred in September 2019 after I submitted my thesis for examination. These diplomatic breaks not only underscore the importance and timeliness of this thesis, but, because Tuvalu elected a new government in September 2019, they also sparked rumors that Tuvalu would soon sever ties with Taiwan (Packham & Barrett, 2019, September 19). Given that divisions among Tuvalu's parliament members have never centered on the Taiwan-PRC issue, I consider these rumors spurious at best.

However, I *would* like to contemplate the conflicting ideas of diplomacy highlighted in this thesis in the context of Solomon Islands and Kiribati choosing to ally with the PRC and split with Taiwan. The motivation for these breaks was undoubtedly Taiwan-PRC competition. With Taiwan's presidential election imminent in January 2020, the PRC is suspected to have offered tremendous aid packages to motivate diplomatic movement (Pryke, 2019, September 23). Yet, we must also consider that, from the perspective of Solomon Islands, a move to the PRC may have been consistent with cultural ideas of diplomacy as bartering. Furthermore, Taiwan's perspectives on official diplomacy and condescending attitude toward allies had already become apparent to Solomon Islands before the 2019 break. In the words of Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare:

I send forty police officers to go and train in Taiwan in 2006.... You know what Australia did? The foreign affairs minister himself went to Taiwan and said "Stop the training. That area is ours...." And, so, they stopped that. So, what I'm saying is that, if this was China, they wouldn't give a damn to [the Australian foreign affairs minister] if he goes there and says, "You stop." They would say "Get the hell out of here. This is a sovereign decision made by a sovereign government." (Smith & Lim, 2019, September 9)

For Kiribati, which values care/concern and properly maintaining relationships, a former ambassador to Taiwan presciently commented:

[If] we're talking about colleagues from other countries—that's where ... the point of tensions become very obvious. For example, in dealing with our Taiwanese colleagues, ... for them, if you are too quiet, then it's not good. You have to push things ... For us, if you are too pushy, you are rude, you know? ... [Before], I was in the same mindset ... with my [I-Kiribati] colleagues. I don't want to talk to these people [the Taiwanese]. [It's] the same with the Australians and the New Zealanders. They come in and [we I-Kiribati] say, "These people, they think they know everything" ... And, then, when we talk about something and then they go away thinking that "Yes. [We've] come to an agreement." Because [we I-Kiribati] didn't say anything[. But, to us,] no agreement because we didn't say "Yes." But we were too polite to say "No."
(10/12 Interview)

It would be ambitious to say that different understandings of diplomacy were the main factor motivating recent diplomatic breaks in the Pacific. However, it is reasonable to posit that diverging ideas made Pacific decisions to leave Taiwan less of a moral crisis. Clearly, then, the concepts outlined in this thesis *do* allow for a deconstruction and reimagining of Pacific-Taiwan relations that moves beyond simplistic understandings of Taiwan-PRC competition as the only element that matters. These concepts allow us to think more carefully about the wide range of cultural, social, and political factors potentially at play.

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