

**Conceptualising Academic and Folk Understandings of
Culture: An Auckland-Based Survey**

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A thesis submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Language and Culture (MLC)

2021

Language and Culture

Abstract

Although the concept of culture has been implemented in a range of different disciplines, many commentators on the topic are quick to point out that there is an overall lack of consensus surrounding its meaning, as well as the problem of defining it (Baldwin et al., 2006; Cronk, 2018; Fox & King, 2020; Gatherer, 2006; Jahoda, 2012; Johnson, 2013). This thesis seeks to discover how culture is understood by various disciplines and people. As such, a folk linguistic methodology and approach to understanding culture will be utilised to view the concept as it stands in various academic contexts, and also to discover how the people of Auckland understand culture in their everyday interaction with it. This will be done through the use of survey and thematic analysis, along with discussions of the role perspective and context play on our overall understandings of a given concept.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| FL | Folk Linguistics |
| FLA | Folk Linguistic Analysis |
| TA | Thematic Analysis |

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Date: 5/11/2021

Acknowledgements

To begin, I would like to thank all of those who have taken an interest in this research and assisted me with their enthusiasm. An especially big thank you goes to all of those who participated in the survey to provide their own thoughts, ideas and feedback. It was always my hope that those participants should be able to take away from this research as much as they gave. I can only hope that I was able to provide half of as much as they provided me through their eagerness and openness.

Next, I would like to say a special thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Tof Eklund, who from the beginning took the time to listen and understand. Tof, without your support none of this research would have been possible. You believed in me and my beliefs that everyone may have ideas worth listening to when very few others did. I have appreciated your encouragement and I will miss our conversations.

I would also like to acknowledge those in my personal life who have taken an interest and supported my study and research along the way. I hope that in the end whatever assumptions and accusations we make, we can learn to make things better and develop a deeper understanding of others one step at a time.

The research of this thesis was conducted in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEK under application number 20/308, dated 26th November, 2020.

1. Introduction

1.1 A Background on Culture

The word *culture* is one that is notoriously difficult to pin down and is one that is contested both in- and outside of academia. Jahoda (2012) asserts that culture has long been a polysemous concept in spite of originally referring to the cultivation of fields, as in, “agriculture”. It has been suggested that the word took on new meaning as the idea of growth was transferred to the human subject, such as how it is expressed in the sense of “culture and the arts” or “cultivating the mind or spirit” (see, for example, Highmore, 2016; Jahoda, 2012). However, the sense in which the word is used today is quite different from how it was first used when transferred to the human subject, and instead is probably more commonly used in the sense of “culture and society” or “cultural identity”. Yet, while we are able to understand each sense of the word, the definition of culture remains elusive. What is surprising about this is that there has never been any consensus on what the word culture actually means (see, for example, Baldwin et al., 2006; Cronk, 2018; Fox & King, 2020; Gatherer, 2006; Jahoda, 2012; Johnson, 2013; Vivanco, 2018). Nonetheless, the word is used frequently both in- and outside of academia, and it has become a concept that seems to have an irreplaceable importance to both those who study it and those who are involved with it in their everyday lives.

1.1.1 Arnold vs. Tylor

The word “culture” has a rather short linguistic history. As Storey (2018) advises, in order to understand what is being talked about, we need to begin with a historical and theoretical account. The first modern definitions trace back to the late 1860s and early 1870s. Around this time, we see how it was transferred to the human subject and away from its use in agriculture with two fundamental understandings of the word which are still in use today. The first, commonly called “high culture” is widely credited to Matthew Arnold who (in)famously stated that “[culture is] knowing the best that has been thought and known in the world.” (Arnold, 1873, p. xvi) and, in another of his earlier works, “culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection ; and that of perfection as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters.” (Arnold, 1869, p. 40).

Although Arnold’s way of expressing culture is somewhat antiquated and many still criticise the elitist implications of this definition (see, for example, Johnson, 2013), I believe this is the same idea we encounter when people speak of culture in the romantic sense, such as going to an art gallery and appreciating the most delicate and detailed of paintings – particularly those seen as the greatest representations, such as the art in the Louvre in Paris. Another, more common way in which Arnold’s sense of culture can still be seen today is perhaps when people speak of travelling or learning a language in order to encounter “other cultures” and therefore attain some kind of enlightened understanding of the world. Though this is of course not the only reason why people would travel or learn languages, for some this could still be seen as one of the ways in which one “becomes cultured” (i.e., becoming a better person) as it is apt to mean in this sense. What

is interesting about this is the sense of “other cultures” which seems unavoidable if one wishes to know “the best that has been thought and known in the world.”

In stark contrast with Arnold’s accounting, “common, or, low culture” is widely considered the first modern definition of culture, and is credited to Edward Tylor. Tylor became famous in the field of anthropology for stating: “Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Tylor, 1871, p. 1). Taken as such culture is said to be the core concept of anthropological studies (see, for example, Eller, 2016; Highmore, 2016; Senft et al., 2009; Vivanco, 2018; Wagner, 1981).

While Arnold’s idea of culture concentrates on individual attainment, perfection and a sense of superiority, Tylor’s is clearly more centred around the group/society and their everyday life and practices. Unlike Arnold who viewed culture as an attainment through getting to know the best of what people have produced in the world, Tylor viewed culture as simply all of what people have produced in the world. Culture, in Tylor’s view, was therefore not held or attained by anyone, but it existed wherever people or civilisations existed. This is likely why many would consider this to be the core concept of anthropology as one of the main focuses in this field is observing human behaviour and practices in order to make sense of the underlying principles and perceptions of different societies (Haviland et al., 2013). Similarly to Arnold’s idea of culture, Tylor’s view can still clearly be seen today in the sense of cultural studies, cultural backgrounds and when people speak, for example, of my/their/our culture.

1.1.2 Kroeber & Kluckhohn

Foundational as Arnold and Tylor are to this discussion, many scholars and commentators on the topic are quick to point out that the problem of defining culture is one that has never been solved (for example, Baldwin et al., 2006; Cronk, 2018; Fox & King, 2020; Gatherer, 2006; Jahoda, 2012; Johnson, 2013; Vivanco, 2018). Most famous among these are Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn whose 1952 monograph on culture showed that there were as many as 164 definitions of culture. The pair began their monograph by stating that the concept, as it is known in anthropology and sociology, has become so fundamental to the social sciences that it is comparable to gravity in physics or evolution in biology, yet, the underlying idea of culture as it has come to be known in our modern sense is nothing new, as throughout history many have taken an interest in the ways of life held by other peoples (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). These two statements immediately show both the breadth and depth of the topic just 80 years after Arnold and Tylor provided their early definitions.

In their monograph, Kroeber and Kluckhohn then go on to provide a list of the definitions that they were able to find at the time but, by their own admission, they lump these into arbitrary categories and come to conclude that existence of so many definitions “point to something legitimate and important [and], in other words, [...] culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based upon symbols; and is an abstraction from behaviour and the products of behaviour.” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 157). Kroeber and Kluckhohn also add to this statement that “this catalogue does not, of course, exhaust the meaningful and valid propositions which can be uttered about culture.” (p. 157).

Here again, there is a sense of culture as it has come to be known today as being embedded or intertwined with history, behaviours, and symbols (namely, language). While this is a much more recent and modern understanding of culture, it has not removed Arnold's or Tylor's sense of the word, nor any of the 164 definitions provided by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. For instance, Baldwin et al. (2006) suggest that there may be as many as 20 different working definitions of culture being used in academia at any time which are agreed upon within specific fields or departments. This then leads Baldwin et al. (2006) to a similar conclusion about the significance of culture as Kroeber and Kluckhohn, but they take a different view of what culture actually is when they state: "This debate surrounding the usage of the term "culture" suggests that the term is a sign, an empty vessel waiting for people – both academicians and everyday communicators – to fill it with meaning." (p. 4).

The idea of culture is clearly one that has a deep meaning to people with a great amount of variation. While some people may find artefacts, tradition and heritage to be most important, others may see the simple, daily routines of everyday people as culture's defining characteristics. Although a consensus as to the meaning of culture has never been agreed upon, there is no shortage of perspectives from which to view the idea. Since Kroeber and Kluckhohn's monograph these perspectives have only continued to expand and evolve and to make the idea of culture even more intangible, while global trends towards increased migration, the sharing of ideas through media or the internet, and the ever-changing lexicon by which we talk about such topics in English, or any other language, have all made research into the concept of culture notoriously difficult. Consequently, Baldwin et al. (2006) state, "the definition of culture is a moving target,

and those who choose to define it should ground their definitions in a fuller, multidisciplinary and historicized accounting of the word.” (p. 24).

1.1.3 A Personal Point of View

While Arnold’s and Tylor’s ideas may seem to be in complete contrast to one another, and Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s add only more nuance and depth, the ideas covered thus far seem unsurprising. Although much has happened both academically and in the mindset of everyday people since Arnold and Tylor first proposed their definitions of culture, they are still perhaps the mostly widely held views and fundamental to how the word culture has come to be understood today. I began this research by considering my own ideas and assumptions about culture and came to the conclusion that most people, including myself, would have two main thoughts about what culture is. The first being that of sophistication and refinement – commonly referred to as “high-culture”, *a la* Arnold – whereby culture is something that is acquired through developing *taste* and an appreciation of the greatest achievements of *man* (and occasionally women). In contrast to this, the other idea of culture I believed most people would have, is that of “low-culture”, more like Tylor – the idea that everyone has culture or is a part of it, and it is the intrinsic values of a people or society.

In the first case, I have italicized the words *taste* and *man* as I believed these to be the appropriate words for this sense of culture as “high-culture”. Yet, the word choice, though it seems quite natural in this instance, is jarring and uncomfortable as it suggests an assumption commonly associated with high-culture, which is that of elitism and

arbitrary hierarchies. While I have nothing against self-improvement and enjoying something for the artistic value one finds in it, it is understandable why many scholars are critical of this idea. However, to disregard Arnold's idea of culture due to it being contentious would lead to an unfair accounting of the concept of culture, especially if there are people who not only value self-improvement and artistic works which may indeed be worthy of praise, but also who may have a better understanding of this concept than initial impressions might be able to capture.

On the other hand, the idea of culture as low-culture seems much more appealing as it acknowledges the intrinsic values of people or society who produce the products that are so sought after in the high-culture sense. While this idea is less clear about where we might actually encounter culture and how we can appreciate it, the fact that it centres on people is perhaps why it has been picked up by so many as a starting point from which to conduct research and investigation into civilisations. However, upon reflection, this also has a great deal of assumptions and complications. The first problem with this is that even if one sets out to respect and value each and every person as having or being a part of culture, those who hold a fervent elitist high-culture view are still a part of the low-culture "whole". The second issue then is that if culture is held by the people or society, how then can someone who sets out to observe and record, such as a scholar/academic, give a fair representation and accounting without proverbially putting words in the mouths of those they are researching?

1.1.4 Framing the Research

Although these are only initial reflections upon what I had believed culture to be and the assumptions associated with these beliefs, it was surprising how these initial assumptions of high- and low-culture aligned closely with the early understandings provided by Arnold and Tylor respectively. Taking this one step further I wondered if indeed most people would define culture in a similar way or if these were just assumptions that I had held. As such, I found that although the academic world has provided hundreds of definitions, culture is still defined in fundamentally the same way in dictionaries as was set out in the early 1870's (see Table 1 below).

Table 1.

List of Dictionary Definitions of Culture (excluding definitions relating to agriculture or cell culture).

| Source | High-culture definitions (Arnold) | Low-culture definitions (Tylor) |
|--|--|---|
| Merriam-Webster (n.d.) | <p>a : enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training</p> <p>b : acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills a person of culture //a person of culture</p> | <p>a : the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group <i>also</i> : the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time //popular <i>culture</i> //Southern <i>culture</i></p> <p>b : the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization //corporate <i>culture</i> focused on the bottom line</p> |
| Collins English Dictionary (n.d.) | <p>a : the artistic and social pursuits, expression, and tastes valued by a society or class, as in the arts, manners, dress, etc</p> <p>b : the enlightenment or refinement resulting from these pursuits</p> | <p>a : A culture is a particular society or civilization, especially considered in relation to its beliefs, way of life, or art.</p> <p>b : The culture of a particular organization or group consists of the habits of the people in it and the way they generally behave.</p> |
| Dictionary.com (n.d.) | <p>a : the quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.</p> <p>b : that which is excellent in the arts, manners, etc.</p> <p>c : development or improvement of the mind by education or training.</p> | <p>a : a particular form or stage of civilization, as that of a certain nation or period: <i>Greek culture</i>.</p> |

While this does not prove that all people think about culture in this way, or that these definitions are stuck in the past, it is indicative that the formal definitions have changed little in the past 150 years and, therefore, there is an assumption that this is how culture is understood by people in general. It is equally as surprising, however, that Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) view of culture as being embedded or intertwined with history, behaviours and symbols is absent, as is that of culture being an "empty vessel", given meaning by both academics and everyday people (Baldwin et al., 2006). It is clear then that it is not a matter of simply changing dictionaries and people's definitions/understandings of culture, but that both in the academic world and in people's everyday lexicon, there is a great deal of variation and assumptions about what is being discussed when we say culture. What needs to be done then is not a revision of the past 150 years of linguistic history surrounding the complexity of one word, but an open discussion about where our understandings of the concept are now.

The problem with choosing to research culture then is not how elusive or complex the definition is, nor is it the sheer number of potential working definitions already in existence. Rather, it is a problem of how to research such a topic, given the extensive range of views from which one might pick from to begin. If, for example, one were to research culture as a universal social phenomenon as their starting perspective on the topic, there would already be a great deal of assumptions made about its nature, and therefore, the validity of any definition presented (as some might be of the view that culture is not a social phenomenon, but something else entirely). Equally, if one were to attempt to capture every definition ever made about culture explicitly stated or only implied, there would surely be no way of ever knowing if such a goal had been achieved,

nor would there be any real discussion or understanding of culture; only a list of potential ideas about it.

As such, what I found most important moving forward with this research were three things: Firstly, to acknowledge that it is simply not possible in the course of one thesis to cover every idea of culture out there, but that every effort to give a broad and fair representation of a range of ideas will be taken; Secondly, to avoid making assumptions about the meaning and nature of culture, in so far as is reasonably and humanly possible – that is to say, not to assume myself or anyone can always be objective as a researcher, but to clarify and own up to assumptions when encountered; Thirdly, in order to actually reach many of the perspectives on culture and stay true to the first two statements, some conventions of academic writing will have to be ignored – as it has been said to me, for example, that dictionary definitions are not suitable in academic literature, and that a well-sourced academic’s writing on a subject such as culture is going to provide a more valuable insight into culture than the ideas of a common person. While I am not trying to dismiss these ideas, particularly in the case of this research, I believe there is a need to look beyond what has already been said in order to see how the idea of culture is being used in a broader context, as well as trying to not assume the meaning and nature of the word. While dictionary definitions, for example, may not be considered equally valid with a published paper on the topic of culture, they still may provide valuable insight into the thinking and understanding that people have in an everyday sense. It therefore needs to be stated that all ideas will be taken as equally valid starting points from which to discuss culture and the ways in which we conceptualise it.

1.2 The Researcher

My own personal interest and ideas about culture come from a number of experiences in getting to know different ways of thinking and different ways of life. Most obvious of these include having learnt Japanese language in my undergraduate years and then living in Japan for a further two years after that. It has always been interesting to observe and experience both the similarities and differences between countries such as Japan and New Zealand. In everyday life, we often refer to these differences as customs or culture and while they can be fascinating and even provide a sense of relief when encountering something new and interesting, they can also be the cause of conflicts and misunderstandings. It is in understanding these misunderstandings that I have often found the greatest appreciation of culture. However, so often these differences are not only between countries, but within perspectives such as those held by people living in the countryside compared to those living in major cities, those living in one economic group compared with those in another, or even those who work at night and those who work during the day. This comes with a host of topics to explore the concept of culture further, from regional and national histories, social conventions and expectations, language variations, and geographical influences just to name a few. It is these kinds of topics that I believe Edward Tylor and other anthropologists refer to when they talk about culture as a complex whole in a wider ethnographic sense, and these topics which have always interested me in both culture and people.

Along with my experience in Japan and with Japanese language/culture, my passion for martial arts, namely kung fu, has also influenced my relationship with the concept of culture. Even just in terms of martial arts, it is has always surprised me how

much variation there can be in the ways in which individuals implement the same set of ideas. By way of example, the various styles by which people train martial arts, such as boxing, karate, kung fu, and MMA have variations within them, as well as the overlap and sharing of ideas, parallel thinking, influences from their social backgrounds, and styles within styles. This then goes all the way down to the individual practitioner's understanding and implementation of these ideas as they are then likely to put their own spin on things. Yet, what makes this interesting to me is that, more often than not, we can still say that the individual belongs to style 'A', or that their punch is like that of style 'B'. This relationship between the individual and their broader social category can be found as much in martial arts as within a country. It is the fluidity which may constitute or signify one's culture which I think makes it an interesting topic and one worth exploring from a range of angles and perspectives, and to do so, it seems necessary to delve into the myriad of ways in which this concept is understood.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the name of the Master's programme in which I am enrolled in is titled: Masters of Language and Culture. As such, it should be no surprise that both before enrolment and during the course of this programme I have spoken at length with several people about the topics of language and culture. While many of my peers have taken a more focused and applied approach by choosing one aspect of language and/or culture to research, I have taken the name of the programme quite literally, basing this thesis around culture as a word, and the language that defines culture. This is in part due to my interest in the two topics and their apparent overlap/connection, but also due to the conversations and classes I have had about them. When I was looking at options for my postgraduate study, I found that everyone I talked to about doing research relating to culture had completely different opinions about what that would look like. On one extreme, some suggested that this was the biggest, most philosophical and

important question I could be asking and that I would need to dedicate my life to such study. On the opposite end, I had also been told that I had no idea what I was talking about, that “we already know what culture is”, and that I could not provide any kind of useful insightful or ideas about culture.

Interestingly, it was the combination of various conversations and extreme opinions that made me understand that there are a wide range of perspectives on language and culture, and that a lot of people, both academic and not, are unfortunately talking past one another on this topic. Consequently, I realised that it is not about “my” view of language or culture, but clarifying and potentially reiterating that there are different understandings of these concepts which seem to largely depend on the perspective from which they are viewed. Additionally, just because any one particular view has been invested into does not automatically make it right or desirable, but only helps to develop our understanding of it. What I am arguing for here is not to dismiss anyone’s research, but that in order to address our assumptions and misunderstandings we need to take the time to understand how different perspectives can lead to different understandings. Ultimately, I have undertaken this research to give people – academics and non-academics alike – a chance to express their view on culture, in their own language, rather than pushing for my own interpretation or one which I am fond of.

1.3 Research Aims

Whether culture be taken as a synonym of civilisation, beliefs, customs or ways of life, what is really being discussed is not the word itself, but what is implied by its use.

There are so many interpretations as to what our concepts of culture could mean which is why in the course of this thesis, it will not be a matter of defining the word or rigidly arguing for one sense of it over others. Instead, in order to get to what is being conveyed when we say “culture”, in this research I seek to show how it is necessary to continually be looking at the ways in which such a concept is used. Furthermore, the question of what culture is or how it can be interpreted is not about comparing or analysing differences between groups of people as can be done in some kinds of cultural studies (primarily ethnological studies), nor is it about observing and recording certain people’s behaviours (as is generally the case in ethnographic studies). Rather, this research is concerned with exploring the ways in which a word or concept such as culture can entail different nuanced understandings and how these can be influenced by context, settings or the perspectives held by different people. The reason for this research then is firstly, to explore the hypothesis that the concept of culture can entail a range of understandings depending upon the wider context, and, secondly, to facilitate awareness of this and (hopefully) facilitate inter-disciplinary dialogue in a manner that promotes open conversation and clarity.

As such, the literature review will firstly cover a range of academic ideas on culture from different disciplines. This will allow for some idea of the scope of different ideas as well as putting them in context within the fields from which they come. Moreover, this will provide a base of ideas which can then be further examined. Secondly, this will be followed by a survey aimed at drawing out people’s ideas of culture as well as their thoughts on the ideas circulating in academic literature. The purpose of this section is two-fold; One, this will allow any new ideas of culture which have not been covered in the literature review but are nonetheless held by people to come to light; Two, an outside,

non-academic perspective can be established which is comprised of people from already varying situations and understandings.

Practically speaking, this research has been set up to collect public opinions and ideas about the concept of culture, both in the sense of how people define culture and how they use the concept (i.e. the word choices surrounding culture, grammar and pragmatic meaning). Therefore, sampling a wide a range of people from different backgrounds to avoid presupposing the nature of culture, or skewing the results by selecting from a niche group has been a priority. To this end, this research centres on Auckland as a superdiverse and multi-ethnic city (for example, Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi, 2013; Terruhn, 2020), and seeks to have participants firstly produce any ideas they may have about culture in order to gain a sense of any pre-conceived notions they may have. After that, participants will have a chance to respond to ideas found in the academic literature and add anything else they wish to express after being presented with these ideas.

This has resulted in three main research questions:

- 1. What are some of the ways culture can be, and is understood today?**
- 2. Are these understandings relative and dependent upon perspective?**
- 3. How do the folk- and everyday-understandings of Aucklanders compare with that of academics?**

1.4 Benefits of this Research

It is my hope that by collecting and examining various ways people think of culture as I have set out in the research questions, we may arrive at a better understanding not only of the range of ideas out there on culture, but of the importance of taking the time to understand other perspectives, experiences and people. This is not limited to the context/topic of culture, but could equally apply to any other research. In order to do this, there will be a focus on the everyday person's knowledge and the key ideas put forward by academics. Consequently, this research will allow participants a chance to express their own thoughts and ideas alongside that of academics. Furthermore, by examining academic ideas through common understandings and everyday language, we allow for more open discussion and a starting point from which we can work back to any of the more complicated and nuanced ideas if they do indeed prove to be best. Finally, the chance to engage with a topic as broad as culture from multiple different perspectives and potentially develop an under-developed area of research has, in itself, been an interesting endeavour.

1.5 Organisation of Thesis

This thesis has been organised into five chapters – introduction, literature review, methodology, results and analysis, and discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 1, Introduction, has already covered much of the linguistic and academic background of the word culture. Additionally, the framing of this research, the researcher's perspectives, and the benefits of this research have been discussed surrounding the research aims of investigating how different people and perspectives may play a role in our understandings of the concept of culture.

Chapter 2, Literature Review, covers a range of academic perspectives on culture from the broad sense of the word to more specific ideas surrounding how it is used in specific departments or fields.

Chapter 3, Methodology, begins with an introspective look at different epistemologies and ontologies about language and meaning, and continues to selection of the folk linguistic methodology which allows the greatest diversity of thought when approaching this topic. Following this, the survey method, design and ethical considerations are discussed in relation to the overall goals of this research and their place in the methodology employed.

Chapter 4, Results and Analysis, breaks down how the data can be analysed by applying the folk linguistic methodology in conjunction with a thematic analysis. The results are then discussed in detail with regard to the context and implications surrounding them.

Chapter 5, Discussion and Conclusion, re-considers the overall findings of this research alongside the research questions, academic ideas discussed in the literature review, and the role perspective might play in how concepts are understood particularly in the fields of language and culture. There is also a discussion of the limitations of this research as well as suggestions made for future research.

2. Literature Review

As discussed in the Introduction, it is widely understood that, beginning with Tylor's definition of culture as civilisation, culture is said to be the core concept of anthropology (see, for example, Eller, 2016; Highmore, 2016; Senft et al., 2009; Vivanco, 2018; Wagner, 1981). However, almost immediately upon looking for definitions of culture in anthropology, we are confronted with the conclusion that there is no agreed upon definition (Baldwin et al., 2006; Cronk, 2018; Fox & King, 2020; Gatherer, 2006; Jahoda, 2012; Johnson, 2013; Vivanco, 2018). In this literature review I will examine some of the arguments for and against certain definitions of culture, and furthermore, following Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952), and Baldwin et al.'s (2006) reasoning, gather from a range of different fields/disciplines perspectives on how such a concept could be viewed.

2.1 Culture as a Broad Whole

Beginning with the broadest overview of culture, Eagleton (2016) states that "Culture' is an exceptionally complex word – the second or third most complex word in the English language." (p. 1). However, Eagleton (2016) then goes on to assert that, in spite of its complexity, culture is generally understood in four categories: culture as a creative or innovative piece of work; the result of a process or development by which one improves intellectually or spiritually (i.e., to be cultured in a certain way); the symbolic practices, gestures, acts, etc. by which we recognise people; the entirety of how people live their lives. It is useful to note how Eagleton's first two definitions align closely with

that of a high-culture definition, while the second two with a low-culture definition as discussed in the Introduction, further suggesting how influential both Arnold's and Tylor's definitions have been (see, Table 1).

Beyond this, Eagleton (2016) acknowledges that while the first three definitions may provide a reasonable understanding of what is meant by culture, the fourth is particularly troublesome as it risks being too elusive as a concept. This is the most widely held criticism toward the understanding of culture as it stands in anthropology or in the low-culture/Tylor's definition. Cronk (2018) for example points out that the issue with anthropologists using this kind of definition is that it does not explain what they actually study. Furthermore, Cronk (2018) states that this has led to much of the research on culture be explained in cultural terms without providing any "fundamental explanations". In other words, if, for example, we talk about culture, society, or how we live as defining each other, all that happens is we rely on synonyms or cyclical reasoning to talk about culture, and fail to go any deeper into what is meant by these words or concepts.

Finally, Eagleton (2016) addresses this kind of critique by stating that even such an exhaustive definition as the fourth should not be dismissed, as culture can be more about the way in which things are done than understanding the things themselves. In, other words, what is meant by the last definition provided by Eagleton is how people, as a whole, deal with life as one of the possible understandings of what we call culture when it is used in this sense. This might include the side of the road we drive on, the frequency with which we brush our teeth, or the structure in which a business is run. It does not, however, include the car, the toothbrush, or the business. Taken as such, culture could be said to be the ways in which things are done in a given society. While all the definitions

Eagleton provides may need some amount of elaboration, this broad overview expands upon those earlier definitions as well as presenting the beginnings of arguments for and against such understandings.

Highmore (2016), who also talks about culture as a broad, generic whole, reiterates that the idea of culture falls into the two categories of self- or societal cultivation and achievement (high-culture), and the way in which people live or their customs and social efficacies (low-culture). Expanding upon the disagreements and distinctions Highmore (2016) asserts that what can be considered cultural, in the high-culture sense, is dictated by the elites of society who are able to promote cultural artefacts such as paintings or music as being superior to others. Furthermore, Highmore (2016) connects this to Arnold's idea that culture is the greatest of what has been said, done or created. Here we can begin to see the disapproval toward the high-culture understanding and why such a perspective is widely dismissed. This idea is echoed by Johnson (2013) who adds that "obviously, this idealized account of culture [carries] with it both ethnocentric and elitist connotations." (p. 98). Again, the idea that high-culture is an elitist idea is presented in contrast to Arnold's assertion that it is about "sweetness and light".

On the other side of this argument however, Highmore (2016) doesn't just claim that we should therefore adopt the low-culture sense of culture, but suggests this is evidence to the way in which the understanding of the word has changed over time, and how these understandings can exist simultaneously. To further illustrate this change in meaning over time, Highmore (2016) adds that even though the idea that culture is about improvement may still be how some people understand it, culture is probably better understood today in its more anthropological or ethnographic sense which was not the

case going back even just one generation. This kind of acknowledgement to the complexity of the word culture and its ever-changing meaning reiterates the importance that perspectives have on our understanding of culture as well as helping to explain why so many understandings seem to exist. Finally, Highmore (2016) then further adds that although the elites of society may dictate what is cultural, “many might have a sense that Shakespeare is more firmly part of culture than Beyoncé even if they prefer Beyoncé” (p. 3), again exemplifying how these ideas may co-exist depending on how they are framed. This suggests that the meaning of culture can be agreed upon in the specific department in which it is used, and as there are already common understandings of the word, there is no need to restrict it to any single definition (Walton, 2012).

Already, just by looking at the broad and generic understandings of culture currently circulating the lack of consensus on what culture means is clear. However, there are certain trends including the recognition of culture as an anthropological term describing the ways in which people go about their lives, the preference toward a low-culture understanding over a high-culture one, and the attribution of culture to societies. While some such as Moshe (2018) may argue that neither high or low-culture is intrinsically superior, with both simply having admirers or objectors, there is propensity toward understanding culture in this way which goes all the way back to Arnold and Tylor.

2.2 Culture in Anthropology and The Social Sciences

Again, beginning with a broad overview of culture as it is taken now within the social sciences, Edwards (2007) asserts that it is already known and accepted that culture

has two definitions – *culture* as the arts, and *cultures* as ways of life. Similarly, Thompson et al. (2018) state that there are only two legitimate ways of viewing culture – one is the mental products of humanity such as beliefs, norms and symbols, while the other is social interactions and ways of life. It is clear then that not everyone is in agreement about the co-existence of these ideas as argued for by Highmore (2016) or Walton (2012). Instead, this removes the idea of elitism entirely, placing the ideas of development or cultivation within the realm of artistic expression, and thus, more akin to an extension of low-culture, or, ways of life. Taking this one step further, Johnson (2013) claims that anthropologists are fervently against the elitist notion of high-culture, but the issue of understanding comes from the lack of clarity when culture is described as a whole way of life. Here, Johnson (2013) cites Tylor’s definition as central to both academic and non-academic circles centred around culture, and claims its all-encompassing nature is the problem and reason why such high-culture interpretations have been allowed to exist. To clarify, Johnson (2013) states that Tylor’s definition fails to distinguish between the beliefs and behaviours of the individual and those of the collective society. This suggests that culture is something that belongs to society as a whole and therefore needs to be understood or studied on a societal level, not an individual one. Although Tylor’s definition has been said to be the core understanding of culture as it is in anthropology, there has clearly been some changes or additions in thinking and perspectives in the time since.

Eller (2016), a cultural anthropologist, backs up this line of thinking by defining culture as beliefs and behaviours which are taught and shared among members of a society. Eller (2016) then also cites Tylor’s definition and claims that culture can therefore be understood as the products of social and material customs – a shift away from the “complex whole” of Tylor’s original definition, which seems to have been replaced with the idea of social behaviours. For comparison, Haviland et al. (2013) similarly define

culture as “a society’s shared and socially transmitted ideas, values, and perceptions, which are used to make sense of experience and which generate behaviour and are reflected in that behaviour.” (p. 5). Haviland et al. (2013) further add that these are often unconscious. This may help in explaining why the view of studying culture on a societal level is considered necessary, as individuals are taken to be only parts of this whole, and are (at least for the most part) unaware of their culture.

The idea of social behaviours, or behaviours exhibited by members of a society, has now been mentioned several times. While Tylor (1871) does not use the word behaviour, instead describing a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (p. 1). This has clearly become a widespread way of thinking about culture which is something more akin to the idea of socialisation rather than that of low-culture. Smaldino (2019), for example, explains that culture evolves through the development of certain norms being pushed or used to create certain identities by which people arrange themselves within a community. Taking a more top-down view, it can also be said that being part of a culture means being well socialised and knowing how to act properly within a particular community (Rapport & Overing, 2000). Lastly, Moshe (2018) elaborates on these ideas, suggesting that social events such as prize ceremonies provide a platform where the ideal values of a society are promoted. This means that people then work toward the same values and are socialised in a sufficiently similar way to protect the culture.

However, not everyone is in agreement with this idea of culture as socialisation. For example, Phillips (2018) argues that there are simply too many ways in which

individuals deviate from the population, and instead, culture is better understood as recurring patterns of behaviour that any member in a society can learn to follow. Wagner (1981) attempted to clarify this kind of distinction, stating that when people speak about culture as a singular, they generally do so referring to unique behaviours of member of the human species, while when they speak of cultures as a plural, they tend more to refer to groups of people or societies with specific traditions and located in specific geographical areas. Finally, Richardson (2019) provides an example of culture in another context, stating that it is not confined to society or social circles, but can be manipulated into other areas of life such as economic activity in the form of the cultural industry.

Simplifying all of these ideas about culture as ways of life, social behaviours or socialisation, Cronk (2018) raises the idea that culture is indeed the collective array of possible understandings that Tylor's original, anthropological definition could entail but that it is more a matter of distinguishing what part of it to apply and when. This would suggest that all understandings of culture already put forward are relevant and acceptable – provided they are understood as sub-viewpoints, under Tylor's definition and applied correctly. While this is a somewhat cumbersome way of understanding culture, it certainly reflects the apparent malleability of the concept and the ways in which definitions are able to be both expanded upon or narrowed down in anthropology and the social sciences. Furthermore, Vivanco (2018) more simply defines culture as a way of describing human behaviours which are shared, passed down or learned within a society and claims that this allows anthropologists to study human behaviour without the need to affix everything to genetics. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) also made mention of the similarity between the role of culture in anthropology to evolution in biology, and as the idea of behaviour has been encountered so many times, it should be no surprise that the concept of culture has even been adopted into areas of research in biology.

2.3 Culture from a Biological Perspective

According to Gatherer (2006), culture is a sub-category of human behaviour which, just as in anthropology, is a concept which can vary in definition between different schools of thought in biology. Gatherer (2006) also explains that unlike the general (low-culture) idea of culture found in anthropology, the idea of culture in biology does not include everything that humans do or are taught, but more specifically refers to socially desirable practices. Dawkins (1982) gives the example that wearing shoes can be considered a cultural practice but the ability to tie your shoelaces is a learned behaviour. This is a similar view to that already covered by Eagleton (2016) who suggested that culture is the way in which we deal with life, but with clear differences surrounding the framing of this viewpoint. While in Eagleton's view, culture is framed around how things are done to solve human problems, this biological view frames culture around why things are done in certain ways as social organisms.

In Dawkins' book, *The Selfish Gene* (first published in 1976), it was stated that "most of what is unusual about man can be summed up in one word: 'culture'." (Dawkins, 2016, p. 245). Here, he also introduced his famous concept of the meme – which is described as being analogous to the gene in that it is a packet of information which is spread through communities and is selected for through external pressures (Dawkins, 2016). Bonner (1980) adds to this that genes are selected for through environmental or physical pressures, while memes are selected for through social or mental pressures. Gatherer (2006) explains that memes are therefore ideas and the components that make up culture. In other words, the meme is an attempt at a biological explanation as to why

there are behavioural differences between societies and how these differences propagate. These memes are then one way of breaking up culture into components.

However, the idea of the meme as a biological explanation to culture has, just like any other definition or understanding of culture, had many critics. Sperber (2001), for example, argues that not only is the idea of memes just one among many possible ways of explaining culture in biology, it is also based on the idea that culture is not transferred in a genetic manner, but rather a social one. This effectively places it back into the realm of anthropology and the social sciences, and the understandings that already exist within these fields. Furthermore, the understanding that these memes are spread throughout society because they are selected for by external pressures and because they benefit the community can only be based on theoretical models (Sperber, 2001). Additionally, as Chick (1999) describes, the idea of the meme is an attempt to suggest a unit of measurement for culture to replace other ways of labelling parts or areas of culture, such as beliefs, values, rituals, etc. Therefore, understanding culture as memes does not actually provide an observable component of culture – as can be done with genes when they are passed from one member of a species to another – but rather the meme is more of a way to talk about the phenomena of culture in biological terms.

Defending the idea of memes however, Nabhan (2013) suggests that memes and genes are co-dependant and influence one another. Nabhan (2013) explains through the example that if only certain foods are available for a time or in a region, it is likely that cultures around eating these foods will develop, which in time may lead to the selection of genes that are more beneficial to the consumption or harvesting of these foods. Likewise, if we develop certain genes that make us better suited to eating certain types of

food, it is likely that we would also promote their consumption on a social level, resulting in a certain food culture (Nabhan, 2013). In a similar vein, Best (1999) also remarks about how culture can guide evolution through learning processes. This kind of thinking has led to the development of the study of cultural evolution, which can be defined as the change in culture over any period of time, and produced by certain shared behaviours becoming more or less prevalent in a society (Bonner, 1980; Mesoudi, 2011; Richerson & Christiansen, 2013).

Tying back into the memes – genes debate, Christakis (2019) explains cultural evolution in terms of cultural universals which are stated as traits that are shared across cultures, regardless of geographical separation, and therefore are likely caused by evolution and not society. In other words, certain behaviours such as marriage or wearing clothes are considered genetic as they are cultural universals, while the style or form that these universals take can be more easily explained through memes or cultural evolution. Putting it in another way, Sapolsky (2006) states that culture is more akin to social tradition and can be easily transferred from one member of a species to any other. Christakis (2019) also notes that the idea of cultural universals has many critics, such as those who would point out that if any culture existed that did not share these traits, they would not be universal, but argues that the idea pertains more to the existence of cultural features such as art, language, food or religion and not their specific form.

There are also those who would argue from a biological perspective that culture fulfils a function, which is to improve cooperation in a society (Vlerick, 2020), or that culture can just as easily be found within animals as in humans (Sapolsky, 2006), it is

clear that there exist different understandings of culture within biology, just as with any other field. As Gatherer (2006) summarises:

People who study culture have unfortunately never been able to agree what it is. Nevertheless, there have always been some who think that it is possible to apply evolutionary theory to it, as well as those who think that mechanisms of change in the socio-cultural realm can teach us something about biological evolution. (p. 57).

2.4 Beyond Culture

Due to the seemingly endless ways of talking about culture and the often-open-ended understandings that they entail, there have even been suggestions for the word to be disused entirely. Eriksen (2017), for example, states that although most people who study culture often use malleable definitions, there are also those who claim that we would be better off not using the word in an academic sense at all as it is often extremely broad and unclear. Elaborating on this, Eriksen (2017) presents what is in their view the four most common critiques of the use of the word culture. These are; (1) if it is the opposite of *nature* (genetic or inherent behaviours), then it must simply be *nurture* (learned behaviours), (2) culture taken as a broad whole fails to account for variations within any group or society by assuming that behaviours must be shared by all members, (3) culture serves to create categories or put labels on people which can then be used politically such as through nationalism or segregation, and (4) it is generally taken to be a catch-all phrase which is commonly used in the media to explain things that people don't understand.

Fox and King (2020), however, state that the sentiment that culture needs to be defined is what has not led to any consensus, has not provided more well-informed research, has resulted in researchers on culture over-worrying about how they define it or talk about it, and has come from a perceived need to confront all of this. Furthermore, Fox and King (2020) add that, meanwhile, the idea of culture has been picked up in the public sphere and is used without worry, and equally, that anthropologists and other social scientists can just as simply conduct research on such things without having to analyse every possible interpretation of culture before any work can be done. Consequently, Fox and King (2020) suggest that this worry about the need to define culture be dropped entirely, rather than the word.

These calls to move beyond either the use of, or need to rigidly define culture illustrate how far- and wide-reaching understandings of culture have gone. Already we have seen definitions of culture that open it up to everything that people do in life, ones that connect it with society as a whole, and ones that take it at face value within their own field or interest. As understandings of culture have changed and been expanded upon over the past 150 years, associations which have moved culture well beyond the limits of its historical and anthropologically based understandings have also become extremely common. The connection between language and culture, for example, was clearly prevalent in academic discussion 70 years ago, as Moore (1952) claimed that what is meant by both language and culture in this sense is often taken to be self-evident and definitions are rarely seen. Moore (1952) then further stated that anthropologists often talk about culture to refer to very different things and as such need to first produce a linguistic foundation for their definitions to help differentiate, for example, talking about “culture” versus talking about “a culture”, or, something that is “cultural”. Moore’s

suggestion here was that anthropologists need a linguistic foundation in order to understand the word based on more mathematical signs or syntax.

This, of course, would not be the first or last instance of mentioning the connections between language and culture. There are many who would claim that the two are co-dependent (see, for example, Burridge & Bergs, 2017; Senft, 2014; Senft et al., 2009). However, this presupposes that we know and are in agreement with what is meant by culture. Schiffman (2006) attempts to make a distinction between language and linguistic culture by asserting that language, as studied in linguistics, is a tool which exists separate from culture until people begin to use it in their own social groups in which they ascribe certain goals or purposes to the language which define how it will be used, thus creating linguistic cultures. In other words, unlike many anthropologists who would consider language to be a part of culture, Schiffman (2006) describes culture more as the contexts in which language is used, such as how in a business situation, we use words which are appropriate for the business culture that we are working in. Eller (2016) adds that culture can be viewed as a force which dictates everything people say and do, while Alptekin (1993) and Piller (2012) further add that the culture embedded in language and symbols frame how people perceive the world. These perceptions of language and culture, particularly those held by the public, can then have massive effects on issues such as language policy (Albury, 2014).

To then further illustrate how these ideas of culture can and have moved well beyond their original understandings, Richardson (2019) explains that these same policies which have been influenced by culture are then themselves taken to be cultural. In other words, one could claim that language tools applied to certain social goals create a

connection between language and culture which can then be ascribed in language through such things as policy. These policies then promote certain cultures again through their language or wording. Richardson (2019) then, however, suggests that the idea that everything humans do or produce is culture results in ontological problems, when in reality, the socially preferred and promoted ideas are the ones that are measurable as they provide economic benefit through the more tangible cultural industry or high-culture. This somehow ties all the way back to Arnold's ideas of high-culture and the best of what has been created in the world, but now applied to economic reasoning and perhaps an attempt at an explanation of economic-, or even, capitalist-culture through human behaviours and social trends. Cowen and Tabarrok (2000), however, claim that, from an economic perspective, high- and low-cultures can be distinguished as a matter of quality versus quantity. Cowen and Tabarrok (2000) found in their study that artists whose work tended to be associated with high-culture spent more time and effort to produce it, while artists whose work was more associated with low-culture tended towards mass production and ease of access.

In trying to understand the meaning of culture in fields beyond its traditional definitions, BurrIDGE and Burgs (2017) suggest that the changes in context of a words use can be indicative of its meaning. When it comes to the use of the word culture, however, those contexts can range between political discourse, sociology, linguistics, psychology, sub-cultures, fan/participatory-cultures, economics, and art to name a few (see, for example, Blau, 1986; Jenkins, 2013; Matsumoto & Juang, 2016; Moshe, 2018; Phillips, 2018; Richardson, 2019; Smaldino, 2019; Storey, 2018). This brings us back to the argument of what can be considered culture, where it lies and who has it? On the one hand, it can be argued that culture can be all-encompassing or over-deterministic, yet is generally taken to mean the unique behaviours or artefacts produced by societies (Cronk,

2018). On the other hand, Cronk (2018) also summarises the counter argument, stating “[Culture] is not shorthand for fine art, classical music, and good table manners. It is, rather, something that everyone and every society has.” (p. 4). While the former is perhaps more the focus of the anthropological, biological, and even linguistic debates, the latter it more commonly utilized in external fields. Cronk (2018) suggests that what is clear is that it is a topic which is often fiercely debated along with the “belief that culture is so fundamental to society and so powerful an influence on human behaviour that it is very much worth fighting over.” (p. 1).

2.5 Literature Review Summary

In this literature review I have focused primarily on the understanding of culture as a broad and generic whole within academia. This then led to understandings specifically within anthropology, where the idea of behaviour was continually mentioned along with a few sources, such as Eriksen (2017) and Vivanco (2018), making the comparison directly to ideas in biology. Consequently, I have provided a biological accounting of culture as a comparative reference for how the concept of culture is framed around the context and perspective from which one looks at it. However, the idea of culture and its importance in both research and everyday life has meant that it is a term that carries weight not only for anthropologists who believe it to be their core topic, or biologists who try to encapsulate it as part of their understanding of the nature and nurture of people, but it can and has been applied in just about every field. This has also led to an additional section, *Beyond Culture*, in which I have focused on the ideas of those who believe that the word itself or discussions around it need to be left behind, as well as considering how the word has been applied beyond its original understandings and fields.

3. Methodology

With the concept of culture having such diversity in its meaning and scope, and the different ideas of culture bringing their own sets of variation and assumptions, my first aim is to sample as many of these different interpretations as possible by seeking to gauge the validity and accuracy of these interpretations. If, for example, the idea that everyone has culture and all culture is equal is found to be more prevalent, how would this affect the idea of high-culture and the idea that certain cultural products are of higher quality than others? Furthermore, does the interpretation that people start from determine how they will view other interpretations? Secondly, assuming that all interpretations are equal in validity, but not necessarily equally prevalent, my second goal is to attempt to describe the potential for a relationship between interpretations. Finally, my third aim is to try to identify variations in these interpretations and whether or not there are any other potential ways of understanding and conceptualising culture. As such, this study takes a relativist approach toward understanding the nature and meaning of a concept such as culture by describing the relationships that context, perspective and previous knowledge can play on any given understanding.

3.1 Epistemology and Ontology in Linguistics

The pursuit of understanding meaning and our knowledge of the world is perhaps the oldest and most fundamental endeavour in the academic tradition. With linguistics being the primary field of research concerned with words, language and what we mean

when we say something, I will first cover how linguistic studies claim to know what they know before moving into the methodology of this research.

As soon as we begin to consider how linguists know anything about language, we run into the issue of deciding what linguistics actually is. That is to say, is linguistics about languages - how to speak them and the *art* of learning them? Or, is it the *science* of how language is developed and produced by human beings? In order to explore and expand upon how a linguist can know anything about language, I will first explore the ontological claims held by different areas of linguistics through propositional knowledge (i.e., the knowledge I have from experience and awareness about the topic that something is the case, without making overly specific reference to anyone else (see, for example, Pritchard, 2017)). While trying to avoid unfair oversimplifications, there is a general sentiment that academia falls into three categories: Sciences, Humanities and Arts. The Sciences tend to approach knowledge under the assumption that the world can be objectively understood and knowledge is independent of the knower (objectivism); the Humanities under the assumption that we know the world only through our interactions with it, whether through observances or experiences (interpretivism); and the Arts propose that through experience we can get a sense of the world and eventually become experts with enough practice (subjectivism) (see, for example, Davies & Fisher, 2018; Graham, 2005; Matthews, 2003). Although I use the terms objectivism, interpretivism and subjectivism very loosely, and furthermore, there is often overlap and variation in all parts of academia, what I am trying to give is a general sense of how it is we know anything through different underlying assumptions about the nature of things. These are all important in identifying where the study of language(s) lie, as it is my belief that linguistics actually overlaps and is centred in between all three major branches of academia.

In an introduction to linguistics Matthews (2003) suggests that the field clearly has a place in the arts, yet is also applied in the humanities (particularly sociology and anthropology), and furthermore, has a very scientific side to it as well. By considering where the study of language(s) began, it is no surprise that originally, a *true* linguist was not someone that studied *about* language and from a scientific perspective as it is apt to mean today, but rather someone who *practiced* one or more languages. Whether it be through study of their own mother-tongue, or of a foreign/second language, a linguist was (and at least in a certain sense of the word, still is) a kind of artist. Though this kind of linguist is sometimes called a philologist today (lit. word lover), the subjectivist side of linguistics is still strongly present in sub-fields such as applied linguistics, second-language acquisition, translation and language education, which all consider the language-user as central to knowing.

As has been the case in many subjects as time goes on, from the art arose a science. In this case, Davis and Taylor (2003) explain that orthodox linguistics (the most common type of linguistics in the academic tradition) views languages as objective topics of study which can be codified or systematised generally through grammar, definitions, phonology, etc. This scientific and objective approach to language is more in line with the general understanding of linguistics today and is typically found in subfields such as syntax, semantics, phonetics, and neurolinguistics. However, as Capone and Mey (2016) explain, particularly in the nineteenth century, attitudes toward science and philosophy were changing, where (orthodox) linguists were being pushed ever more to explain the science of language and their underlying assumptions. The main critique of the objective approach with regard to language was that there had not been anywhere near enough consideration for human element – “the users of language were completely left out of the equation” (Capone & Mey, 2016, p. 19). With these shifts in thought and an emphasis

being placed on the human and social aspects of language, modern linguistics has taken a much more interpretivist approach, and entered into the humanities through subfields such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, semiotics, and the philosophy of language.

So, what then can be said about how knowledge is developed in linguistics? I believe that the difficulty of pinning down one approach or set of assumptions in linguistics comes from the fact that whatever knowledge we try to explain must be explained in the words we use. As such, given that linguistics is primarily concerned with words and communicative meaning, it is easy to either manipulate or shift language so that new paradigms may be formed. That is not to say that I think linguists go around trying to take control of language, but simply that language is fluid and, therefore, the way we talk about and communicate knowledge needs to be adapted too. This is why in this research what I have done is to try to avoid all of the common assumptions by considering that, applied in the right way or at the right time, each may be valid or valuable to assessing the linguistic nature of anything that we claim to know. Furthermore, this allows for a research-led methodology and the results to be driven by the ever-changing trends in language. As such, I have taken a more relativist approach, which is to say that careful consideration has been given to context as well as content. Finally, to achieve this epistemological goal, the primary methodology for this research is a folk linguistic approach which means that language-users will be taken as the primary *knowers* of language.

3.2 The Methodology of Folk Linguistics

3.2.1 What is Folk Linguistics?

Broadly speaking, folk linguistics (FL) is a field of language research which focuses on non-linguists' (or non-professional language users) knowledge of, and beliefs about language (Pasquale, 2013). According to Preston (1993), traditional linguistics puts emphasis on discrete knowledge (i.e., the parts of language that most language users are unaware of), natural conversation (such as recording dialogue for analysis), and language structure rather than language content. These are all things that FL runs in opposition to as it asks language users openly what they think and brings the content of language into the user's awareness. As a methodology, the folk linguistic approach addresses the fact that all language users must have some degree of knowledge about how language works in order to use it. Wilton and Stegu (2011) add that language and communication is a natural part of human life and our social environments within which people learn to operate. As such, a certain degree of understanding should be expected. It is these social and communicative understandings that are central to folk linguistic research. As an example of FL in action, Albury (2014) elaborates on the case of language policy, where experts must understand the language issues of everyday people in order to appropriately solve them, and conversely, it is usually the folk people who then have to interpret and act upon said language policies. One of the main points of interest to a folk linguist is in addressing the disparities between the experts and folk users of a language so that we may arrive at a more complete understanding, rather than taking a purely top-down, or purely bottom-up approach.

The FL methodology can therefore be summarised as one that draws out intuitive knowledge by explicitly stating the ideas and theories of the research, and then using these intuitions as the primary object of research and analysis. As an extension of this methodology, this thesis has also revolved heavily around discussion and intuitive (sometimes logical) understandings, rather than singular, authoritative ones.

3.2.2 Applying Folk Linguistics to this Research

As with any non-traditional (and perhaps more recently any) approach, there is often a great deal of critique and criticism. However, in the case of FL that is further exacerbated due to its nature of valuing folk ideas as equal to academic ones. Niedzielski and Preston (2000) explain that folk linguistic studies are often disregarded as naïve or even disingenuous since non-professional linguists are simply not well enough informed to make worthwhile comments on language. Wilton and Stegu (2011) echo this by stating that the idea of considering theories, attitudes or beliefs of everyday people as a part of scientific investigation is nothing new, yet, “Mainstream linguistics [has] continued to keep to the traditional — and often still prevalent — view of anything a non-linguist has to say about language as uninteresting, unqualified, uninformed or even dangerous” (p. 1). Niedzielski and Preston (2000) claim that professional linguists are most likely annoyed with the idea that putting too much value on ordinary people’s opinions of language makes them dismissive of the *expert* opinions.

While it is easy to either dismiss this argument as condescending or, on the other hand, agree with it, believing that academic research should be built upon robust theories developed through years of effort. it is clear that (at the very least within the field of

linguistics) the methodology of FL is one that is contested on the basis that lay- or folk people cannot know as much about language as an expert. However, even from a purely semantic view of what words mean, Hipkiss (2013) points out that words only have meaning when related to our experiences and perceptions. Furthermore, lexicographer Fuertes-Olivera (2018) explains that the transcription of words into dictionaries is as much an art as it is a science that requires a combination of intuiting what words mean and ascribing the correct scientific parameters to each entry. In other words, and in the context of this research, it is important to look at existing definitions as well as perceptions of culture to get to know what the word *can* mean in different contexts. This is where the dual approach of science and art comes into practice as, rather than providing a single intuited response to what culture means, this research seeks to provide a range of intuited and scientifically/linguistically led ideas on what constitutes culture from both inside and outside of academia. Finally, this research seeks to use the methodology of FL to give a fair account and representation of all sides, while attempting to remain unbiased as to which is correct or more important, in order to find what can be learned by looking beyond the current academic knowledge.

In order to fairly represent a range of claims from both inside and outside of academia this research proposes that viewing a topic from both carefully thought-out and internalised understandings as well as intuitive and externalised understandings can lead to a fuller, more complete representation of what an idea such as culture means. Paveau (2011) asserts that in spite of potential misunderstandings held by the folk people being researched, the theories should not be dismissed on an *a priori* basis, but rather integrated into the overall discussion of linguistic and scientific research. While it could be said that asking non-professional linguists for their opinions of linguistic issues such as complex syntax or translation methods for second-language learners is inappropriate, what has to

be considered is the scope and context of the research. In the case of this research, I am not concerned with pinning down *one* definition of culture and arguing for it as the *correct* definition, but rather, focus on showing the range of understandings on the topic of culture. Moreover, rather than being dismissive of any views on culture, this research considers how both academics and non-academics may have their own cultural backgrounds adding to the complexity of potential interpretations. Finally, in the context of this research, I believe it would be fair to make the claim that non-academics still use and/or are a part of culture, while additionally, given that different academic fields have different perspectives on what constitutes culture, it is worthwhile taking a more holistic approach to understanding such a broad concept.

While folk linguistic studies generally focus on the topics in classical linguistic (such as parts of speech, conversation, grammar, etc.) this research has taken the approach of FL and applied it to what is effectively a linguistic *and* cultural study of the concept of culture itself. In other words, rather than just purely focusing on what culture means as a semantic unit and asking people to define it, like what would be done in a more typical folk linguistic study, this research is focused on giving people the opportunity to express both meaning and ideas related to culture, as well as take into account how the term is used in various academic and non-academic contexts. This approach is obviously quite practical in terms of addressing one of the questions of this research, which asks how people in Auckland conceptualise culture. Furthermore, this allows for a range of academic ideas on culture from different fields to be put forward to people, who then have a chance to respond and add their own ideas. By taking this approach, this research allows for a multidisciplinary and multivariable analysis of what a large concept such as culture can entail. Furthermore, the methodology of FL being applied here does not restrict the analysis to experts/academics versus non-professionals/folk beliefs, but rather, by taking

each side as potentially valid, shows that academics are not above intuiting definitions and ascribing folk language explanations to them, nor everyday folk perceptions void of logical reasoning.

3.3 Research Design and Problems

In applying a methodology that attempts to consider knowledge and ideas from all sides, there are several considerations that need to be taken. One of these is the problem of designing research that is capable of reaching wide enough to incorporate enough perspectives on the concept of culture to be considered a valid representation. This first came in the form of background research into academic literature where (as discussed in Chapter 2) it was found that concepts of culture not only exist within a broad range of fields, but even amongst these, variations and disagreements on the concepts exist to seemingly no end as well. The question then was how can these variations all be accounted for and fairly represented? Simply put, it is impossible to find every account of culture in enough detail to pin down each variation on the concept. However, I will once again note that it is not the aim of this research to define culture or seek out every possible definition, but instead to showcase how complex and variable such a topic can be. As such, recurring ideas and underlying themes have been drawn out to represent a wide range of fields.

The second issue in this approach is then putting forward these ideas about culture in a way that is both accessible for people to comment on, but also include a wide enough range of potential responses (i.e., not limiting the responses to one frame of reference such as anthropology professors or classmates who are interested in similar topics). For

this problem, this research will use the method of survey where the key points made in the different fields researched in Chapter 2 have either been referenced directly or the overall themes have been paraphrased for participants to consider and respond to (I go into this more in section 3.3.2 – survey design). Additionally, the survey has been regionalised to Auckland city due to its recognised status of superdiversity, meaning that it has a wide range of people from different age groups, backgrounds, beliefs, languages, religions, and more (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi, 2013). This has been done to allow for the responses to come from a sufficiently broad range of perspectives, while still maintaining accessibility and an overall fair representation of folk ideas on culture.

3.3.1 Survey Method

As the topic of culture has been shown to be incredibly broad, a survey has been chosen as the primary and preliminary method by which research data will be collected. Bryman (2012) explains that surveys are one of the key methods for sampling in a way that produces results that are representative of a wider population. In terms of this research, what is being sampled is people's understandings and/or attitudes toward culture, in the context of the population of Auckland which is considered "superdiverse" (Terruhn, 2020), and therefore, representative of a range of cultures. One reason for taking this approach is that surveys allow for some of the ideas surrounding culture, such as the ideas that culture is dependent on a person's ethnic background or that culture is dependent on the society that you are a part of, to be put forward to people from a range of potential perspectives. Alternative methods such as interviews or ethnography could be much more heavily influenced by the limited number of participants, or by researcher/observation

bias. Another reason for choosing surveys in the context of Auckland is that the superdiverse status could be re-phrased as Auckland's population is representative of a wide range of global cultures (in one sense of the word culture). So, the research is a matter of collecting a representation of understandings of *culture* from a population that is representative of a range of *cultures* (i.e., a range of people from backgrounds will be able to express their thoughts and opinions on culture). Finally, as cultural anthropologists Jack Eller (2016) suggests, surveys are a good way to begin an enquiry into topics or problems that require new knowledge or understandings. As has been established in the literature review, ideas relating to culture have been researched and discussed extensively, but there has been little interdisciplinary dialogue as to what culture actually is. As the ideas of culture are so vast and variable from department to department, research into how these ideas may or may not be connected and what the users of culture think of them is underdeveloped. In order to bring some of these ideas together and ask about the value and validity in them, the survey method fills the roles of both allowing folk people to express their ideas and also develop a new area of research.

3.3.2 Survey Design

Before any kind of survey could be undertaken, it is important to note that ethical approval was acquired from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) and participants were provided with an information sheet on what the survey would entail (see Appendices A and B). The design and questions in the survey have been chosen as follows (see Appendix C for full survey):

- The first section contains open questions about the nature of culture and what first comes to mind when the participants are confronted with the idea of culture. Johnson and Morgan (2016) point out, open questions pose the issue of a lack of nuance and are often ignored entirely. However, this is part of the logic behind beginning with these questions as, even though some people may simply choose not to answer them, the ones who do will be able to express their ideas without being led to any of the perspectives on culture held by myself (the researcher) or those discussed in Chapter 2 – Literature Review. Therefore, the wording of these questions also had to be carefully constructed. For example, the question in Q1 a) *What culture (if any) would you describe yourself as?* seemed less natural than *What culture would you describe yourself as belonging to?* or *What culture are you a part of?* However, those phrasings assume the position that culture is something that people belong to, or are a part of, and not that culture is something that people have, or that people may not feel that they belong to any particular culture. Furthermore, another reason for beginning with questions about culture that maintain an openness to any understanding of what could be considered culture, is that it gives participants a chance to start with thinking of their own ideas before being given a chance to respond to ideas that others have, even if they choose not to answer in this first section.

- The second section contains closed questions and is concerned with the linguistic and social influences on perceptions of culture. This includes separating the ideas of *culture* and something that is *cultural*, as well as asking participants to rank-order a list of *cultural* items in an attempt to see if the ways in which culture is talked about had any influence on people's perceptions of it. The rationale behind this being that, as this survey is based in a superdiverse city (Auckland), the linguistic and social influences on how people perceive culture would be expected to be extremely broad. Therefore, the answers to any question that attempt to constrain what is considered culture or cultural should also

be expected to be unclear. It may seem strange to hypothesise that the findings of this section of the survey will be unclear, however this is an important part of allowing people to express different ideas as well as helping to determine whether or not the perspectives on culture really are as broad as expected.

- The third section again uses closed questions, but unlike the second section, is based purely on the ideas of culture found within the literature review. Fink (2003) suggests that closed questions can provide clear feedback on specific topics. The feedback being sought here is how people respond to the ideas put forward in various forms of academic literature and departments. This has been done through the use of a Likert scale so that the degree to which participants agree or disagree with these ideas could be gauged after they've had the chance to think about culture in their own terms. Furthermore, this section provides one of the main quantitative sources of feedback on the ideas of culture found within academia as the rest of the survey is highly qualitative and allows for new ideas and folk perspectives to be more broadly understood and discussed.

- The final section of the survey once again utilises open questions and is primarily to give participants a chance to share any final thoughts they have on culture after both thinking about it themselves and being exposed to some of the more common ideas found in the academic literature. This section is very similar to the first and provides the chance for direct reflection and comparison between the sets of ideas.

Throughout the design of this survey, ideas that appear to be in direct conflict with one another (such as in Q3 where we have the ideas *all cultures are equal* and *culture can be good or bad*) have been intentionally grouped together. This has been done to bring the obvious incompatibilities to the attention of the participants as it was thought that if

these ideas had been separated and worded less in a way that was in direct conflict, participants may simply agree with both ideas without the chance to reflect upon their implications. This would not necessarily be an error in research that was concerned with showing how people can hold conflicting views on a topic, however, that is not the focus of this research, which is instead more concerned with giving people the chance to respond to, and think about different ideas on culture – whether they are in direct conflict or not.

3.3.3 Format and Limitations

This survey was implemented through an online format. Online surveys are useful for accessing those who may need additional privacy to express their thoughts and also bypass potential social pressures and gatekeepers which may affect who participates, or what they say (Murray, 2014). This was an important consideration in choosing to conduct this research online and in the form of a survey.

As previously mentioned, interviews or ethnographic research could introduce observer or researcher bias which was not in keeping with the aims of this research for allowing people to have their own thoughts on culture expressed. Furthermore, there had to be consideration as to how having other people present could produce social pressure to answer in certain ways, or limit the willingness of participants to fully express their own thoughts. However, the main drawback of the online format is that of a non-response bias. Additionally, while the online format allows for a greater reach of potential participants than a traditional paper/face-to-face survey, which would be limited to the immediate area in which the survey was conducted, it is also more susceptible to self-

selection bias, as well as the negative self-selection bias of people or communities that are less willing to participate or share their ideas. This likely means that those who do respond are more likely to have some interest or pre-conceived notions on culture. However, this is also part of the reason for giving participants a chance to share their own ideas first, followed by introducing a range of ideas found in academic literature which can then be reflected upon in the final section of the survey. Furthermore, in taking a folk linguistic methodology, the ideas which people may have before participating in the survey are taken to be just as valid as those of someone who had not thought about the topic before.

Finally, as this topic is highly qualitative and conceptual, there is little to compare to or quantify, and thus, much is left to intuition and a general sense of the topic being discussed. This is not so much an issue to this research as the aim is to open discussion on how concepts such as culture can be interpreted in a variety of ways. However, it is a noteworthy limitation as to the claims that this research can make and their implications.

3.3.4 Ethical Considerations and Recruitment

Throughout the design and implementation of this survey, several ethical issues have been attended to in an attempt to minimise any potential harmful or misleading elements, and also minimise researcher bias. Highest among these is putting any one interpretation of culture above others and promoting it as the *correct* one. Through much of the literature review, there was a notion that culture as high-culture (i.e., the idea that certain arts or endeavours are superior and reflect the values of a society more than others) was to be dismissed on the basis that it was *obviously wrong*. Although one might not

agree with this sentiment, I wanted to still give people a chance to encounter that idea and respond to it as they saw fit.

There was also the risk at this point of favouring the participants perspectives over that of academic researchers which is why the methodology of FL has been implemented in the way it has been. That is to say, the survey is not designed to prove or disprove any perspective on culture, but rather aid in clarifying the lack of clarity and diversity of opinion when it comes to talking about such a topic. In addition to this there also had to be consideration for how questions were worded so as not to mislead anyone, yet still be clear in what is being asked. For this, as there is little prior research to fall back on for this topic and a range of highly qualitative ideas, the best that could be done was to intuit and attempt to fairly represent all the different ideas in a way that was transparent. The participants were also provided with sufficient background information to understand that this survey was about presenting and representing perspectives on what culture is and not an attempt to promote any one idea over others.

Finally, this survey was also advertised to a wide range of Aucklanders primarily through the use of online Facebook community pages relating to Auckland and suburbs all over Auckland. This was done as I have previously had no connection to any of those community pages and wanted to minimise potential biases from family/friends. Additionally, these pages are targeted at people living in particular areas and, therefore, are likely to have a range of perspectives and understandings. This also allows for self-selection bias where not every member of those groups will participate, but instead only those who wish to think about and comment on concepts of culture would participate as there is little to no pressure from other members of the groups to give certain kinds of

opinions. Consequently, of the approximately 20 community groups involved, 153 participants provided usable responses (i.e., they gave any amount of feedback on the survey as they were free to leave as much blank as they wished). This survey was all conducted through the use of the Qualtrics survey software. As previously mentioned, ethical approval from AUTECH was also acquired before conducting this survey.

4. Results and Analysis

After allowing the survey to remain open for approximately one-month, a total of 153 participants submitted responses. While any demographic data was not included as part of this survey as it would both undermine the purpose of this study to not assume the nature of culture by relating it to demographics, in addition to losing some of the anonymity promised in this survey, it indeed both surprising and unsurprising that the results and feedback of the participants in this research has been just as varied as the ideas of culture within academia. Whether by looking at variations between individual responses or apparent contradictions in the in the collective sum of data, it would seem that even within the population of Auckland there is no consensus on precisely what constitutes culture. However, it should also be noted that this does not mean that people simply were not well-informed enough as is often the criticism of a folk linguistic methodology, but rather that they were almost too capable of speaking on the topic. To this, some researchers on the topic such as Highmore (2016) have suggested that a few decades ago people would probably think of culture mostly in its high-culture sense, while today they would think of it in its low-culture sense. Yet, by providing open question spaces where people were able to give their own thoughts, both before and after presenting various ideas on culture, not only did the participants cover a range of perspectives on culture, but they also totalled over 16,000 words in the open questions between the 153 responses from the participants. This suggests that they were cumulatively aware of several different ways of understanding culture and that they were willing and able to make significant commentary based on their own individual ideas about culture.

In this section I will firstly discuss how the data has been analysed, followed by the findings from the survey and discuss the implications of these results as they appear. In order to analyse these results in a cohesive and coherent manner, I will do this by separating the results into the closed questions of the survey, which were more quantitative and provide an initial understanding of how participants responded to various ideas, followed by the open questions, which were highly qualitative and interpretive, but lead to a deeper understanding of how culture is talked about as well as potential areas of further inquiry into the topic and concept of culture.

4.1 Analysis

As a consequence of conducting research which is highly qualitative and dependent on views from a range of people and sources the question of analysis is one that needs to be considered very carefully. While there is some data which can easily be presented in a quantitative manner, such as how many people said that language or music was culture in Q2.a of the survey, much of the analysis had to first be considered in an intuitive manner – just as the manner in which the answers were given. This is because I first needed to get a sense of what participants were trying to say and what the recurring ideas were rather than try to force any of the responses into certain ideas that have already been presented by other academics or that I held about culture. This then allows for the methods of analysis to be chosen based on the best ways to capture what the participants were saying, allowing their understanding to be fairly represented and for understandings of culture which may not yet have been captured by previous academic concepts, but are nonetheless held by the participants, to come forward.

4.1.1 Folk Linguistic Analysis

The main way in which the results will be analysed is simply an extension of the FL methodology. Although much FL research has thus far been centred around traditional language concepts, such as variations in language held by second-language (L2) speakers (see, for example, Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2016) this research extends the ideas and theories guiding FL into a folk linguistic analysis (FLA). As this research has investigated a wide range of understandings of culture in academic literature and now seeks to investigate folk understandings of culture within Auckland, intuitive understanding and language awareness which guide FL methodology will be further implemented into the analysis.

For the purposes of this research, what I mean by intuitive understandings and language awareness is conversation and discussion about the findings of the survey. As one of the motivations for this research is to promote conversation about how ideas such as culture can mean different things to different people in different contexts, analysing the results through discussion is the most conducive method to achieving this goal. Additionally, this method has been chosen so as not to deconstruct the data, but rather discover understandings based on representing participant feedback in conjunction with the ideas reviewed in the academic literature. As such, this FLA probably most closely resembles a discursive analysis, primarily used in psychology – “Akin to mindfulness based practices, discursive analysis attends to the moment-to-moment arising and fluctuation of interactional meaning.” (Gale, 2010, p. 11). Gale (2010) goes on to explain how a discursive analysis aims to capture understandings of client and family understandings of a situation in therapy and the perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness of the therapist largely depends upon their ability to understand the client’s situation. In

much the same way, this research has always been centred on providing a fair accounting of both folk and academic understandings of culture, and thus, the utilisation of discussion and awareness in relation to the interactional meaning of the results makes the FLA most suitable.

4.1.2 Thematic Analysis

In addition to the FLA, the open question sections of the survey will utilise thematic analysis (TA). Alhojailan (2012) describes TA as one of the most useful types of qualitative methods of analysis for interpretive data whereby the relationships between concepts and recurring ideas or themes can be determined. It is done by describing recurring patterns or themes which occur within large data sets and, therefore, does not rely on any pre-existing ideas, but only upon the sum of attitudes or understanding of the participants (Alhojailan, 2012).

This method therefore allows for the understandings of culture circulating within the minds of Aucklanders to be presented without being either overly prescriptive nor under developed. Additionally, the TA method has been just as applicable to the selection of questions in the survey based on the literature review as certain common ideas or themes had to be pulled out in order to present the participants with something that they could comment on and not overload them with a wide range of ideas and a lack of consensus. The rationale behind this is to produce a way of understanding or talking about culture which is neither so rigidly defined that it forces certain viewpoints, nor so loose that it becomes vague and impractical. This is also in keeping with the theory behind TA and the methodology of FL. As Clarke and Braun (2014) state:

TA emphasizes the active (and reflexive) role of the researcher in constructing codes and themes. Themes do not simply “emerge” from the data; the researcher does not simply search the data for the themes residing within them. Rather, the researcher makes active, interpretative choices in *generating* codes and in *constructing* themes. (p. 1948).

Practically speaking, the overall FLA method used works as follows: The closed questions will have the statistical data discussed in relation to their implications for FL understandings of culture in Auckland and the relevant themes and ideas from the literature review. This will be done through the use of the Qualtrics survey software analysis tools, alongside Excel to access the more statistical data. Meanwhile, the open questions will utilise the TA method to provide findings on how culture is talked about. This will require the addition of a keyword list, which takes the most frequently used words in a given set of text to indicate patterns or word function in context (Archer, 2009). This keyword list will then show what words are most commonly being used, and those words will then be grouped into themes to provide an understanding of how culture is talked about, or most commonly explained by the participants. This section will use the AntConc software which is able to identify keywords and phrases. The themes will then be determined from the keywords manually, which will be based on their context and discussed in the same way as the closed questions with reference to their statistical occurrence and their relevance to the ideas of culture.

4.2 The Closed Questions – Statistical and Folk Linguistic Analysis

4.2.1 Participant Views of Culture/Cultural Items

Questions Q2. a) and Q2. b) had participants check the items they considered to be culture and cultural respectively and the results were as follows:

Figure 1.1.

Survey Question Q2. a) Items Considered Culture.

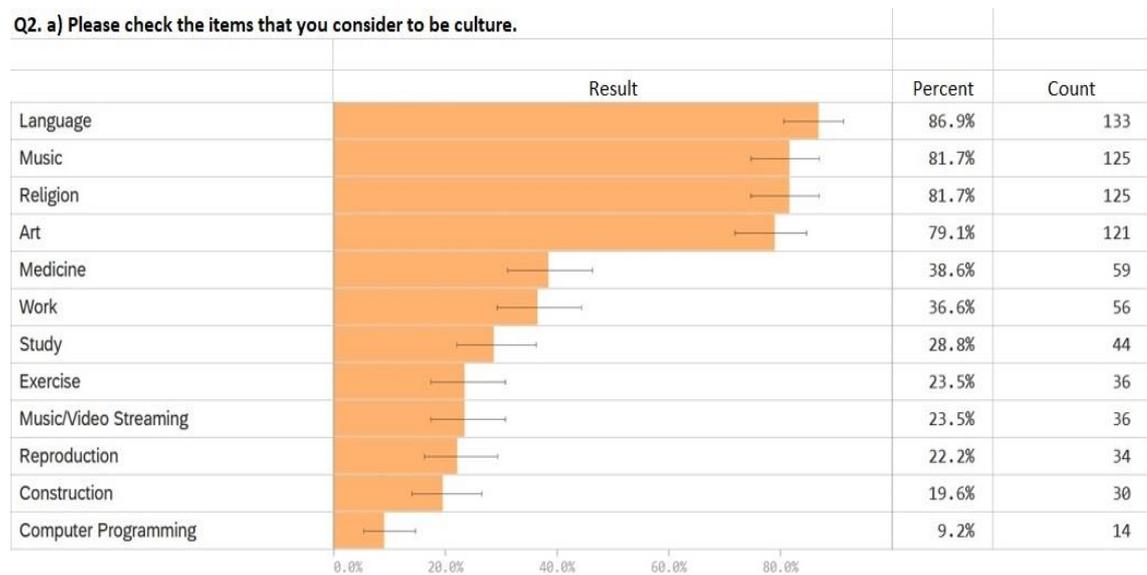
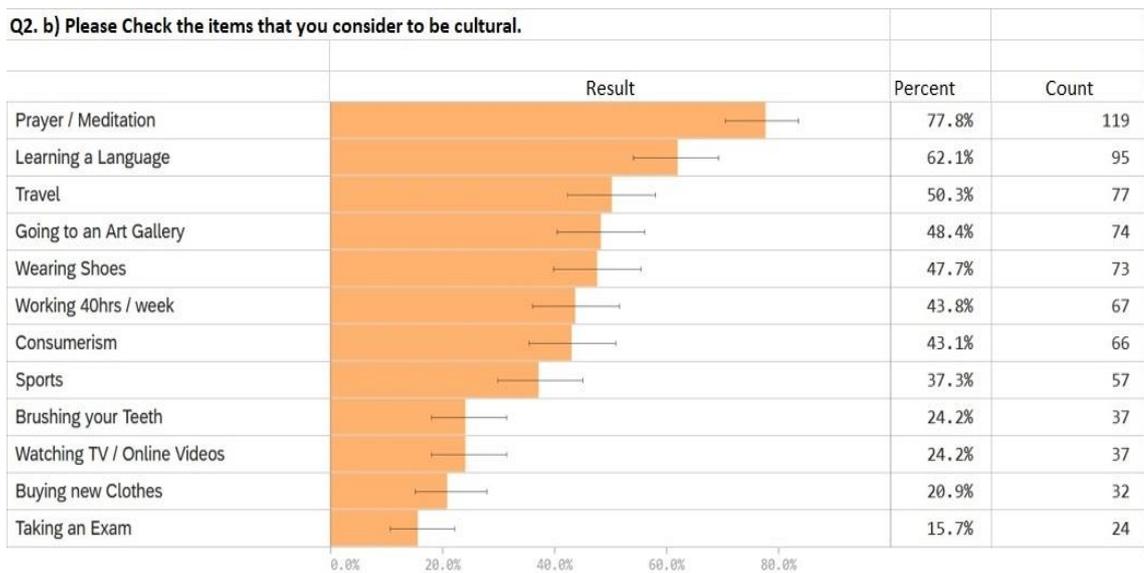


Figure 1.2.

Survey Question Q2. b) Items Considered Cultural.



Although many of the items chosen for these questions came from the review of literature, such as the ideas of language, music, art and religion, some liberties were taken to try to add additional items for comparison that could be included in culture or as cultural to draw more out from the participants. Originally, this was intended to be a section where the differences in nuance between something that is culture and something that is cultural, and as such, participants were asked to simply ignore the distinction but answer what felt most natural. While this was later dropped as it was deemed overly interpretive within the scope of this research and would need a great deal more investigation with more research more specifically set up for such purposes, the formatting of the questions was left as it was.

However, this had certain benefits in itself. For example, one potential issue was the fear of leading the answers by grouping **Language** with **Learning a Language** or **Art** with **Going to an Art Gallery**. If these ideas weren't separated into two questions, it could have affected the outcome of the results as there could possibly have been some bias toward the more all-encompassing/broader terms. Therefore, leaving them separated helped to put everything on a more even playing field and mitigated the direct comparisons between items such as **Language** with **Learning a Language**. Additionally, the participants actually seemed to care little for the distinction between saying something is culture versus something is cultural, and rather, answered everything with a maintained focus on their overall view/understanding of culture.

Looking at the results, it is perhaps not surprising to see **language, music, religion** and **art** respectively ranked at the top. These are ideas which have appeared in common understandings of culture since both Arnold and Tylor's definitions, and they continue to be presented in dictionary definitions today. Conversely, while **prayer/meditation** ranked highly, there was a significant drop to **learning a language**, then again to **going to an art gallery**. Perhaps as Highmore (2016) suggested, there is a preference toward low-culture understandings and had this research been conducted 30 – 40 years ago, there may have been more preference toward high-culture understandings. This might have resulted in the ideas to do more with self-cultivation appearing higher in the results, such as **travel** or **going to an art gallery**.

Something important to note however, is that by no means are the high-culture based ideas completely dismissed as some such as Johnson (2013) might argue for. Rather, just as with the ideas of culture found within the literature review, there are clearly diverse

opinions about what constitutes culture, with less glamorous ideas such as **taking an exam** and **computer programming** still having a fair portion of people believing that they are also a part of culture. Yet, overall, the results shown here suggest that culture is still understood by the majority of people in the sense of high- or low-culture and in how it is portrayed in dictionary definitions (see, Table 1).

4.2.2 Most to Least Cultural

Question Q2. c) had participants rank some items in order of most to least cultural (1 – 8) while allowing them to select the same number twice or put a (0) for items they believed not to be a part of culture at all.

Figure 2.

Survey Question Q2. c) Items Ranked by Cultural Order.

| Q2. c) | Rank | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Count | Mean | Median | 0 |
|-----------------------------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------------|-------------|------------|----|
| Variable | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (1) Archaeology | | 38 | 23 | 21 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 123 | 3.19 | 3 | 3 |
| (2) Shakespeare | | 27 | 24 | 23 | 12 | 17 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 123 | 3.43 | 3 | 2 |
| (3) Politics | | 31 | 15 | 12 | 19 | 17 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 116 | 3.54 | 3 | 7 |
| (4) The Great Wall of China | | 26 | 29 | 11 | 18 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 121 | 3.59 | 3 | 4 |
| (5) Eating Sushi | | 15 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 15 | 11 | 121 | 4.40 | 4 | 4 |
| (6) Drinking Coffee | | 16 | 6 | 15 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 121 | 4.69 | 5 | 3 |
| (7) The Internet | | 14 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 16 | 17 | 25 | 110 | 5.16 | 6 | 12 |
| (8) Beyoncé | | 9 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 42 | 107 | 5.83 | 7 | 15 |
| Totals | | | | | | | | | | 942 | 4.23 | 3.5 | |

Note: A graph for each variable can be found in Appendix D.

This question was aimed at providing a direct comparison between things that could be considered culture. As comparisons had been avoided until this point, both in the previous questions of the survey and in the literature review, this question specifically gave a chance for high- and low-culture ideas to compete. Although this again had to rely on liberties being taken with just what can actually be considered high- or low-culture, two items provided an easy starting point. These came from Highmore (2016), who made specific mention of **Shakespeare** (representing traditional, elitist high-culture) being thought of as more a part of culture than **Beyoncé** (representing more modern/common place, low-culture).

Extending out from here, I added **The Great Wall of China** as a representation of more traditional ideas of culture, travel and achievement, commonly being spoken about and thought of as a wonder of the world. To this I made a modern comparison of such a wonder and achievement by adding **The Internet**. Next, leaning more toward elitism or high-culture, **Archaeology** and **Politics** were chosen because of their authoritative positions in society, and also their apparent irrelevance to one another, with one specifically being about getting to know cultural artefacts and the other concerned with society and the issues of today (supposedly making it invisible as a part of culture as Haviland et al. (2013) have claimed). Finally, I added the low-culture sense of everyday life and food through **Eating Sushi** and **Drinking Coffee** which, in themselves, could be compared on a cultural basis.

Given that all of these are certainly open to interpretation about their roles in culture, it is of course hard to say definitively why participants ranked them one way or another. The data can also be looked at in two ways: On the one hand, the top four items

all lean toward a top-down/authoritative, historical or superiority sentiment, while the bottom four could all be seen as more common-place, modern or mundane. This could indicate that when given a chance for comparison, people may lean toward a high-cultural understanding of culture, perhaps due to the very idea that it is associated with simply being better. This is also backed up by the tendency for the answers of '0', or 'not cultural at all', to loosely follow the same order, with more people feeling that **The Internet** and **Beyoncé** are not a part of culture at all while fewer feel that **Archaeology** and **Shakespeare** are not.

On the other hand, though, if we look at the means and medians (answers of '0' have been excluded), an answer of 4.5 would be average, with 3-6 still being somewhere in the middle, while 1-2 and 7-8 being on the extreme ends. By looking at the top seven items it would seem then that there is no consensus about whether any of these items are culture or not, or how much a part of culture they are, given that they all fall within the centre and only have slight leans toward one side or the other. As such, we cannot then claim definitively that everyone understands these ideas to be culture or places value upon them as prestigious cultural ideas as it could be taken in the high-culture sense. Furthermore, if we look at the totals for the mean and median, they too are almost directly within the centre, suggesting that on the whole, the items from which the participants were able to select were all fairly ambiguous parts of culture, and that on the whole, the perceptions of whether these ideas are culture or not was neutral – possibly owing to the diversity of participants involved.

The possible exception to this of course, being that of **Beyoncé**. This may then be due to the fact that, as Haviland et al. (2013) claimed, culture in the sense of shared

behaviours or practices can be unconscious. As listening to Beyoncé may be a part of this society's current behaviours or practices and may require greater awareness to consider them culture. However, as an alternative to this idea, this could indicate that celebrities such as Beyoncé have yet to become a part of culture as it is perceived by the people of Auckland, or even that they are in fact not a significant part of culture in spite of anthropological claims. Once again, this may simply be a matter of perspective or definition as to how one thinks about culture, and not a case of right or wrong.

4.2.3 Likert Scale Responses to Ideas from Academia

The final closed question, Q3, was comprised of statements which were taken from a mixture of ideas and sentiments which were discussed in the Literature Review. Some of the ideas were actually those that were argued against by the academics and some were presented as a way of defining, understanding or interpreting culture. For the purposes of this research, however, it was not possible to go into all the details of every idea that was come across in the literature, so instead Q3 was designed around giving participants the chance to respond to a range of ideas which were often contradictory with one another. For this question, participants were asked to give their opinion of whether or not they agreed with the statements and to what degree based on a typical Likert scale.

Figure 3.

Survey Question Q3. Likert Scale of Aucklanders' Feelings Towards Ideas of Culture.

| Q3. | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neutral | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Culture changes over time. | 0% | 3% | 4% | 36% | 58% |
| Culture is the actions and creations of people which are particular to their society. | 1% | 4% | 4% | 39% | 53% |
| Culture describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives. | 2% | 7% | 7% | 39% | 44% |
| Culture can be seen in the ways we act. | 1% | 2% | 7% | 46% | 44% |
| Culture can be good or bad. | 3% | 7% | 14% | 33% | 43% |
| Culture is identified through behaviours or patterns of behaviour. | 1% | 3% | 8% | 51% | 37% |
| All culture is built upon shared human endeavours of language, art, religion, society, industry, etc. | 1% | 4% | 8% | 49% | 37% |
| Culture is the accumulation of traits and characteristics held by individuals. | 4% | 13% | 9% | 41% | 33% |
| Culture is the set of 'norms' which are expected in a society. | 2% | 13% | 10% | 44% | 30% |
| All cultures are equal. | 22% | 19% | 18% | 13% | 29% |
| Certain great works showcase culture more than others. | 6% | 16% | 13% | 44% | 21% |
| Culture works to promote cohesion within a society. | 4% | 16% | 20% | 42% | 18% |
| Culture (or the best of culture) is old. | 32% | 32% | 13% | 15% | 7% |
| Culture represents the best parts of a society and promotes an ideal standard. | 20% | 26% | 27% | 20% | 7% |
| Culture cannot be shared with people outside of your own culture. It is something you are born into. | 59% | 32% | 4% | 4% | 1% |

I will begin the analysis of these results with something which runs counter to what has been the core of this thesis. With every other question in this survey, there has been disparities in the results, meaning that it had been impossible to say conclusively just what culture is or as within academic literature that there was any kind of consensus. These results however show some very strong agreement toward certain ideas of culture, with many having fewer than 7% of participants (10 people) answering in opposition. This thesis has shown from the background on the idea of culture in the Introduction, the ideas currently circulating within academia about culture in the Literature Review, and the results thus far provided from the survey that there is no consensus as to what constitutes culture, and that our understandings are dependent on the perspective or context from which one tries to talk about it. However, particularly in the case of **culture changes over time**, which had absolutely no one strongly disagree, this question showed that there can be some agreement about ideas of culture.

Even though we might not be able to agree on what culture is anywhere else, perhaps here there is some indication that we may be able to agree on certain aspects of culture, such as that it changes over time. These results could then provide an indication of why it has been seemingly impossible to provide one single definition of culture, as it is in fact many of those attempted definitions. Following the idea that **culture changes over time**, the next three statements with the strongest agreement have been based on Tylor's (1871) definition of culture and a combination of Eagleton's (2016) broad explanation of culture as a whole with the overall themes of culture within anthropology. It could be said that these are likely to be agreed upon due to being generic and broad ideas of culture, but I believe this is more of a reflection on what culture actually means to people and why there is a tendency to use broad definitions when talking about culture both in and out of academia.

Save for the final one, the remainder of the statements fall more toward the neutral or no-consensus category, but still give an indication of Aucklanders' attitudes toward culture overall. Ideas such as **culture can be good or bad** was one aimed at targeting something of a sensitive topic and one that went against such ideas as high-culture is an ethnocentric and elitist notion (Johnson, 2013). This idea was also placed sequentially with the idea **all cultures are equal**, giving participants a direct point of comparison from which their perspective could be framed. In spite of this, there was a positive trend toward **culture can be good or bad**, while **all cultures are equal** had the most neutral response of all. This is perhaps one of the most important points of comparison in this whole survey as the results show that our ideas of culture can be directly inferred from how it is being talked about at any given moment (I will also reiterate here that participants were encouraged throughout the survey to just "go with their gut and not worry about apparent contradictions", putting importance on their intuitive understandings).

One possible reason for the contradiction could be that the participants did not intuitively feel these ideas were incompatible at all, but rather that ideas like **culture can be good or bad** could be referring to sub-sections of their own culture or practices that are more desirable within a culture, while **all cultures are equal** could be interpreted as making direct comparisons between cultures when taken in Tylor's sense of civilisation, or, other countries as it could be rephrased to better fit the language used today. Even the idea that **certain great works showcase culture more than others** had a positive trend (although it leaned toward being neutral), suggesting further that Arnold's sense of culture has also not been entirely dismissed and that there is at least some preference, whether they be elitist or not, toward certain aspects or artefacts of culture.

Of the ideas which were disagreed with, only three had a significant lean toward this side. Two of these ideas **Culture (or the best of culture) is old** and **culture represents the best parts of society and promotes an ideal standard** both had high-culture connotations, but the later was actually more influenced from the biological view that culture serves the function of creating cooperation (Vlerick, 2020), and the sociological view that culture is promoted through social events such as award ceremonies which promote ideal social standards (Moshe, 2018). It was somewhat surprising to find that the idea of culture being old was not more neutral, given how in the other questions, the more modern or common-place ideas tended to rank lower. Furthermore, the idea of social standards also fell short, despite culture sometimes being talked about in this way by biologists and sociologists when they try to ascribe a function to it.

Finally, we come to the idea that **culture cannot be shared with people outside of your own culture. It is something you are born into**. This was the only statement which came close to a consensus of disagreement and is perhaps a reflection of the diversity of Auckland's population where it is common for people of different backgrounds and ideologies to share ideas, traditions, food, and so on. This also runs counter to views of culture which are ethnocentric, but also ideas that people outside of a culture cannot understand it.

4.2.4 Summary of Aucklanders' Responses to Ideas in Academia

Although many of the ideas discussed in the Literature Review had to be left out or glossed over, this section is perhaps the best for understanding Aucklanders' attitudes toward culture overall. Rather than showing the variation and context dependence of ideas about culture as has been done throughout the majority of this thesis, these results are more indicative of how a diverse population feels when given a range of different ideas about culture. This also provides a basis for folk understandings of culture, which are inferred from intuitive or natural understandings, or in other words, are led by real world interactions with culture and not by over-thinking about ideas as can be easily done in the academic world. From these results, we may then be able to extrapolate from the top four ideas, which were close to a consensus, and the final idea, which was almost completely rejected, and make an attempt at a definition of culture which has been based upon Aucklanders' opinions of academic ideas. As such, it could be said that:

Culture is the actions and creations of people which are particular to their society, yet, it is shareable with people of other societies. Although it changes over time, culture describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives and can be seen in the ways we act.

Alternatively, if we expand upon this by integrating it back into the academic literature and the discussion around these ideas, it could instead be said:

Culture is the actions and creations of people which are particular to their society, making it recognisable as culture 'x' (Tylor and anthropology). It is shareable with people of other societies and subject to transformations as new thoughts and ideas appear and are shared, allowing it to change over time (Biology). Culture, therefore, describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives and can be seen in the ways we act and deal with the conditions of human life (Eagleton and the broad overview of culture).

4.3 The Open Questions – Keyword List and Thematic Analysis

For the final section of the results, I will talk about the open questions which totalled over 16,000 words from the 153 responses. These questions were given both at the beginning and end of the survey and primarily focused on the participants' understandings of culture before and after having a chance to take in any other ideas (see Appendix D for full survey). Although there were too many individual responses to comment on every one, there were certain themes which appeared a number of times. The first, and most obvious, was that the participants all had unique ways of talking about culture and most of the time would talk about examples relating to their own experiences. This again only made it more difficult to say anything about culture other than to further show how the concept of culture is incredibly context dependent and variable.

This problem was solved through the combination of a keyword list and a thematic analysis as discussed in section 4.1 - Analysis.

4.3.1 Keyword List

For the purposes of this research the keyword list was ordered by the frequency which certain terms appeared. As Archer (2009) explains, these words are analysed dependent on their context. In other words, words which had the same meaning were either edited or grouped together. Edited words include, for example, “te reo”, “Te Reo”, “TeReo”, “Te Reo Maori”, “Maori language”, etc., as they were all indicative of the same thing, which is Te Reo Maori language. As such, every instance of these variations was edited to simply be “TeReo”, so that it could easily be picked up as a single item by the computer software when searching for the word frequency (rather than “te” and “Reo” as two separate words). This was likewise done with other commonly used words that had variations in spelling. Secondly, words such as “Maori” could be used to talk about Maori people or Maori language, and so those which were used to talk about language were changed to “TeReo” as well, while instances where Maori people were being talked about were left as “Maori”, in order to differentiate talking about language versus talking about people. In the same vein, as there was no distinguishable difference between “culture”, “cultures” or “cultural”, these were all grouped together as a single term.

As Archer (2009) points out, the frequency of a word or term is not a measure of pure numerical occurrence, but the social/contextually significant occurrence. In other words, lexical and grammatical features need to be taken into account when calculating frequency (Archer, 2009). As such, it should also be noted that not only were the word variations accounted for, but grammatical words such as “a” or “the” were also omitted from the wordlist as they have no social significance in the context of understanding how people talk about culture. Lastly, spelling was also standardised to New Zealand English

and spelling errors were corrected. As a final note, although the grouping of words was done based on how they were used in the context of what participants were saying, this was also dependent on how I, the researcher, understood or interpreted what was being said, and whether or not there were any substantial differences in the pragmatic meaning of words. As such, there could always be errors in my understanding of what the participants were saying or those who disagree with the ways in which words have been grouped into terms. However, every effort has been taken to mitigate this by giving a fair representation of what the participants had to say and stay true to the aims of this research.

The results of this keyword list are as follows:

Table 2. (See Appendix E for full-page image)

Top 104 Words Used by Aucklanders to talk about Culture – Grouped by Meaning.

| Top 104 Words (each used 10 times or more) - Grouped by Meaning | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|--------------------|----|----------|----|---------|----|--|-------|
| Rank | Term | | | | | | | | | Total |
| 1 | Culture | 445 | Cultural | 84 | Cultures | 66 | | | | 595 |
| 2 | People | 124 | | | | | | | | 124 |
| 3 | Family | 86 | Whānau | 11 | Parents | 12 | | | | 109 |
| 4 | NZ/New Zealand | 73 | NZer/New Zealander | 29 | | | | | | 102 |
| 5 | Way | 63 | Ways | 35 | | | | | | 98 |
| 6 | Think | 48 | Consider | 22 | Thinking | 14 | Thought | 11 | | 95 |
| 7 | European | 51 | Pākehā | 34 | | | | | | 85 |
| 8 | Group | 51 | Groups | 28 | | | | | | 79 |
| 9 | Life | 24 | Live | 19 | Living | 14 | Lives | 10 | | 67 |
| 10 | Traditions | 51 | Traditional | 13 | | | | | | 64 |
| 11 | Food | 47 | Eat | 14 | | | | | | 61 |
| 12 | Beliefs | 44 | Believe | 17 | | | | | | 61 |
| 13 | Things | 60 | | | | | | | | 60 |
| 14 | Māori | 56 | | | | | | | | 56 |
| 15 | Identify | 32 | Identity | 18 | | | | | | 50 |
| 16 | Art | 36 | Arts | 13 | | | | | | 49 |
| 17 | Ethnicity | 27 | Ethnic | 22 | | | | | | 49 |
| 18 | Music | 47 | | | | | | | | 47 |
| 19 | Social | 28 | Society | 18 | | | | | | 46 |
| 20 | History | 17 | Background | 16 | Heritage | 13 | | | | 46 |
| 21 | Language | 43 | | | | | | | | 43 |
| 22 | Religion | 21 | Religious | 18 | | | | | | 39 |
| 23 | Kiwi | 39 | | | | | | | | 39 |
| 24 | Different | 36 | | | | | | | | 36 |
| 25 | Christmas | 31 | | | | | | | | 31 |
| 26 | Values | 31 | | | | | | | | 31 |
| 27 | Behaviours | 16 | Behaviour | 15 | | | | | | 31 |
| 28 | Customs | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 29 | Feel | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 30 | Shared | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 31 | Country | 24 | | | | | | | | 24 |
| 32 | Certain | 12 | Particular | 12 | | | | | | 24 |
| 33 | Based | 23 | | | | | | | | 23 |
| 34 | Speak | 13 | Say | 10 | | | | | | 23 |
| 35 | Day | 22 | | | | | | | | 22 |
| 36 | Practices | 11 | Rituals | 10 | | | | | | 21 |

Table 2. (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|----|
| 37 | Auckland | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 38 | Born | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 39 | Place | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 40 | Ideas | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 41 | English | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 42 | Time | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 43 | Work | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 44 | World | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 45 | Celebrate | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 46 | Community | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 47 | Good | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 48 | Sense | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 49 | Irish | 16 | | | | | | | | 16 |
| 50 | Norms | 16 | | | | | | | | 16 |
| 51 | Doing | 15 | | | | | | | | 15 |
| 52 | Important | 15 | | | | | | | | 15 |
| 53 | Dance | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 54 | White | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 55 | Festivals | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 56 | Respect | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 57 | Stories | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 58 | Home | 13 | | | | | | | | 13 |
| 59 | Scottish | 13 | | | | | | | | 13 |
| 60 | British | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 61 | Events | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 62 | Experience | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 63 | Influenced | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 64 | Mixed | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 65 | Beach | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 66 | Church | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 67 | Easter | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 68 | Love | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 69 | School | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 70 | Years | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 71 | Christian | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 72 | Dress | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 73 | Holidays | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 74 | Individual | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 75 | Know | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 76 | Seen | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |

The wordlist in Table 2 contains every word which was used by the participants 10 times or more, resulting in a list of 104 keywords. The limit of 10 times was decided as there were a few cases where one person would use the same word as many as 4-5 times. As such, any word which was used 10 times or more was either talked about a lot by at least a couple of people or was used by a handful of participants. Staying true to the methodology of FL, this suggests that the word is important as it is an idea shared by even a few people and, therefore, an idea which has just as much potential significance as those discussed within the Literature Review. This then resulted in 76 key terms being identified – with variations on how they were used.

From the top 10 of these terms, we can immediately identify some common ideas with the literature, some which were specific to the context of a folk linguistic survey of the people of Auckland, and some which were entirely new. The first of these terms is, perhaps unsurprisingly, culture(s)/cultural. This has been disregarded as a keyword for culture, but likely occurred because many participants began with statements such as "culture is..." or "I think culture...". Additionally, many of the statements made were very colloquial, and as such, included a fair amount of repetition and clarification.

Aside from this, terms such as people, way(s), group(s), life/lives, and tradition(s) have all been seen in various academic perspectives on culture. These include Eagleton (2016) who talked about culture as a whole way of life, Wagner (1981) who talked about referring to groups of societies, and Eller (2016), along with other anthropologists who talk about people and their society's traditions. In contrast to this, some of the terms were specific to the people of Auckland or New Zealand, such as New Zealand/New Zealander or European/Pākehā. While the idea of New Zealand/New Zealander could be considered

civilisation, as Edward Tylor phrased it, European/Pākehā do not really fit the same phrasing (though there may be certain European/Pākehā civilisations or traditions associated with these term). Additionally, the final of the top 10 terms to be discussed, family/whānau/parents and think(ing)/thought/consider, cannot easily be associated with any of the ideas or terms discussed within the academic literature reviewed. That is not to say that these ideas are unknown to those who study culture, as Eller (2016), for example, explains the role of family relations and alliances within the structure of society and in relation to social behaviours. However, when talking about culture, these terms are clearly important and at the forefront of the language used to express ideas on culture for the folk participants of Auckland.

4.3.2 Themes

The words of the keyword list were then categorised into the themes based on the contexts in which they were used or talked about. For example, nationality or ethnicity descriptors were grouped into the theme of **People**. As an additional point of reiteration, words such as **Māori** were grouped into **People** as the word was almost always used to talk about Māori people or culture and Māori language was mostly referred to as **Te Reo**, while items such as **English** were grouped into **Language** as it was almost always used in the context of English language rather than English people. Furthermore, words such as language and similar ideas could have been grouped in the same category as Arts but this was avoided as most people seemed to talk about the two separately (e.g., one participant stated: “Culture for me involves my understanding of religious beliefs, language, arts, [etc.]”). Similarly, words such as eat were placed together with food as people tended to use it in the context of "what we eat". Items have been grouped and

categorised based on what felt appropriate relative to the feedback from the participants, but by no means are any of the groupings definitive and final. For example, another researcher might have come up with another name for a category relating to the “way” in which we do things, or grouped words together slightly differently, such as combining language and arts or traditions/events and beliefs/value. The result of this thematic analysis was as follows:

Table 3. (See Appendix F for full-page image)

Themes of Culture

| Themes | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|----------|----------|---------|--------|-------|
| People | People | Māori | European | Kiwi | Pākehā | Nzer/New Zealander | Irish | Scottish | British | | 374 |
| | 124 | 56 | 51 | 39 | 34 | 29 | 16 | 13 | 12 | | |
| Society & Groups | Family/Whānau/Parents | Group/Groups | Social/Society | Community | Individual | | | | | | 261 |
| | 109 | 79 | 46 | 17 | 10 | | | | | | |
| Arts | Food/Eat | Things | Art(s) | Music | Dance | Stories | Dress | | | | 255 |
| | 61 | 60 | 49 | 47 | 14 | 14 | 10 | | | | |
| Way | Way/Ways | Life/Live/Living/Lives | Behaviour/Behaviours | Norms | Customs | | | | | | 237 |
| | 98 | 67 | 31 | 16 | 25 | | | | | | |
| Place | NZ/New Zealand | Country | Based | Auckland | Place | World | Home | Beach | Church | School | 214 |
| | 73 | 24 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 11 | |
| Identity | Identity/Identify | Ethnicity/Ethnic | History/Background/Heritage | White | Mixed | | | | | | 171 |
| | 50 | 49 | 46 | 14 | 12 | | | | | | |
| Traditions/Events | Traditions/Traditional | Christmas | Practices/Rituals | Festivals | Events | Easter | Holidays | | | | 163 |
| | 64 | 31 | 21 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 10 | | | | |
| Cognition/Experience | Think/Thought/Thinking/Consider | Ideas | Experience | Know | Seen | | | | | | 146 |
| | 95 | 19 | 12 | 10 | 10 | | | | | | |
| Beliefs/Values | Beliefs/Believe | Religion/Religious | Values | Christian | | | | | | | 141 |
| | 61 | 39 | 31 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| Acts & Actions | Shared | Born | Work | Celebrate | Doing | Influenced | | | | | 108 |
| | 25 | 20 | 19 | 17 | 15 | 12 | | | | | |
| Perspective | Different | Certain/Particular | Good | Important | | | | | | | 92 |
| | 36 | 24 | 17 | 15 | | | | | | | |
| Language | Language | Speak/Say | English | | | | | | | | 85 |
| | 43 | 23 | 19 | | | | | | | | |
| Feelings/Senses | Feel | Sense | Respect | Love | | | | | | | 67 |
| | 25 | 17 | 14 | 11 | | | | | | | |
| Time | Day | Time | Years | | | | | | | | 52 |
| | 22 | 19 | 11 | | | | | | | | |

As a matter of clarification, Table 3 has been arranged so that the most used terms from the keyword list (Table 2) are grouped in rows in the blue (centre) section. The groupings then correspond to a theme on the left column, with the total number of times the terms for each theme were used on the right column. Additionally, the only term omitted from this graph was that of culture/cultural/cultures (ranked no.1 in the keyword list).

In keeping with the nature of both TA and the FL methodology/FLA, which rely upon intuition, context and interpretation, the themes were decided upon through the following procedure. Firstly, the terms of the keyword list were looked through to make sure that the participants were using each word in generally the same context or meaning. Secondly, the terms were then grouped together based upon their compatibility and synergy with one another, such as ethnicity, cultural descriptors and ideas about people. These were then prescribed a theme which encapsulated the terms and was based upon the common denominator running between them, such as the theme **People**, which captures the ideas and sentiments of the terms in that group. Additionally, themes were once again kept separate, such as **Language** and **Arts**, when they were most commonly used in different contexts or when participants commonly made mention to them as separate ideas. Although terms such as art, music and language can all be classified under the broader term – arts – the fact that participants talked about art and music in one category and language in another indicated that they were two unique components of culture. The results of this analysis have led to 14 unique themes being identified as the primary categories by which the people of Auckland talked about culture:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. People | 8. Cognition/Experience |
| 2. Society & Groups | 9. Beliefs/Values |
| 3. Arts | 10. Acts & Actions |
| 4. Way | 11. Perspective |
| 5. Place | 12. Language |
| 6. Identity | 13. Feelings/Senses |
| 7. Traditions/Events | 14. Time |

4.3.3 Discussion of Themes

1. People

The main theme by which culture was talked about was people. Not only was the word people the second highest term on the keyword list (Table 2), but of all the ways people described themselves in question Q1. b) (What culture (if any) would you describe yourself as?), ethnic and nationality-based descriptors made up almost half of the ways people described themselves (see Appendix G for full list). As such, it can be inferred that when people talk about culture, they are most likely to talk about people or peoples.

2. Society & Groups

The second most common theme by which people talked about culture was the various groups to which people belong. Talking about groups, societies and communities is often the way anthropologists begin any discussion about culture (see, for example,

Eller, 2016; Haviland et al., 2013 as discussed in Chapter 2). Additionally, as anthropology literally means the study of humans, and anthropologists claim to study culture (for example, Eller, 2016; Highmore, 2016; Senft et al., 2009; Vivanco, 2018; Wagner, 1981), it could be said then that the top two themes of people and society/groups have perfectly captured the essence of culture as it is in anthropology. Perhaps this may help lay to rest any doubts that anthropologists simply do not know what culture is given that they cannot agree on its definition and also that folk people are ill-informed and unqualified to add anything of value to academic discussion as is often the criticism of an FL methodology.

3. Arts

In just the same vein, talking about culture in terms of the arts and the products of humanity is something both Edward Tylor (1871) and Matthew Arnold (1873) did, which gave rise to the notion of culture as low- and high- respectively. Although both approached the topic from completely opposite views, with Tylor talking about civilisation as a whole, and Arnold talking about self-cultivation and refinement, the arts have been central to understandings of culture since the beginning of its modern use – something which is evidently still important to how culture is talked about today.

4. Way

Although vaguer than the theme of arts as there is no tangible object for examination, culture discussed as a way or the way in which people live has appeared through academic literature as much as the previous themes. Eagleton (2016) gave the clearest understanding of culture as a way, and it was one of the main understandings of

culture in a broad and generic sense. Additionally, the idea of the “way” in which people do things or live encapsulates how ideas such as behaviour(s) were talked about by participants, further suggesting the perspective of culture as behaviour in both anthropology and biology is an important and main theme of how culture is understood even when discussed by folk people.

5. Place

The theme of place is something that was more ambiguous in the academic literature. Although there was acknowledgement that culture exists in different places and this can guide our understandings, such as how Christakis (2019) talked about cultural universals as a way of separating out cultural features from biological needs, the theme of place was an important way of talking about culture for the participants of this survey. This could indicate that it is a blind spot for research into culture, but more than likely, is something which is taken for granted and generally lumped in with ideas of society or civilisation, rather than discussed as its own aspect of culture. Nonetheless, the participants of this survey talked about culture in relation to place significantly and is worth considering its own theme.

6. Identity

The theme of identity was discussed primarily in terms of ethnicity, background, and ethnic background, as well as the history and heritage of the country and how that has defined what culture has become for the people of Auckland and New Zealand. The idea of identity in relation to culture, perspective and understanding is one that has gained recognition in more recent years, particularly in sociological and political views of culture

even though it was not present in the early definitions of Arnold or Tylor. While identity as one of the main themes of culture has a much shorter history than some of the previous themes, it certainly has a place in academic literature, such as how Mendoza-Denton and Worrell (2019) explain the relationship and interchangeability of culture, race and ethnicity in attitudes toward identity. This is also evidenced again by the descriptors people used in Q1. b (see Appendix G) where ethnic and nationality-based descriptors made up almost half of the ways people described their own culture and identity.

7. Traditions/Events

Although somewhat ambiguous due to the fact that people often talked about traditions and traditional things in a vague sense which mainly indicated the aspects of culture which are considered old, the idea of traditions, and the events often associated with such traditions, is again one of the primary terms used in anthropological text. Eller (2016), for example, talks about culture falling into the categories of traditional or modern, but goes on to say that there is always an interaction between old world and new world ideas – linking humans together across time. The participants of this research primarily gave examples of seasonal holidays, such as Christmas, Diwali and Matariki, linking both their family (group) and heritage (identity) to such traditions and events. Additionally, the idea of festivals was also mentioned a lot (14 times on the keyword list), suggesting that such traditions and events don't have to be old and stale, but much as Eller (2016) talked about, they are linked to modern practices and celebrations as much as the old ones.

8. Cognition/Experience

It is likely in part due to the fact that this was a folk linguistic survey that people often used phrases such as “I think ...” or “I thought ...” to express their ideas on culture. However, this also indicates that the participants were not particularly willing to make definitive claims as to what culture is, but rather were more aware that they were only giving their opinion on the parts of culture that they know. In addition to this, the other terms of this theme such as ideas, know and seen, were commonly used in the sense of the ideas that make up culture, how culture affects what we know and our knowledge, and how culture is seen or can be seen. Perhaps the best justification for the FL methodology and evidence to suggest that users of language and culture can be sufficiently self-aware to make comment on such topics, this theme shows that when talking about culture, people are capable of being reflective and highly cognitive of their own thoughts, ideas and experiences. Though this theme may not necessarily be about culture itself, it certainly makes up a significant portion of how culture is talked about.

9. Beliefs/Values

The significance of beliefs and values in culture, such as when people speak of religion and culture, is another area of cultural studies which is well known. Hordern (2016), for example, talks about the role beliefs play in determining socially acceptable practices, and by extension, how ideas should be communicated in the context of medical practices. Just as how the theme of identity links with other disciplinary areas of research, Hordern’s example illustrates the interrelationship of how groups organise themselves from a biological perspective of culture with how language is used, and ideas communicated in linguistics. Moreover, as was shown in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2,

religion, as well as prayer/meditation ranked extremely highly as one of the main ideas of what culture is for the participants of this research.

10. Acts/Actions

Although similar to the idea of culture as a “way” or the way in which we go about our lives, the theme of acts and actions was used in a much more passive sense, such as how people can be born into certain cultures, or how culture is shared among a society (but without anyone actively or intentionally sharing it). Rather than the life choices, this theme was more about the actual doing or happening of people and societies. One participant even talked about the reason for doing things in a certain way, such as out of respect or love, adding another layer to the discussion about how or why culture is spread. While talking about culture in this way is less common in the academic literature than some of the other themes, this is perhaps closer to ideas in biology, and even philosophy, about the nature or function of culture, such as the idea raised by Vlerick (2020) about the function of culture in improving societal cooperation.

11. Perspective

While Tylor’s and the anthropological ideas of culture are clearly the main way by which participants talked about culture, there is still perhaps some remnants of, or validity to the perspective introduced by Arnold. The high-culture idea has played a mixed role in this research with some such as Johnson (2013) dismissing it completely as elitist. However, from this theme the participants have clearly shown an awareness of some degree of bias that they may have. The use of terms such as “different” or “particular” suggest an understanding for how cultures may be viewed as other or inferior – which is

often the criticism of high-culture views. Yet, throughout the survey the participants were still able to talk about parts of culture as good or important, without being dismissive or elitist toward other cultures. While removing all bias or preference from people may be impossible, the use of the theme of perspective to talk about culture is not only clearly important in being open about potential biases, but also was utilised significantly in the survey responses.

12. Language

As previously discussed, language was given its own category as people talked about it separately from the arts or ways of life a lot. As with the idea of religion and culture, language and culture is a significant area of study (and one that this research is centred upon). Ideas such as what people say and how they speak, as well as specific languages such as English, were the main ways in which participants talked about the relationship between language and culture.

13. Feelings/Senses

Similar to the theme of perspective, participants also made mention a lot to their own specific relationship with culture and cultural ideas. Unlike the theme of perspective, however, the terms in this category were used in a much more intuitive and unapologetic manner. That is to say, as one participant did, culture is where you feel you belong, suggesting that certain understandings of culture may not be able to be captured by thought (cognition) or awareness (perspective), but are rather intuitive (felt/sensed).

14. Time

With the idea that culture changes over time being the most agreed upon statement about culture in question Q3 (see Figure 3), it is no surprise that talking about culture in terms of our day-to-day lives or time spent/passed has its own unique category. Still, there is little to suggest that anyone would talk about culture in relation to time from the academic literature, but as the participants of this folk linguistic survey have managed to capture all of the main academic concepts of culture in the other themes, time in relation to culture is clearly worthy of mention and a significant theme by which culture is talked about.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As many of the specific results have been discussed already throughout the findings and analysis section (Chapter 4), this section will primarily be a discussion of the results as a whole, and what implications these have for research into language and culture in relation to the research questions for this thesis. In addition to this, I will talk about the shortcomings of this research, as well as making suggestions for future research, and go into the critiques and reflections arising out of this research.

5.1 Discussion of the Results and Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

1. What are some of the ways culture can be, and is understood today?

While I will not reiterate the specific definitions of culture found within academic literature, it is clear from the results that culture can be understood in a variety of ways. These include the understandings of high- and low-culture, originally accredited to Matthew Arnold (1869, 1873) and Edward Tylor (1871), which can still be seen today in dictionary definitions (Table 1) and in the responses by participants (Figure 1.1 & 1.2). Additionally, there are the academic perspectives on culture which can be taken in their respective fields and include, but are not limited to: Anthropology and the social sciences, which largely focus on the shared behaviours in any given society as a whole, as well as the traditions, beliefs, values, customs, etc. of any given group of people; biology which looks at attempting to explain the existence of culture through biological terms and in relation to genes, as well as how culture comes about and spreads; and the more

linguistically based ideas of culture which include how the word is used to imply or infer meaning, such as what Baldwin et al. (2006) proposed about culture being an “empty” word which is filled with meaning when it is used, or Fox and King (2020) who suggested that while we can research any ideas about people and call it culture, what is important is the research and not the definition. In addition to these, there are also ideas of culture in relation to politics (Cronk, 2018), psychology (Matsumoto & Juang, 2016), media (Blau, 1986), equality (Phillips, 2018), and economics (Cowen & Tabarrok, 2000) to name a few. As was suggested from the very outset of this thesis, the concept of culture is notoriously difficult to pin down and talk about, and it is an idea that is contested in every field (Jahoda, 2012).

While all of these ideas have been taken as potentially valid understandings of culture throughout this research, what I have been able to show in addition to the ideas already circulating about culture are two main things: The first of these is the perceptions of culture and understandings as they stand today in the thoughts of the people of Auckland. Throughout the survey it was clear that none of the ideas presented and talked about in academia could be totally dismissed from the outset, but that there were some ideas that were quite strongly agreed upon. From this, a folk linguistic idea of culture could be proposed which was based on the survey feedback, was totally distinct from any dictionary definition, and took inspiration from a wide range of ideas circulating in academia about culture. From the understandings of Aucklanders, it could therefore be said:

Culture is the actions and creations of people which are particular to their society, making it recognisable as culture 'x'. It is shareable with people of other societies and subject to transformations as new thoughts and ideas appear and are shared, allowing it to change over time. Culture, therefore, describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives and can be seen in the ways we act and deal with the conditions of human life.

Secondly, this research has shown there isn't a singular understanding of what the concept of culture is, but instead shown how it can be talked about. The FL study showed that culture can be understood through the themes or components which are most strongly talked about in relation to it. Culture could, therefore, be said to be understood today in terms of the themes by which it is talked about, which include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>1. People</i> | <i>8. Cognition/Experience</i> |
| <i>2. Society & Groups</i> | <i>9. Beliefs/Values</i> |
| <i>3. Arts</i> | <i>10. Acts & Actions</i> |
| <i>4. Way</i> | <i>11. Perspective</i> |
| <i>5. Place</i> | <i>12. Language</i> |
| <i>6. Identity</i> | <i>13. Feelings/Senses</i> |
| <i>7. Traditions/Events</i> | <i>14. Time</i> |

2. Are understandings of culture relative and dependent upon perspective?

One of the most fascinating but challenging outcomes of choosing to use a methodology that opens up the conversation of culture to beyond singular interpretations was how to understand and talk about the results. In other words, the way of interpreting the data was just as variable as any of the definitions of culture. For example, the idea that people today tend toward low-culture understandings and away from high-culture ones (Highmore, 2016), or that culture understood as a societies behaviours or practices is unconscious (Haviland et al., 2013), seem to indeed to depend upon the framing of the research, and the assumptions being made about what part of culture it is exactly that is being studied. That is to say, the understanding of culture depends upon the context around which it is being talked about, the framing of questions, what the speakers are trying to convey about culture, and so on.

In Figure 1.1 and 1.2, for example, the ideas of language and religion were viewed as highly cultural, while in Figure 3, the idea that culture is built upon shared human endeavours of language, art, religion, society, industry, etc., was just one idea of many that the participants strongly agreed with. These results are not sufficient to show that people are, therefore, unqualified to comment on such ideas, as is the common criticism of a FL methodology (Niedzielski & Preston, 2000), but rather align with one of the reasons for undertaking this research in the first place, which was to broaden ideas of what might be considered cultured and where we might find understandings of it. Much as there is a lack of consensus about the meaning of culture in literature, this study has shown that there were no dominant understandings of culture in the community of

Auckland, and one of the key outcomes of this research was showing how the framing of a question or statement can change the perspective from which culture is understood.

This was an important outcome to establish in regard to research due to the fact that the word *culture* is so variable in meaning, yet an extremely important concept to a lot of people. In regard to social research, the findings align with the idea that slight variations in wording can produce completely different responses from participants, and furthermore, this can affect the validity of results (Bryman, 2012). In this research, there were so many possible ways of wording questions to get at different understandings of culture, which was taken into account by posing a range of questions, essentially providing the opportunity for contradictions and variations to be established rather than ignored.

One apparent contradiction could, for example, include the discrepancy between music (ranked 2nd as an item of culture at 81.7%; Figure 1.1) and Beyoncé (who was viewed by many as not really being a part of culture; Figure 2). Taken in conjunction with how a different popular figure, Shakespeare, could be viewed by more people as being a part of culture (Figure 2), it is difficult to say here what may have caused this, but is possibly due to a number of factors such as changes in popularity, the relevance of these popular icons to the participants involved, or how people feel about music and literature overall. What this does again suggest, however, is the importance of being aware of how questions are framed and the context in which ideas are being discussed (particularly in relation to very interpretive and subjective topics), and more importantly, to be careful about the conclusions drawn from such research.

As the method of analysis employed (FLA) has been able to show, understandings of culture are indeed relative and depend upon perspective. Not only does the perspective of the individual affect understandings, but so too does the perspective from which culture is being discussed, as well as the context in which it is being talked about (such as in anthropology, biology, or even pop-culture). This is important as it not only showcases the value of FL as a methodology in such research, but also re-establishes one of the driving purposes for this research, which was to promote conversation about such ideas so that we might better understand others in inter-disciplinary dialogue and everyday life.

3. *How do the folk- and everyday-understandings of Aucklanders compare with that of academics?*

One of the biggest findings of this research has come from the thematic analysis of the corpus from the open questions. This method of analysis took the most common words used to talk about culture and grouped them into themes, indicating not so much what culture “is”, but what culture “is about”. This also helped to establish why the perspectives from which culture is understood tend to be relative to their contexts as the themes focused on by people and disciplinary fields were also different. What was interesting about comparing the participants of this survey to the understandings found in academic literature was that academics tended to focus on the areas relevant to their research, while the people talked freely about a range of ideas and thus provided the basis for the themes of culture, which included; people, society and groups, arts, way(s) of life, place, identity, traditions and events, cognition or experience, beliefs and values, acts or actions, perspective(s), language, feelings or senses, and time.

It was largely due to this that the themes could be established and compared back to the academic literature. That is to say, although the results from the participants suggested that culture was talked about in a more colloquial manner, there were certain ideas that were present in both the academic literature and in the corpus of the survey feedback. As such, it is fair to say that culture is talked about differently in different fields and walks-of-life, such as academic versus non-academic. However, that is not to say that they are talking about different things, but instead, that they are talking more about certain aspects of culture over others, applying their knowledge in different ways (such as to explain the relationships between genetics and culture), or simply phrasing things differently to suit their current context (i.e., as a participant in a survey versus an authoritative position in academia).

It has long been suggested that culture and language are dependent upon one another (see, for example, Burridge & Bergs, 2017; Senft, 2014; Senft et al., 2009). What this research has shown though is how the ideas of culture can be talked about in different ways, thus leading to different understandings, and perhaps even different cultures or parts of culture becoming more or less prevalent. As such, much like how the language used to talk about culture by the anthropologists differed from the language of the biologists, the people of Auckland also talked about culture in a different way to the academics, yet nonetheless, covered many of the same ideas as shown in the themes.

Finally, much like in the Literature Review, where academics approached the topic from different perspectives and so came to different conclusions about what was important about culture, the participants also talked about culture differently to one

another. As such, although there were differences in language used and amount of focus put into certain parts of culture, what can be said is that the ideas of the participants mostly overlapped with that of academics, and the complexity of arriving a singular definition was equally consistent. Consequently, what these themes have enabled is a way of considering what particular aspect of culture is being discussed.

5.2 Reconsidering the Literature

Throughout the literature review, it was apparent that there was no single agreed upon definition or understanding of culture. Instead, what was present were concepts of culture which were discussed from or within certain academic contexts. To illustrate, in the broad overview of culture, Cronk (2018) suggested that research into culture was lacking in fundamental explanations, i.e., cultural terms were used to explain what culture is. This was also echoed at least as far back as Moore (1952), who suggested that anthropologists need to use linguistic techniques to frame definitions of culture adequately and with clear symbolic logic. These claims could be contrasted with that of the Eagleton (2016) who stated that culture is understood in terms of creative practices, development or cultivation, symbolic practices, and how people live their lives.

Interestingly, the symbolic practices Eagleton (2016) speaks of include language and methods of communication, but as a whole Eagleton (2016) talks about culture in line with the themes of arts, experience, way, people, and loosely, language and traditions. In the literature review, Eagleton's explanation was placed into the sub-chapter of *culture as a broad whole*, which came from a sense of how culture was

discussed, but can now be more clearly understood as covering a variety of the themes found in this research. On the other hand, Cronk (2018) and Moore (1952) look at culture purely through the lens of linguistics, aligning them with the theme of discussing culture through language. This interaction between the aforementioned claims is, therefore, not a matter of comparing the validity of each, but of understanding the perspective from which each one approaches the topic.

As a further point of illustration, the ideas of high- and low-culture both talk about culture mainly in terms of people, society, and arts which could be why they are so easily thought of together and why they are always in conflict.

What the ideas of non-academics have shown then is the aboutness of culture and what possible themes culture could be categorised into. As such, this could also be used as a tool for better understanding different areas of culture being focused on in different fields of research. This has also provided evidence for the validity of the FL methodology as a means to incorporate new perspectives from outside academia into the research without dismissing either side.

5.3 Shortcomings of this Research

Throughout this research I have discussed the need for transparency about what I am doing and the apparent breakdown in dialogue between fields of study concerning themselves with culture. It seems clear from the background and outcomes of this research that if we are to actually understand each other, whether inside of academia or between academics and non-academics, there is a need to go beyond many of the conventional uses of jargon and academic English. As such, I have opted

to include such things as first-person, a number of instances of plain/colloquial English, and tried to avoid presupposing or taking sides with any of the proposed notions on culture. Having said that, there are shortcomings in this research, some of which have resulted from trying to go beyond conventional research methods/methodologies, such as the use of the FL methodology.

First of all, the FL methodology, often criticised as providing ill-informed data on language (Niedzielski & Preston, 2000), has, to my knowledge, never been used in the manner that I have used it in this research. Generally speaking, FL is used in cases where public opinions about language are investigated (Stegu et al., 2018), and not for displaying how a word or concept is used in everyday speech, or to investigate a range of ideas on a concept held within a variety of academic disciplines and perspectives. However, the ideas behind the FL methodology – that people might actually have something important to say about such a concept, and that academic ideas are not inherently superior but can be taken in conjunction with one another and with folk ideas, have been maintained throughout this thesis.

The limitations therefore arise from the practical aspects of looking at so many different perspectives in relation to one topic and trying to figure out from there what can be said about it. As such, although in this research I have been able to indicate several possible ways of viewing and even researching culture (e.g., the results of the TA), this methodology was ultimately a way of showing how different perspectives and ideas exist simultaneously, and how ideas from the public sphere might be brought into academic knowledge. As such, the claims that can be made about the meaning and nature of culture are still very limited as this research relied heavily on

intuitive ways of re-applying the FL methodology to a FLA, and combining it with the TA method.

Following on from this, the methods employed also have a great deal of limitations as to what claims can be made about culture. As the FLA method was something new which was needed as it functioned as a means to getting at the underlying connections between understandings, the claims that can be made from it are limited. Although I have sought to make the wide range of perspectives about this topic more accessible to academics and non-academics alike, this research has still ultimately only been one person's look at a range of academic ideas about culture coupled with a single survey, in a single city. Although Auckland was suitable due to its recognised superdiverse status (Terruhn, 2020) and a sizeable response rate was achieved, more research would need to be done to arrive at anything close to a definitive claim about what culture means to Aucklanders, let alone what it means as a concept.

Finally, while every effort has been taken to give a fair account of what culture means to different people, there will always be a certain degree of bias and limitations as to what is possible within the scope of a single master's thesis. From the areas of academia investigated, to the conducting of the survey, this research has relied heavily on my own interpretations of what I believed might be the best way to get at various understandings of culture. Furthermore, the wording of the survey, the questions asked, and methods used, were all based on my own understandings of how to understand and represent culture. In addition to this, the participants of the survey conducted in this research only make up a small sample of Auckland's population and were self-selected only through the use of Facebook community pages. As such this

while this research can be taken as a limited representation of Aucklanders' opinions on culture, it is more of a representation of how non-academics can not only provide well-informed responses on topics relevant to them but also the value of folk-linguistic and multi-faceted cultural studies. Consequently, although there are a number of improvements to be made, I hope that these things can be understood and improved upon in future research into culture.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research and Reflections

As this research has been both broad, in terms of covering a wide range of ideas on culture, and creative (in terms of applying the FL methodology in a new way for the purposes of a FL survey of Aucklanders' opinions on culture, and in the FLA), it would be extremely useful to revisit both of these ideas and incorporate more targeted research into many of the specific ideas covered in this thesis. The survey, for example, would greatly benefit from rewording and more specific sections on the ideas brought up about culture and what people think of them. Furthermore, it is also now clearer that people are willing to talk about culture from a range of viewpoints. Additionally, revisiting the survey would help to establish the validity of the data in terms of providing greater representation of Aucklanders' and lay-people's ideas about culture. Future research may also benefit from re-targeting the results found in this research and seeing if they can be found in similar settings or how well they hold up against other research into culture.

Aside from the survey method, I had also originally intended to incorporate a data-scraping method which would have been able to take tens of thousands of posts

from commonly used social media sites. These could have been used to target the word *culture* to provide a much more substantial corpus (potentially millions of words rather than the 16,000 from my survey), on which the TA could be re-utilised. Although this method was cut due to time constraints and the practicality of accessing such data, it was originally intended as a complementary method to the survey, where the survey would have focused on what people had to say about culture and the data-scraping method on how people used the word culture in everyday communications. Much like how in the Literature Review I looked at the concept of culture in different academic departments, these two methods would show how culture is used and talked about in everyday life, but in different contexts of everyday life. Additionally, the data-scraping method could also be applied to larger geographic areas, such as the whole of New Zealand, or even to other languages within a region such as Auckland (although this would risk losing its local or linguistic relevance and potentially become too vague). Lastly, despite providing a significantly larger corpus of data from a much wider array of people, this would have been looked at again as an equally valid understanding of culture in the context of an online social media setting, and not more or less valid than other methods such as the survey. Simply put, this method would have provided a much larger, quantitative data set of how the word culture is used in everyday communications, while the survey would still provide more specific reflections and qualitative data.

Beyond the specific methods for this research, the FL methodology has also shown potential in terms of how else it could be implemented for research into language beliefs which are not limited to top-down models. Similar methodologies could also have been used, but this one was chosen as it provided a host of ideas on culture with a means of placing them alongside (not above or below) academic

understandings. This has allowed for a more holistic view of the topic and provided both suggestions for how culture could be defined (or at least re-looked at and updated in dictionary definitions which more closely represent how culture is understood by everyday people today), and also provided a list of themes by which culture is commonly talked about and could be researched. This area definitely has the biggest potential for future research, as, if these themes are at least the beginnings of showing how culture might be broken up into categories or components, it could help to explain why definitions on it have varied so greatly, and where researchers can make themselves clearer as to what specific part(s) of culture they are interested in.

This leads me to my own reflections on research into culture and social research as a whole. As I have stated in the Introduction, I hoped to broaden understandings of culture, and promote conversation within fields of research and between academics and non-academics. To this end, I believe it has been important to approach this topic very openly, and the methods/methodology I have chosen have greatly assisted in making this possible. While my suggestions for future research are largely concerned with the concept of culture, I hope I have helped to showcase the importance of social research and non-objectivity. That is to say, by looking at a range of viewpoints on culture, both academic and not, this kind of research has hopefully helped to bring together a range of viewpoints and understandings to provide a better way of communicating specific areas of interest and concern.

5.5 Summary and Conclusions

In the beginning of this research, it was proposed that culture is a polysemous concept with no consensus as to what it means (Jahoda, 2012). In contrast to this, I proposed that culture is also a word that has importance to both those who study it and those who invoke it in their everyday lives. From these two points, this research established an approach toward investigating culture as a concept. On the one hand, the lack of consensus and variation in meaning was established, as well as various understandings from different fields of research. On the other hand, it had to be kept in mind that each understanding was relative to the context in which it was used and perspective of those using it. Consequently, each interpretation had to be taken as an equally, potentially valid/appropriate understanding of culture.

In order to achieve this, I began with a background on culture and arrived at four fundamental definitions which summarise the history of the word as it has popularly come to be understood today. These were as follows:

- **Matthew Arnold**, who captured the idea of high-culture, greater quality, superiority, and improvement.

“Culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection ; and that of perfection as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters.” (Arnold, 1869, p. 40).

And, “[Culture is] knowing the best that has been thought and known in the world.” (Arnold, 1873, p. xvi).

- **Edward Tylor**, who captured the idea of low-culture, everyday acts and knowledge, society as a whole (civilisation), and social practices.

“Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Tylor, 1871, p. 1).

- **Alfred Kroeber & Clyde Kluckhohn**, who captured the exponential increase in attempts at defining culture, and the ideas of social behaviours, historical and external influences, and transmission from one individual to another.

“[The array of modern definitions] point to something legitimate and important [and], in other words, [...] culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based upon symbols; and is an abstraction from behaviour and the products of behaviour.” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 157).

- **Baldwin, Faulkner, Hecht, & Lindsley**, who captured the variability of the idea of culture and need for a more interpretive or relative approach to talking about culture.

“This debate surrounding the usage of the term “culture” suggests that the term is a sign, an empty vessel waiting for people – both academicians and everyday communicators – to fill it with meaning.” (Baldwin et al., 2006, p. 4).

Already from the development of these ways in which culture has come to be understood, it was clear that there would be a great deal of variation and interpretation on each of these. As such, this research has shown how some of these ideas are still relevant today, such as their presence in dictionaries, along with ideas that further the conversation and add new elements to the discussion, such as the perspectives found in biology or those who suggest the need to move beyond culture.

The need for this discussion, however, has raised several issues, from the how easy it is to make assumptions about knowing what a word or concept means without awareness of how others use it, to the methods and methodologies for investigating such variability in other departments or people's understandings. In order to address these issues, there is a need for openness to new ideas from both in- and outside of academia. Additionally, as has been shown by the wide variety of interpretations of culture and the importance that being able to bring lay people or everyday understandings into the discussion of this research, this is clearly a topic that needs expanded and extended research and reconsideration.

In order to enable this, I have brought into the discussion the importance of the way we talk about culture and the perspectives from which it is discussed. From the academic side of these perspectives, we have:

- **Culture as a Broad Whole**, which acknowledges the general perceptions of culture as high- or low-culture, as is commonly found in dictionaries. In addition to this, similarly to Baldwin et al. (2006), culture is talked about as a whole way of life

(Eagleton, 2016), thus allowing the users of culture to decide what exactly that means to them. This expanded understanding of culture also allows researchers to play with various ideas on culture while maintaining a focus on people's lives and their backgrounds.

- **Culture in Anthropology and the Social Sciences**, which generally focus more on the role of society or civilisation, and try to emphasise the social behaviours through non-biological terminology. The focus of culture in this perspective also tends to view culture more through social norms, behaviours or practices and research focuses on how these social ideas come about and are spread, as well as their implications.
- **Culture from a Biological Perspective** is similar in many regards to that of the social sciences in that it looks closely at culture in relation to human behaviour and how it comes about and is spread. However, it differs greatly in approach where the social sciences look for the implications and what can be learnt from these cultures, the biological perspective looks at explaining the variation in societies and finding ways of measuring and categorising culture.
- **Beyond Culture** is a way of talking about culture outside of the main areas of focus and how the concept relates to other fields, as well as where the concept goes from here. Culture can be included in fields such as language, religion, economics, etc, and when viewed in this way, it is less about what culture is or where it comes from and more about how ideas about what culture is relate to other areas of study and life.

In addition to these, there have also been the perspectives of the folk people of Auckland, as well as a list of themes which were most commonly used to talk about culture:

- **Auckland Folk Definition** which is based on the strongest opinions for and against ideas of culture found within academia and which expands upon the background definitions, whereby culture is:

The actions and creations of people which are particular to their society, making it recognisable as culture 'x'. It is shareable with people of other societies and subject to transformations as new thoughts and ideas appear and are shared, allowing it to change over time. Culture, therefore, describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives and can be seen in the ways we act and deal with the conditions of human life.

- **Auckland Folk Themes** which are based on the most commonly used words to talk about culture when the participants had a chance to express their own ideas and which led to the themes being created which best reflected the ideas conveyed by the most commonly used words. These were:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. People | 8. Cognition/Experience |
| 2. Society & Groups | 9. Beliefs/Values |
| 3. Arts | 10. Acts & Actions |
| 4. Way | 11. Perspective |
| 5. Place | 12. Language |
| 6. Identity | 13. Feelings/Senses |
| 7. Traditions/Events | 14. Time |

5.6 Closing Statement

Although it is always easiest to favour an interpretation of a concept that is easy to work with, this research has shown that there are several different ways of viewing culture. Furthermore, in spite of the difficulty posed by working with concepts which are relative to perspective, this research has provided an example of a methodology (FL) which has allowed for a range of understandings to be presented and, furthermore, incorporated together alongside new, non-academic perspectives. This has been done in part as an example of how concepts can be used and understood in a variety of ways, but also to provide those concerning themselves with the concept of culture with new tools, such as the themes, for understanding the range of perspectives. As a final word, this thesis has been concerned with the value in taking the time to understand others, whether their ideas align with our own or not, and the importance perspective can play in forming how we talk about topics, and the conclusions these bring us to.

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Appendices

Appendix A: AUTECH Ethics Approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

26 November 2020

Tof Eklund
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Tof

Re Ethics Application: **20/308 Understandings of Culture in Auckland and Online**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 26 November 2023.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTECH in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTECH prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTECH Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTECH Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.

AUTECH grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

30th November 2020

Understandings of Culture in Auckland and Online

Hello and thank you for your interest in this survey! My name is Adam Sawyer and I am currently undertaking the Master of Language and Culture course at AUT. As a requirement for this course I am in the process of writing a thesis on the topic of culture and what that actually means. Culture is something that is often talked about both inside of academia and in our everyday world. What I am wanting to know is are we all talking about the same thing? How do we understand culture? And, most importantly, what is culture to you? Should you choose to participate, I hope that you will enjoy being a part of this research as I will very much enjoy getting to know what you have to say.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research has come about from an interest in culture and what was perceived to be a need to talk more openly about what culture means to different people. Although there are many different thoughts on culture held by different circles and used in different contexts, this research aims to draw out how those thoughts relate to the world and to everyday people. It is hoped that through this research, I will be able to establish a better sense of how we can go about understanding culture in future and that the findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

This research relates to everyone as users and creators of culture. However, the research is centred in Auckland due to its wide range of cultural backgrounds and diverse population.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to participate in this research, all that you will need to do is complete the survey from where this information sheet was retrieved. You will be asked to confirm your identity as an Aucklander but even if you are not, you are welcome to take the survey.

What will happen in this research?

First, you will be asked to complete the survey which will include a series of questions on your thoughts about culture. Your data will then be stored while the survey runs (approx. until the end of December 2020), and then it will then be analysed alongside that of all other participants. The survey will remain completely anonymous meaning that none of the answers you give will be identifiable with you in any way.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Due to the nature of this survey, the risk to you as a participant is minimal. However, it may be the case that some of the questions could be uncomfortable for some people. Consequently, you can skip any of them and still have your other responses counted.

What are the benefits of this research?

There are several main benefits which I hope to achieve in conducting this research.

Firstly, for you, the participant, there is the chance to share your understanding of culture and to engage with various views put forward in academic literature on the topic of culture.

Secondly, for myself as a researcher, this research will hopefully help in developing a better understanding of culture and how it is discussed in academia, as well as aid in my progress toward my qualification.

Finally, for the community of Auckland, I hope that this research will provide a fair and up to date representation of our cultural diversity as well as a chance to reflect on our culture as a whole.

How will my privacy be protected?

As the survey which you will participate in is to be anonymous, there will be no link with you and anything that you answer. Furthermore, the data collected in this research will only be used for the purposes of this study and once completed, will not be used in future research.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Just your time! I realise that people have other things that they need to do so I have tried to make sure this survey is brief, interesting, and informative to you. I very much appreciate any answers which you choose to provide and hope to get the results processed as soon as possible, giving you an understanding of what other participants have had to say about culture.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

This survey will run approximately until the end of December, 2020 to provide enough time for people to participate and for the data to be analysed.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Once the survey has run its course and the results have been processed, a summary of the results will be uploaded to this address: <https://conceptsofculture.wordpress.com/>

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Tof Eklund, tof.eklund@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 5245

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference. Not only does it provide the necessary information should you have any concerns or queries about the project, but it also contains the link where you will be able to check the results of the research once they are available (see: <https://conceptsofculture.wordpress.com/>).

You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Adam Sawyer - nym7720@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Tof Eklund - tof.eklund@aut.ac.nz, office phone (+649) 921 9999 ext 5245

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 26th November 2020, AUTECH Reference number 20/308.

Concepts of Culture

Start of Block: Information and Consent

Thank you for your interest in this survey! Culture is something which is often discussed in our everyday world and this survey is designed to help us understand just what we are talking about when we say culture.

Before we begin, I would ask that you please download and read the [Information sheet](#) below.

Please keep the information sheet as it provides a range of information as well as contact address' and a URL where you will be able to view the results of this project once it is complete.



Participant Information Sheet

20 August 2020

Understandings of Culture in Auckland and Online

Hello and thank you for your interest in this survey! My name is Adam Sawyer and I am currently undertaking the Master of Language and Culture course at AUT. As a requirement for this course I am in the process of writing a thesis on the topic of culture and what that actually means. Culture is something that is often talked about both inside of academia and in our everyday world. What I am wanting to know is are we all talking about the same thing? How do we understand culture? And, most importantly, what is culture to you? Should you choose to participate, I hope that you will enjoy being a part of this research as I will very much enjoy getting to know what you have to say.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research has come about from an interest in culture and what was perceived to be a need to talk more openly about what culture means to different people. Although there are many different thoughts on culture held by different circles and used in different contexts, this research aims to draw out how those thoughts relate to the world and to everyday people. It is hoped that through this research, I will be able to establish a better sense of how we can go about understanding culture in future and that the findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

This research relates to everyone as users and creators of culture. However, the research is centred in Auckland due to its wide range of cultural backgrounds and diverse population.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to participate in this research, all that you will need to do is complete the survey from where this information sheet was retrieved. You will be asked to confirm your identity as an Aucklander but even if you are not, you are welcome to take the survey.

What will happen in this research?

First, you will be asked to complete the survey which will include a series of questions on your thoughts about culture. Your data will then be stored while the survey runs (approx. until the end of December 2020), and then it will then be analysed alongside that of all other participants. The survey will remain completely anonymous meaning that none of the answers you give will be identifiable with you in any way.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Due to the nature of this survey, the risk to you as a participant is minimal. However, it may be the case that some of the questions could be uncomfortable for some people. Consequently, you can skip any of them and still have your other responses counted.

What are the benefits of this research?

There are several main benefits which I hope to achieve in conducting this research.

Firstly, for you, the participant, there is the chance to share your understanding of culture and to engage with various views put forward in academic literature on the topic of culture.

Secondly, for myself as a researcher, this research will hopefully help in developing a better understanding of culture and how it is discussed in academia, as well as aid in my progress toward my qualification.

Finally, for the community of Auckland, I hope that this research will provide a fair and up to date representation of our cultural diversity as well as a chance to reflect on our culture as a whole.

10 November 2020

page 1 of 2

This version was edited in November 2019

How will my privacy be protected?

As the survey which you will participate in is to be anonymous, there will be no link with you and anything that you answer. Furthermore, the data collected in this research will only be used for the purposes of this study and once completed, will not be used in future research.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Just your time! I realise that people have other things that they need to do so I have tried to make sure this survey is brief, interesting, and informative to you. I very much appreciate any answers which you choose to provide and hope to get the results processed as soon as possible, giving you an understanding of what other participants have had to say about culture.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

This survey will run approximately until the end of December, 2020 to provide enough time for people to participate and for the data to be analysed.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Once the survey has run its course and the results have been processed, a summary of the results will be uploaded to this address: <https://conceptsofculture.wordpress.com/>

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Tof Eklund, tof.eklund@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 5245

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference. Not only does it provide the necessary information should you have any concerns or queries about the project, but it also contains the link where you will be able to check the results of the research once they are available (see: <https://conceptsofculture.wordpress.com/>).

You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Adam Sawyer - nym7720@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Tof Eklund - tof.eklund@aut.ac.nz, office phone (+649) 921 9999 ext 5245

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *type the reference number*.

If you have read and agree to your answers being used for the purposes of this research as outlined in the [Information sheet](#) please select "Agree" to proceed to the survey.

NOTE: By completing this questionnaire you are indicating your consent to participate in this research.

Agree

End of Block: Information and Consent

Start of Block: Confirmation

Please confirm that you consider yourself to be an Aucklander.

Yes, I am an Aucklander

No, I'm not an Aucklander but I'm interested in this survey (*NOTE: your answers will not be used in the analysis of this research but you are welcome to participate anyway*)

End of Block: Confirmation

Start of Block: Preliminary Questions

Great! I'm interested in knowing more about what **YOU** think! I want to get to know your ideas about culture before presenting any of my ideas.

Feel free to take your time and just stick to what feels comfortable and natural. There are no wrong or right answers and you can leave any question blank if you wish. Good luck!

Q1. a)

Do you have any initial thoughts or ideas about culture?
e.g. What constitutes culture? Types of culture? Examples of culture?

Q1. b)

What culture (if any) would you describe yourself as?

Q1. c)

Could you provide any examples of things that you do that you consider cultural?

End of Block: Preliminary Questions

Start of Block: Representing Culture

These next questions are about the subtle distinction between **culture** and something that is **cultural**.

Don't worry too much about trying to classify which is which, just go with your instincts!

Q2. a)

Please check the items that you consider to be **culture**.

- Study
 - Music
 - Language
 - Work
 - Exercise
 - Reproduction
 - Construction
 - Religion
 - Art
 - Medicine
 - Netflix
 - Computer Programming
-

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Q2. b)

Please Check the items that you consider to be ***cultural***.

- Brushing your Teeth
- Going to an Art Gallery
- Travel
- Sports
- Taking an Exam
- Wearing Shoes
- Prayer / Meditation
- Watching TV / YouTube
- Learning a Language
- Working 40hrs / week
- Buying new Clothes
- Consumerism

...Some interesting things to think about so far! Alright, let's try this one!

Q2. c)

Please rank the following in order from what you consider most (1) to least (8) cultural. *(You can use the same number twice if you believe they are equally cultural or a (0) if you believe it is not cultural at all. Feel free to leave any blank that you are unfamiliar with or unsure of).*

- _____ Shakespeare
- _____ Beyoncé
- _____ The Great Wall of China
- _____ The Internet
- _____ Drinking Coffee
- _____ Eating Sushi
- _____ Politics
- _____ Archaeology

End of Block: Representing Culture

Start of Block: Concepts of Culture

Phew, We're almost there!

This next section is about presenting to you some of the current concepts of culture found in academic literature. Again, there is no wrong or right here but some of these will seem to conflict with one another.

Don't worry about trying to resolve any of those conflicts - once again, just go with your gut!

Q3.

Please select the response that most closely represents your view.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neutral | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Culture describes the whole way in which people go about their everyday lives. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture is the actions and creations of people which are particular to their society. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture (or the best of culture) is old. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture is the accumulation of traits and characteristics held by individuals. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture is the set of 'norms' which are expected in a society. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture is identified through behaviours or patterns of behaviour. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture represents the best parts of a society and promotes an ideal standard. | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Certain great works showcase culture more than others. | <input type="radio"/> |
| All cultures are equal. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture can be good or bad. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture works to promote cohesion within a society. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture cannot be shared with people outside of your own culture. It is something you are born into. | <input type="radio"/> |
| All culture is built upon shared human endeavours of language, art, religion, society, industry, etc. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture can be seen in the ways we act. | <input type="radio"/> |
| Culture changes over time. | <input type="radio"/> |

End of Block: Concepts of Culture

Start of Block: Final Questions

Well done! I hope that was interesting and gave you a lot to think about. Your answers are very much appreciated and now I wonder if there is anything you'd like to add?

Q4. a)

Before getting into it, you were asked a few questions (your thoughts on culture, the culture you would describe yourself as, and examples of things you do that you consider cultural).

Now, after having taken this survey, have any of your initial ideas changed?

Q4. b)

Is there anything else you would like to add?

(e.g. your thoughts on culture or the questions in this survey).

End of Block: Final Questions

Start of Block: Contact Details

Fantastic! Your answers will assist greatly in getting to know more about the ways in which people understand culture.

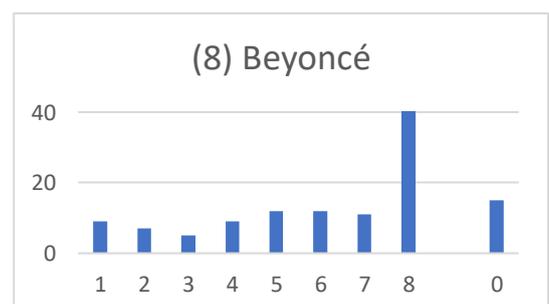
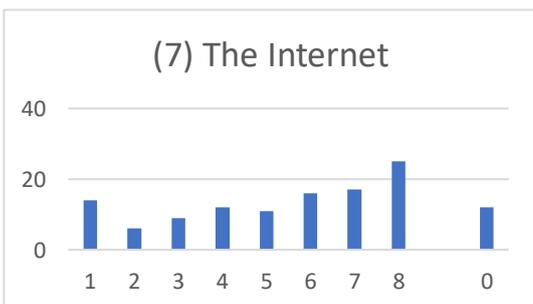
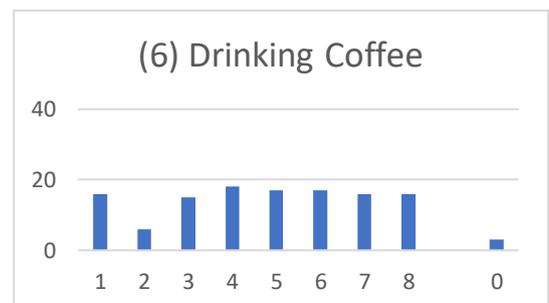
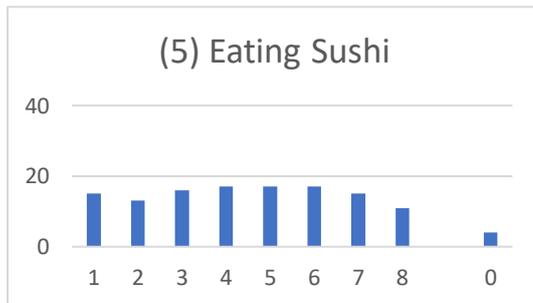
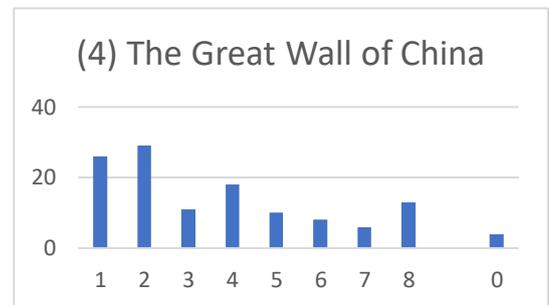
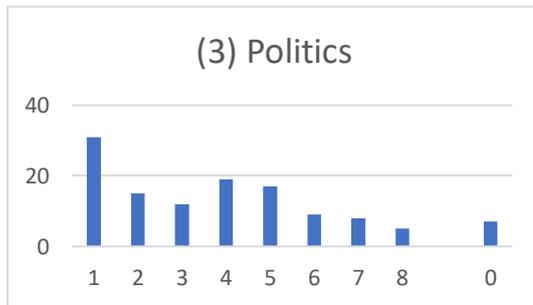
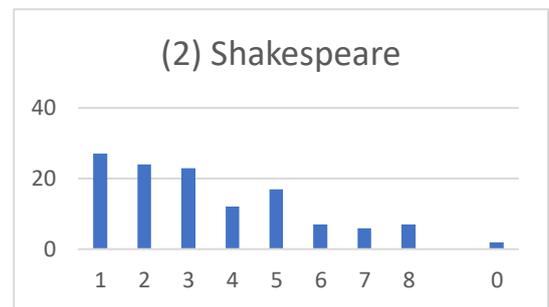
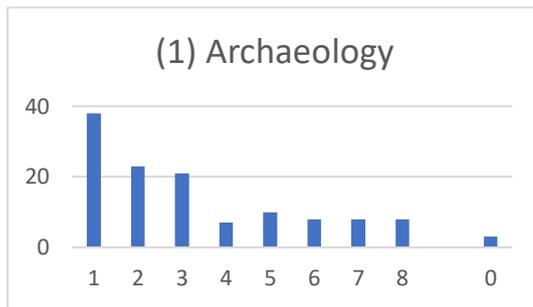
I would also like to take this opportunity to ask you to encourage others that you know who may be interested in this research to participate so that we can get as many opinions on culture as possible!

Lastly, here is a link to the webpage where you will be able to view the results of this survey once the data has been analysed: <https://conceptsofculture.wordpress.com/>

Thank you!

End of Block: Contact Details

Appendix D: Figure 2 Graphs



Appendix E: Table 2 Full Image

| Top 104 words (each used 10 times or more) - grouped by meaning | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|--------------------|----|----------|----|---------|----|--|-------|
| Rank | Term | | | | | | | | | Total |
| 1 | Culture | 445 | Cultural | 84 | Cultures | 66 | | | | 595 |
| 2 | People | 124 | | | | | | | | 124 |
| 3 | Family | 86 | Whānau | 11 | Parents | 12 | | | | 109 |
| 4 | NZ/New Zealand | 73 | NZer/New Zealander | 29 | | | | | | 102 |
| 5 | Way | 63 | Ways | 35 | | | | | | 98 |
| 6 | Think | 48 | Consider | 22 | Thinking | 14 | Thought | 11 | | 95 |
| 7 | European | 51 | Pākehā | 34 | | | | | | 85 |
| 8 | Group | 51 | Groups | 28 | | | | | | 79 |
| 9 | Life | 24 | Live | 19 | Living | 14 | Lives | 10 | | 67 |
| 10 | Traditions | 51 | Traditional | 13 | | | | | | 64 |
| 11 | Food | 47 | Eat | 14 | | | | | | 61 |
| 12 | Beliefs | 44 | Believe | 17 | | | | | | 61 |
| 13 | Things | 60 | | | | | | | | 60 |
| 14 | Māori | 56 | | | | | | | | 56 |
| 15 | Identify | 32 | Identity | 18 | | | | | | 50 |
| 16 | Art | 36 | Arts | 13 | | | | | | 49 |
| 17 | Ethnicity | 27 | Ethnic | 22 | | | | | | 49 |
| 18 | Music | 47 | | | | | | | | 47 |
| 19 | Social | 28 | Society | 18 | | | | | | 46 |
| 20 | History | 17 | Background | 16 | Heritage | 13 | | | | 46 |
| 21 | Language | 43 | | | | | | | | 43 |
| 22 | Religion | 21 | Religious | 18 | | | | | | 39 |
| 23 | Kiwi | 39 | | | | | | | | 39 |
| 24 | Different | 36 | | | | | | | | 36 |
| 25 | Christmas | 31 | | | | | | | | 31 |
| 26 | Values | 31 | | | | | | | | 31 |
| 27 | Behaviours | 16 | Behaviour | 15 | | | | | | 31 |
| 28 | Customs | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 29 | Feel | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 30 | Shared | 25 | | | | | | | | 25 |
| 31 | Country | 24 | | | | | | | | 24 |
| 32 | Certain | 12 | Particular | 12 | | | | | | 24 |
| 33 | Based | 23 | | | | | | | | 23 |
| 34 | Speak | 13 | Say | 10 | | | | | | 23 |
| 35 | Day | 22 | | | | | | | | 22 |
| 36 | Practices | 11 | Rituals | 10 | | | | | | 21 |
| 37 | Auckland | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 38 | Born | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 39 | Place | 20 | | | | | | | | 20 |
| 40 | Ideas | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 41 | English | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 42 | Time | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 43 | Work | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 44 | World | 19 | | | | | | | | 19 |
| 45 | Celebrate | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 46 | Community | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 47 | Good | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 48 | Sense | 17 | | | | | | | | 17 |
| 49 | Irish | 16 | | | | | | | | 16 |
| 50 | Norms | 16 | | | | | | | | 16 |
| 51 | Doing | 15 | | | | | | | | 15 |
| 52 | Important | 15 | | | | | | | | 15 |
| 53 | Dance | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 54 | White | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 55 | Festivals | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 56 | Respect | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 57 | Stories | 14 | | | | | | | | 14 |
| 58 | Home | 13 | | | | | | | | 13 |
| 59 | Scottish | 13 | | | | | | | | 13 |
| 60 | British | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 61 | Events | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 62 | Experience | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 63 | Influenced | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 64 | Mixed | 12 | | | | | | | | 12 |
| 65 | Beach | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 66 | Church | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 67 | Easter | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 68 | Love | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 69 | School | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 70 | Years | 11 | | | | | | | | 11 |
| 71 | Christian | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 72 | Dress | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 73 | Holidays | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 74 | Individual | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 75 | Know | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |
| 76 | Seen | 10 | | | | | | | | 10 |

Appendix F: Table 3 Full Image

| Themes | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|----------|----------|---------|--------|--|-------|
| People | People | Māori | European | Kiwi | Pākehā | Nzer/New Zealander | Irish | Scottish | British | | | |
| | 124 | 56 | 51 | 39 | 34 | 29 | 16 | 13 | 12 | | | 374 |
| Society & Groups | Family/Wihānau/Parents | Group/Groups | Social/Society | Community | Individual | | | | | | | 261 |
| | 109 | 79 | 46 | 17 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| Arts | Food/Eat | Things | Art(s) | Music | Dance | Stories | Dress | | | | | 255 |
| | 61 | 60 | 49 | 47 | 14 | 14 | 10 | | | | | |
| Way | Way/Ways | Life/Live/Living/Lives | Behaviour/Behaviours | Norms | Customs | | | | | | | 237 |
| | 98 | 67 | 31 | 16 | 25 | | | | | | | |
| Place | NZ/New Zealand | Country | Based | Auckland | Place | World | Home | Beach | Church | School | | 214 |
| | 73 | 24 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 11 | | |
| Identity | Identity/Identify | Ethnicity/Ethnic | History/Background/Heritage | White | Mixed | | | | | | | 171 |
| | 50 | 49 | 46 | 14 | 12 | | | | | | | |
| Traditions/Events | Traditions/Traditional | Christmas | Practices/Rituals | Festivals | Events | Easter | Holidays | | | | | 163 |
| | 64 | 31 | 21 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 10 | | | | | |
| Cognition/Experience | Think/Thought/Thinking/Consider | Ideas | Experience | Know | Seen | | | | | | | 146 |
| | 95 | 19 | 12 | 10 | 10 | | | | | | | |
| Beliefs/Values | Beliefs/Believe | Religion/Religious | Values | Christian | | | | | | | | 141 |
| | 61 | 39 | 31 | 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Acts & Actions | Shared | Born | Work | Celebrate | Doing | Influenced | | | | | | 108 |
| | 25 | 20 | 19 | 17 | 15 | 12 | | | | | | |
| Perspective | Different | Certain/Particular | Good | Important | | | | | | | | 92 |
| | 36 | 24 | 17 | 15 | | | | | | | | |
| Language | Language | Speak/Say | English | | | | | | | | | 85 |
| | 43 | 23 | 19 | | | | | | | | | |
| Feelings/Senses | Feel | Sense | Respect | Love | | | | | | | | 67 |
| | 25 | 17 | 14 | 11 | | | | | | | | |
| Time | Day | Time | Years | | | | | | | | | 52 |
| | 22 | 19 | 11 | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix G: Self-Descriptors

NOTE: - All descriptors have been arranged alphabetically by column. This has been done to ensure the privacy of participants. Spelling errors have also been fixed while grammar and sentence structures have been left unaltered.

| Ethnicity/Nationality Based Descriptors | Non-Ethnic/Nationality Based Descriptors | Against Cultural Descriptors/None |
|---|--|---|
| Asian | "A little of different cultures" | "Census type descriptions seem inappropriate" |
| Austrian/European | 5th Generation New Zealander | "I am a product of much complexity of interaction and trying to understand others. So a label would be? Maybe no label can sum it up. Is culture becoming more fluid in a multicultural New Zealand?" |
| British | Academic | "I am white European but to me that's not a culture it's a description" |
| British Pakeha | Accepting | "I don't necessarily fit a mould" |
| Caribbean | Activism | "I don't see culture as just related to an ethnic grouping or nationality it is more about all the cumulative groups you are part of" |
| Caucasian | Adaptable | "I don't think we can accurately ascribe a culture to ourselves. I participate in various cultures related to food, coffee, sport etc. but I am not described as a culture" |
| Celtic | Animal-Loving | "I don't think I would identify myself as any specific culture. I have ethnic roots which trace back to eastern European and Celtic origins but, while I acknowledge them, I do not consider myself defined by these" |
| Chinese | Artist | "I would not describe myself as a culture but as a person who has absorbed a mix of cultures" |
| Colonial New Zealander | Arts | "I wouldn't describe myself as being any culture. It's not cultural cringe as such, I just don't feel like anything describes me adequately" |
| Cook Island Maori | Aucklander | "Not a cultural person" |
| Cornish | Baby Boomer | None |
| Croatian | Boring | |
| Cypriot | Chameleon | Other |
| Dutch | Carnival | |
| Eastern Canadian | Catholic | Cultureless (self described as being without anchor or root in any particular culture) |
| Eastern European | Chinese (used only to refer to culture, not ethnicity) | |
| English | Christian | |
| Euro-Fijian | Cosmopolitan | |
| Fijian | Country | |
| Filipino | Creative | |
| French | Educated | |
| German | Expat | |
| Hungarian | Feminist | |
| Irish | Gen X | |
| Japanese | Gender Diverse | |
| Latino | Hindu | |
| Māori | Hip Hop | |
| New Zealand European | Immigrant | |
| Niuean | Indian (used only to refer to culture, not ethnicity) | |
| NZ Pakeha | Internet | |
| Pacific | Jesus Follower | |
| Pacific Islander | Jewish Heritage | |
| Pakeha New Zealander | Kiwi (generally used in the context of lifestyle or culture and not ethnicity) | |
| Pakeha Woman | Kiwi ethos and way of life | |
| Pasifika | Kiwiana | |
| PNG | Left-Wing | |
| Polynesian | Male | |
| Sámi (Indigenous Norse) | Middle Class | |
| Samoa | Middle-Aged | |
| Scot | Midwife | |
| Scottish | Millennial | |
| Sicilian | Mixed | |
| South African | Mother | |
| South American | Multi-Cultural | |
| Sri Lankan | Multiple | |
| Thai | Music Culture | |
| Tongan | Nature-Based | |
| United Kingdom | Nerd | |
| Welsh | New Zealander (used only to refer to culture, not ethnicity) | |
| Western European | Parent | |
| White | Plastic Maori (self described as not being able to speak the language but understands tikanga) | |
| | Polynesian (used only to refer to culture, not ethnicity) | |
| | Pluralist | |
| | Positive | |
| | Progressive | |
| | Self Employed | |
| | South Aucklander | |
| | South Island | |
| | Te Ao Maori | |
| | Theatre | |
| | Titirangian | |
| | Traveller | |
| | Urban | |
| | Vegetarian | |
| | West Auckland | |
| | Western | |
| | Westie | |
| | White Anglo Saxon Protestant | |
| | Yorkshire | |