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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO  
Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN NURSING

THE CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE OF WELLNESS THROUGH THE VOICES  
OF THE *KŪPUNA*

by

Anne P. Odell

A dissertation presented to the  
FACULTY OF THE HAHN SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

In partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
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Dissertation Committee

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## ABSTRACT

Few studies successfully explain the decline of Hawaiian health, nor provide enough insight to the cultural determinants that affect Hawaiian wellness. For over two hundred years, Hawaiians have been influenced by a changing landscape mostly imposed upon Hawaiians and Hawaiian lands as a consequence of being conquered by powerful Western cultures. This grounded theory study utilized video elicitation and focus group methodologies to examine the perspective of wellness in a group of Hawaiian elders known as *kūpuna*. Following the viewing of a documentary film designed to elicit culturally based memories, a series of interview questions were asked to foster group discussion. Participants were videotaped while participating in the group discussion.

Twenty-six Hawaiian *kūpuna*, with an average age of 65 years participated in this study. The *kūpuna* were recruited through the efforts of a local Hawaiian facilitator and the researcher's established connections with the Hawaiian community. Over 70 percent of the participants had more than 70% Hawaiian ancestry, known as Hawaiian blood quantum (HBQ), 9 were 100% Hawaiian, and the minimum HBQ was 50%. The following lines of inquiry were explored: What is the contemporary Hawaiian perception of wellness? What are the social and cultural determinates that influence the Hawaiian perception of wellness? Keeping balance emerged as the core category of this study. There were three thematic categories that supported the core category: *Aloha*, Mastery and Belonging. The context and conditions of change and adaptation emphasize the need to instill these concepts for cultural survival and

consequently, Hawaiian identity. The *kūpuna* perceptions of wellness in this study are balanced by spiritual fulfillment, physical and mental health. These values have been well formed by ancient Hawaiian tenets; they become stable as a result of their ancestry and life experiences. Further research will contribute to improving existing programs and developing better guidelines for clinical practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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My family waited patiently on the sidelines for their mom, grandma, daughter, and sister to return fully to their lives, a true testament of their love and support for me, for that, I am truly thankful. My husband, Bob deserves my enduring thanks for his love and support. He intimately experienced the dissertation process for four years, and because of our lively discussions; I was provoked to open my way of thinking.

A very special thanks goes to my Hawaiian niece, Rolinda Bean, who spent hours

helping me and facilitating this research. My gratitude goes to my ex-husband Dino; our enduring friendship has fostered my commitment and love for the Hawaiian culture. Because of our relationship, I have been privileged to participate in the Hawaiian life rarely experienced by non-Hawaiians. I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of his parents John and Ida Kunewa, who accepted me as their daughter. I also dedicate this dissertation to the *kūpuna* who shared their lives and time by participating in this research-all in the hopes that their efforts will be for the benefit of the Hawaiian people.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
TABLE OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS OF INQUIRY .....	1
Lines of Inquiry .....	4
Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study .....	5
Significance of the Study .....	7
CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY .....	9
Cultural Conditions .....	11
A Sociocultural Historical Perspective .....	11
From their source, the <i>Kanaka Maoli</i> perspective .....	11
Hawaiian creation. ....	11
Early Hawaiians. ....	14
Centering, from the <i>hapa</i> perspective .....	15
Perpetuated post-contact beliefs and activities. ....	15
From the outside, the <i>haole</i> perspective .....	16
Hawaiian adapted traditions.....	16
Genetic explanations.....	17
Disruption from a Sociocultural Historical Perspective .....	18
From their source, the <i>Kanaka Maoli</i> perspective .....	18
Losses.....	18
Centering, from the <i>hapa</i> perspective .....	20
Forming the Christian landscape .....	20
Societal reallocation.....	21
From the outside, the <i>haole</i> perspective .....	23
Stature .....	24
From their source, the <i>Kanaka Maoli</i> perspective .....	24

Centering, from the <i>hapa</i> perspective .....	25
From the outside, the <i>haole</i> perspective .....	26
Diminishing Hawaiian population .....	26
Huli .....	27
From their source, the <i>Kanaka Maoli</i> perspective .....	27
Hawaiian identity .....	27
Cultural resiliency .....	28
From the outside, the <i>haole</i> perspective .....	29
Cultural discourse .....	29
Hawaiian Health Delivery System.....	29
Health Delivery Programs.....	31
Hawaiian Health.....	32
Exploring Health Determinants .....	33
Learning from the <i>Kūpuna</i> and <i>Kūmu</i> .....	34
Philosophical Elements that Shape Socio-Cultural Determinants .....	35
Rationale for the Study .....	37
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN .....	39
Grounded Theory Methodology .....	40
Data Collection .....	42
Hawaiian Culture Considerations .....	42
Recruitment.....	43
Setting .....	44
Purposive Sampling .....	47
Demographic Data of the <i>Kūpuna</i> .....	48
Age.....	48
Percentage of Hawaiian blood quantum (HBQ) .....	49
Interview Guide .....	50
Focus Groups .....	52
Video-Elicitation Methodology .....	53
Equipment Considerations.....	53
Ethical Considerations .....	53
Informed Consent.....	53
Subject Risks and Benefits.....	54
Data Analysis .....	55
Procedures .....	55
Translation .....	58
Coding.....	58
Rigor .....	60



Conformity and Reflexivity Issues .....	61
History of My Role in the Hawaiian Community.....	61
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS .....	 64
Core Category: Keeping Balance ( <i>Pono</i> ) .....	65
<i>Aloha</i> .....	70
Mastery .....	72
Belonging .....	76
Context: Changing Landscape .....	80
Hawaiian Theory of Illness.....	82
Lifestyle Changes.....	84
Decreasing Resources .....	85
 Conditions: Connections.....	 88
Strengthening the Community .....	90
Spiritual Fulfillment.....	92
Utilizing Prayer .....	92
Living According to the Christian Tradition .....	93
Strategies: Using Cultural Recipes .....	95
Learning Another Way .....	96
Boosting the Culture .....	98
We are Just Caretakers.....	99
Consequences: Hawaiian Identity.....	101
Hawaiian Resemblance.....	104
Theoretical Model.....	106
 CHAPTER FIVE-DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....	 110
Keeping Balance ( <i>Pono</i> ).....	111
The Context and Conditions of Keeping Balance: <i>Aloha</i> , Mastery, and Belonging	
.....	113
Cultural Strategies of Keeping Balance: <i>Aloha</i> , Mastery, and Belonging.....	115
Consequences: Hawaiian Resemblance .....	117
 CHAPTER SIX-CRITIQUE AND IMPLICATIONS .....	 119
Critique of the Study.....	119
Strengths of the study.....	119
Limitations of the study .....	120

Implications for Practice .....	121
Personal practice changes .....	121
Specific Hawaiian needs .....	122
Advanced practice nurses .....	122
Social and Political Challenges.....	123
Research Implications .....	124
Conclusion .....	125
REFERENCES .....	127
APPENDICES .....	138

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Model of the Categories and Themes .....	65
Figure 2. Model of Balance .....	66
Figure 3. The Contemporary Hawaiian Perception of Wellness (Odell, 2008).....	109

## LIST OF APPENDICES

A: Focus Group Question .....	139
B: Consent Form .....	142
C: Media Release Form .....	146
D: Film Storyline .....	148
E: Hawaiian Wellness Research Demographic Questionnaire .....	150
F: Hawaiian Language Glossary .....	152
G: University of San Diego Institutional Review Board .....	155

## CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS OF INQUIRY

Hawaiians consistently have the poorest healthcare outcomes in the United States and equal only to people of Samoa worldwide. Concerns over Hawaiian health grew after the release of the Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in 1979. The report became the impetus in establishing the Native Hawaiian Health Research Consortium (NHHRC) in 1985. The NHHRC spearheaded a study to investigate the health needs of Hawaiians and to review all existing health data on Native Hawaiians (Native Hawaiian Health Research Consortium, 1985). Their findings found that Native Hawaiians health studies were limited because the Western biomedical model defined the meaning of health and wellness. These findings increased research efforts to explore the meaning of health and wellness from the Native Hawaiian cultural perspective. Consequently, through the advocacy efforts of the Hawaiian community and the NHHRC, cultural well being was integrated with the biomedical model. Their advocacy translated into increased access to healthcare programs, mentorship programs that promote native health practitioners, and funding for further Native Hawaiian health research.

In the past, conducting Hawaiian research was challenging because the methods used in collecting data for surveys or censuses had not separated Hawaiians from other

racess. Furthermore, scholarly efforts were mainly written from the Western perspective with the exception of three notable writers, Samuel Kamakau, David Malo, and David Kalakaua (Kuykendall, 1938). Improved statistical data on Hawaiians became available in 2000 when changes were made in the survey forms that distinguished Hawaiians and other races. Hence, knowledge of Native Hawaiians improved as a result of the work from emic researchers.

When conducting research and data collection amongst Hawaiians, it is important to consider how the population is defined. At the state level, two labels/terms are commonly used in reference to this people--*Hawaiian* and *Native Hawaiian* (using the upper case N). *Hawaiian* refers to persons with at least 50% blood quantum, whereas *Native Hawaiians* refers to all persons of Hawaiian descent. A third term, *Kanaka Maoli*, which means indigenous Hawaiian, exists and is preferred by Hawaiian scholars and elders (Blaisdell, 1989). Although the State stresses the accurate use of these terms in its surveys and censuses, national surveys and censuses pay less attention to the above definitions, relying instead on self-reports. As a result, discrepancies in the statistical data between the state and federal governmental reports are common (Native Hawaiian Health Research Consortium, No. 46, 1985).

Most emerging Hawaiian research involves the collaborative efforts of the University of Hawai'i, Kamehameha Schools, and the Native Hawaiian Health Research Consortium (NHHRC). This collaboration in Hawaiian studies research has shifted the focus from a purely quantitative methodology to include qualitative methodologies and mixed methodology. Also, a motivating factor for the exploration of the meanings of wellness in the Hawaiian community is the inconsistency between data on Hawaiian

mortality and the Native Hawaiian perceptions of their health. Although statistically Hawaiians were not responding to healthcare interventions as expected, in fact the death rate is 34% higher for Hawaiians when compared to all other races in the United States. A report published by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, (2003) revealed that over 89% of Hawaiians (living in Hawai'i) perceived their health to be good to excellent. The gap in the data provides for a strong case for describing the *emic* and *etic* perspectives of a society's cultural system.

Another important concern in understanding Hawaiian wellness involves this group's strong ties to its past. Studies on Hawaiian health determinants generally point to the period after the arrival of Captain Cook in 1778 when explaining their current health circumstances. This is because for thousands of years, Hawaiians and other Polynesian groups lived free of diseases common to the rest of the world. Experts point to the long periods of isolation that prevented Hawaiians from acquiring immunity to diseases. As with all closed societies, isolation also advances the Hawaiian's strong sense of cultural identity, belief systems, and social structures (Hofstede, 2001). Thus, Cook's arrival in 1778 and subsequent foreign commerce exposed Hawaiians to new diseases that effectively wiped out approximately 300,000 Hawaiian people. Further decline was attributed to the number of Hawaiian people who left the islands to work on merchant ships. By 1920, only 23,723 pure Hawaiians lived on the islands, and they had a life expectancy of 35 years. Although Cook's arrival was 150 years ago, the social and cultural repercussions continue as prominent factors in virtually all scholarly works.

Evidence that Hawaiians value their past is found in oral histories. Oral histories tie their identities to the natural world, to their ancestors, and to their cosmic unity with

nature. According to Meyer (1990) Hawaiians possess a unique and fluid sense of self that will never be understood by non-Hawaiians. Meyer stresses that any explanation of Hawaiians' sense of wellness must come from their own voices, driven by their innate method of communication. The prevailing method of communication for Hawaiians is "talk story." Talk story functions as a method of sharing life lessons, traditional customs, and keeping ties to their communities (Lane, 1990). This method vividly and colorfully describes talk story as "a rambling, open-ended kind of storytelling, given to riffs of language and twists of fancy—not unlike the movement of the wind itself. Its roots are in the experience of 19<sup>th</sup>-century sugar-cane plantation workers, who in pidgin [sic] English told stories of common suffering and hope" (Lane, 1990). This unique form of Hawaiian communication infuses a sense of belonging and a respect for the time it takes to listen to each other, and can assert a sense of balance with Hawaiians, their families, and their land (Handy, 1998).

There is limited research in how Hawaiian identity is linked to their sense of wellness and the theoretical underpinnings are ill defined.

### Lines of Inquiry

The purpose of this study was to explore the contemporary perspective of wellness through the voices of the Hawaiian elders (*kūpuna*). The term *wellness*, defined in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as "the quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal" (wellness, 2008), is culturally vague and could be interpreted differently in the Hawaiian population and in the Western medical community. For this reason, the researcher made use of the Grounded Theory



methodology to guide the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Charmaz (2006), claims that using this approach can “bring the researcher into new worlds and in touch with rich data.” Rich data reaches below the social dynamics that may be dependent on relatively permanent determinants, environmental forces, and social changes. To appreciate how Hawaiians value wellness, the following lines of inquiry were explored: What is the contemporary Hawaiian perception of wellness? What social and cultural determinates influence the Hawaiian perception of wellness?

### Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

A gap exists in understanding patterns of behavior in an attempt to gauge the Hawaiian’s self-conception and the meanings they ascribe to in the world around them. Though limited, Chilcott (1987) offers an approach for exploring predictive behaviors in cultures useful even to non-members of the cultures being studied. In regards to behavior patterns systems, he writes that this approach is useful “for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it.”

. Following his line of thinking, these patterns can be coded into “categories, plans, rules, and organizing principles of behavior that a person has conceived as a member of a culture” (Chilcott, 1987). There are theoretical gaps when Hawaiian knowledge is limited to social and genetic determinants.

George Herbert Mead (1934) approached this problem by using an alternative approach for understanding meaning within cultures—that of *symbolic interaction theory*. The basic assumptions of symbolic interaction theory are that groups influence individual

experiences, and those experiences are attached to social customs, expectations, and laws. For example, Hawaiian ancestry reflects a point of view recognized by association with their current issues or what Herbert Blumer (1969) describes as the “network of multiform actions.”

The literature review demonstrated that Polynesian groups rely on symbolic expressions to impart culturally-specific sets of concepts. For example, it is common for Native Hawaiians to speak of their personal ties to the land in metaphoric terms, referring to themselves as born of the root of the *kalo* plant, and they believe that they communicate their own rootedness to their cultural home (Meyer, 2003). When Hawaiians link their points of views with their experience of current issues, they are affected in such a manner described by Herbert Blumer. Modern film documentaries attempt to capture images of traditional Hawaiian life and the landscape, which include extraordinary scenes of the ocean, sunsets, and waterfalls. One or more of three award winning films, *Spirit of the Land-Continuing Tradition* (Evenari, Parkins, & Evenari Media Productions, 1992) and *Pule Wailele* (Zak, 2006), illustrated activities that had a strong cultural relevance for Hawaiians that is probably not shared by outsiders because of the extent of cultural meaning (Palys, 1996). Geert Hofstede (2001) attributes this to the collectivity in human society and “that extreme phenomena differentiate more between cultures than do modal ones” Ginsburg, (1983). states that symbolic interaction theory underlies this process wherein participants inform researchers of meanings not understood by the researcher. Visual anthropologists often refer to the film image as a means of capturing the “wholeness” or “completeness” that is not shared in words or even photographs.

Examples of employing Hawaiian symbolic imagery using ancient and modern proverbs are very popular in Hawai'i. Mary Kawena Pukui (1983) collected and translated Hawaiian proverbs that exemplify how symbolic imagery involves individual Hawaiian experiences. The following is an example:

*E lauhoe mai na wa'a; i ke ka, i ka hoe; i ka hoe, i ke ka; pae aku i ka 'aina.*  
(327)

Everybody paddle the canoes together; bail and paddle, paddle and bail, and the shore will be reached. If everybody pitches in, the work is quickly done.

or

*Komo mai kau mapuna hoe*  
Dip your paddle in. Join in the effort. (1836)

The image of the canoe and the paddling represent expectations and laws that remain important to Hawaiians today and give meaning to their traditions and their customs.

### Significance of the Study

*Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention* (1979) stated that providing adequate medical care alone does not meet the objectives of health promotion in vulnerable populations. Understanding the culture for its character or way of thinking and being is needed to help eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare. Health disparities are linked to language, social and economic status, and education. The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) has established funding opportunities for nurse researchers who are interested in investigating health disparities. At the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific Nursing Research Conference 2007, Dr. Patricia Grady (2007), Director of the NINR, identified significant health disparities among Hawaiians.

In general, nursing research contributes to the body of knowledge that informs practice in the nursing profession. In order to develop optimal nursing practice, it is imperative that nursing research focuses on the emic (behavior or beliefs of the participants) perspectives of unique cultures. There has been very little research involving Hawaiians, especially in nursing and medicine. The few studies available have been conducted by anthropologists and sociologists, and considered to be within the domains of oceanic studies in archeology, sociology, and ethnology.

The lack of available research on Hawaiians has not prevented research scientists from recognizing Polynesian societies as unique from other migrating groups. This is partly because Polynesian cultures can be traced back to their aboriginal geographical origins based on the preserved integrity of cultural characteristics. Despite migration, integration, and subjugation, their core components of language, customs, beliefs, and social structure are relatively intact. This provides an opportunity for transcultural researchers to explore the various forces that affect behaviors. Because many other minority cultures hold behavioral and disease concerns common to Hawaiians, the findings of this study could lead to further research that would test those assumptions in other vulnerable populations (Casken, 2001).

## CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The following review and critique involves a discussion of Hawaiian culture and its relationship to the dynamic determinants of Hawaiian wellness.

The first section concerns the sociocultural history of Hawaii as a foundation for the Hawaiian contemporary perspective on wellness. The discussion focuses on Polynesian/Hawaiian ancient narratives and the influence of their ancestors and their invaders. Following Cook's invasion, the role of tradition, as it relates to the Hawaiian sense of wellness, has been juxtaposed with Western influences. The intermingling of Western and Native Hawaiian cultures resulted in a two-way phenomenon of discovery. In other words, the Hawaiian has discovered new worldviews and tools that continue to influence their well-being and perspective on life. In turn, foreigners (*haoles*) have discovered a new culture from which they profited and formulated their etic perspective. Today, the result is that many Hawaiians, who were viewed by early explorers as great in physical and mental stature, have left the islands, married out of their culture, or they have remained in their homeland only to become the State of Hawaii's most marginalized citizens (McMullin, 2005).

Like the *hula* dance, swaying from side to side, the literature review describes determinants that affect modern Hawaiian culture. The emic perspective incorporates

ancient indigenous beliefs, while a mixed (centering) perspective incorporates ancient beliefs with contemporary cultural theories. The etic perspective relies on Western logic and scientific reasoning. The headings are labeled as follows:

- Emic: From their source, the *Kanaka Maoli* perspective.
- Centering: From the *hapa* (combines a mixed perspective, informed by interplay of the *Kanaka Maoli* and the *haole* cultural perspectives).
- Etic: From the outside, the *haole* perspective.

The second section describes the construction of the Hawaiian health delivery system. The current healthcare delivery system was designed to connect the ancient past with the present and the future in hopes of returning balance or wellness to the Hawaiian community. While the review of literature suggests that the current Hawaiian health system is accessible and affordable, the available health statistics reveal that it is minimally effective. A pertinent review of the current health status of Hawaiians will follow.

In the third section, the philosophical reasoning and Hawaiian epistemology as they relate to wellness promotion will be reviewed. Strikingly, Hawaiian epistemology has survived in spite of modernization. The seemingly inherited sense of knowing shared by Hawaiians is difficult to extricate from the literature. However, references to these phenomena are in practically every written and oral account where the essence of being Hawaiian is discussed.

The fourth section presents the rationale for this study. The literature critique will support the argument that research to address wellness in this population is best approached through qualitative methodology.

## Cultural Conditions

### *A Sociocultural Historical Perspective*

*From their source, the Kanaka Maoli perspective*

#### *Hawaiian creation.*

Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa (1998) states, "its essential lesson is that every aspect of the Hawaiian conception of the world is related by birth, and as such, all parts of the Hawaiian world are one indivisible lineage." When Kame'eleihiwa refers to "all parts of the Hawaiian world," she is alluding to Hawaiians' sense that they have a relationship to all living things, seen and unseen.

This phenomenon of man's connectedness to all of creation is similarly expressed in *Whale Rider* (Caro, 2004), a recent movie based on the 1987 novel written by Polynesian writer and Professor Witi Tame Ihimaera-Smiler. In the story, a Maori village's culture and structure are threatened by modernization, represented, in part, by the death of whales in the waters proximal to the villagers. The granddaughter of the chief risks her life to save thousands of whales from death and, in doing so, restores faith in her culture's purpose. The spirits of her ancestors, which include whales, direct her actions. In the end, her family is reunited, her grandfather's health is restored, and there is renewed hope for the future of the villagers. The story exemplifies the cosmic forces that maintain wellness and harmony in Polynesian societies.

Humankind's creation and connectedness to, or oneness with, the rest of creation is also described in the sacred chant *Kumulipo*:

In the midst of Chaos there was a great void. It was a time of deep darkness, before the memory of mankind. Into this void came *Kane*, the god of creation. He picked up a giant calabash, threw it high into the air where it broke into two enormous pieces. The top piece was curved like a bowl, and became the Sky. The seeds scattered and became the stars. The remainder of the calabash fell downward, and became the Earth. The Sky was the domain of the god *Rangi*, while the domain of the Earth was of the goddess *Papa*. To *Kanaloa Kane* gave the care of the sea that surrounded them. *Kane* proclaimed that he was going to create a great Chief to rule over all the Earth. To prepare for the needs of this great Chief, he first filled the earth with living things: caterpillars to make moths and butterflies; eggs which would hatch into birds of every sort, both land birds and sea birds. He created geckos and salamanders, and turtles, for both land and sea. To the god *Ku* he gave the domain of the forests to grow great trees of *koa* wood and candlenut, *hau* and *wiliwili*. To *Lono* he gave the domain of food plants for the Chief to eat: coconut, breadfruit, sweet potato and taro. *Kane* was satisfied, and told the gods they must now seek out the material required to construct this great Chief, be it wood, or clay, stone or bark. He sent them far and wide. The gods searched and searched, when one day, they found a great mound of rich, red earth, overlooking the sea. They took some of this earth to *Kane*, who fashioned a figure of a man from it, breathing life into it as he did so. Soon the man walked about, and spoke to the gods, and the gods were pleased. They called him Red Earth Man, and proclaimed him the first son of *Rangi* Sky and *Papa* Earth. From this union came *Wakea*, and his wife, *Lihau'ula*, from whom are descended the priests (*kahuna*) and other chiefs (*alii*). Chiefs forever more are descended from this first union of *Rangi* and *Papa*. (Elliott, 2004)

*Kumulipo* is an example of how chants communicated rituals, traditions, and lineages for the past 2000 years. Since the written word did not exist in Hawaiian culture prior to the arrival of European invaders, researchers must rely on oral accounts for a historical perspective of Polynesia before European contact. Hawaiian researchers have recently employed dialectical methods to find consistency in Hawaiian oral histories, ancient traditions, and modern folklore. The journalist Kamakau (1961, 1964, 1976) was one of the few Hawaiians who described the lifeways of "the people of old." He lived during Kamehameha's time, and the missionaries educated him. His collections are



significant because they present life from the emic lens of Hawaiian culture. Another literary resource comes from Handy and Pukui's (1998) reconstruction of traditional Hawaiian society based on material gathered from elderly informants on the island of Hawai'i that includes the informants' own interpretations, oral history and lessons

The following story about indolence is another example of how oral stories were used to teach the Hawaiian people to behave. This story in an electronic format from the Hawaiian Language Legacy Program (HLLP), which is available as an educational tool in order to improve the perception of Hawaiians:

In the life of the people of *Ni'ihau*, since the sweet potato was their principal food, each family cared for its gardens and selected the slips to be planted at the proper planting time. This we know in our living in *Hawai'i*: some families remain in one place while others travel to visit relatives on the other islands in the chain. Some traveled when it was near to the sweet potato planting season. The farmers watched, and when they saw signs in the sky telling them that the rains were about to fall, they made their gardens ready by weeding and planting the sweet potato slips before the rains came. After the slips were planted, the rains fell and the earth received its moisture. This moisture lasted until the slips grew. The travelers went on their visits and then returned to their island. When the crops matured the farmer pulled up the vines, dug into his sweet potato mounds and baked some food for his family. When the food was cooked and taken from the underground oven, the fragrant smoke of the sweet potatoes cooked by the builder of the oven lay close to the ground and was smelled by the travelers who had gone about and returned. These travelers awoke and traced the fragrance of the sweet potato to where it came from. As the oven maker opened up his oven, the travelers arrived hoping to get some. Because they could not get some without asking, they asked. When they asked, the owner of the sweet potatoes raised his head and asked the question given as our title, "When the rain fell at *Kahoea*, where were you?" If the answer was, "I was at *Waimea*," or "I was on *Kaua'i*," then they received some sweet potatoes. But if the answer was, "On *Ni'ihau*," they would receive none. Because, said the people of *Ni'ihau*, if a person was on *Ni'ihau* when the rains fell, it was very well understood that the person was one of the laziest people on the island of *Ni'ihau* and deserved to die of starvation because of idleness. (Kamehameha Schools, 2007, chap. 2-34 [from] *Ka nupepa kuokoa*)

*Early Hawaiians.*

The historical recordings of early settlers described the Hawaiians as people of “superior” physique and intelligence. There are some archaeological indicators and navigational documents that support these premises as evidenced by their knowledge of navigation, agriculture, and medicine. Archeologists have found elaborate land designs that provided bountiful land resources for food. There is scant documentation of health practices; rather it is through ancestral transmission that researchers learn of their sophisticated medical practices. Larsen (1999, p.258) writes: “It is interesting to notice that the Hawaiians knew the effect of single drugs and administered simple doses as well as strange combinations.” Outsiders thought that Hawaiian practitioners were practicing heathen medicine. Larsen notes that the ancient medical practices of the *kāhuna* (high priests) are still used in modern medicine and most of their pharmacopoeia is supported scientifically.

Pukui (1943) recounts activities of her childhood while living in Kau, on the island of Hawai‘i. Some of their sports included flying kites and sliding down hills on *ti* leaves, surfing the waves on boards, and a Hawaiian version of hide-and-seek. Chanting, *hula*, and community celebrations (*luau*) were an essential part of Hawaiian life, as well as functioning to transmit cultural traditions. According to Pukui, these activities have changed substantially since her childhood. For instance, *hula* lessons started early, and students would graduate to levels of expertise. Rarely would students reach the highest level of expertise. Taught by a *hula* master, the respected teacher was thought to have special knowledge from a spiritual source. Before the master began teaching the *hula*, a pig was sacrificed as an offering in order to gain wisdom and knowledge:

Portions were cut from the nose, ears, feet, side, and tail of the pig and placed on *ti* leaves. From the sea had been brought *kala* seaweed, shrimps, black crab, the spawn of mullet and of *ahulu* fish (*weke*), marine mollusc (*kuapa'a*), and red and white fish. One of each was selected and placed on a plate of *ti* leaf with a portion of pork for each dancer. A special portion was set aside for the *po'opua'a*. The master ate the brain that he might be *ailolo*, 'endowed with wisdom,' in his art. The feast was spread before the altar for the dancers alone. No outsider was allowed to eat with them. The day before the luau all carried their best garments and adornments to the beaches near by, laid them in a safe place, and then plunged into the water. (Pukui, 1943, p. 214)

Centering, from the hapa perspective

*Perpetuated post-contact beliefs and activities.*

Handy (1998) describes the difficulty of knowing how ancient Hawaiian people perceived a Supreme Being. This is because the knowledge of ancient priests was secret, and this knowledge was held under oath under the threat of death. Thus, all references of a Supreme Being are written by outside observers such as in C. F. Forander's circa 1909 memoirs. Forander states that Hawaiians worshiped the most excellent, supreme [being] called *Hika po loa*. A representative of the *Hika po loa* was the god, *Kane*. *Kane* was the father of all living things. Two other gods are described in oral prayers: *Lono* was the god of peace and *Ku* was the god of chiefs and of war. The god *Lono* plays a large role in the historical accounts of Hawaiian legends and in the story of Captain Cook.

Cook was the first outsider the Hawaiians met, and being a Caucasian man, his appearance fit the mythical image of the god *Lono*. The timing of Cook's arrival was important as well; he arrived during the annual *Makahiki Festival*, celebrated from October to February. The season was a time for the rebirth of nature and a time for peace. Cook left and then returned to the Hawaiian Islands because of poor weather conditions, whereby he and his men were greeted with a sense of hostility. He demonstrated his might by shooting gunfire in the air and he destroyed the *Altar of Lono* (Sahlins, 1995).

According to Sahlins, Hawaiians killed him (as a sacrifice) believing that if he were *Lono*, he would return in the flesh the following day. Others believed that Cook essentially humiliated the priests who claimed him to be *Lono*. In the end, because of his cultural ignorance, he was put to death. In the latter version, distrust of outsiders was established. While tools and metals were desirable, this incident was the beginning of the discourse between Hawaiians and *haoles*.

Another ancient tradition of using outrigger canoes has continued in the form of canoe racing. When Captain Cook arrived in 1779, he estimated there were about 8,000 canoes for a Hawaiian population of about 190,000. West (2006) reports that in ancient times the outrigger canoe was used for sporting events in order to hone the skills of the paddlers. Today, there are 60 canoe clubs and approximately 10,000 paddlers race in these clubs. The paddlers are a heterogeneous group ranging from children to senior citizens, of all races; the sport is enjoyed by males and females alike.

*From the outside, the haole perspective*

*Hawaiian adapted traditions.*

Linnekin's (1983) article, *Defining Tradition: Variations on the Hawaiian Identity*, discusses tradition as "elements from the past, but this 'past' is equivocal: it does not correspond to the experience of any particular generation. For Hawaiian Native writers, converts to Christianity, felt obliged to denigrate many of their ancient practices as examples of heathenism" (p. 242). Holm (2006, p. 6) observes other problems with historical documentation. She argues that because most Hawaiian oral histories are from privileged narratives, they overlook "the everyday practices, lifeways, beliefs, and

perceptions of the common people (*makaiinana*) who navigated the social and physical terrain of these vast leeward slopes.”

Post-World War II, the *hula*, *chant*, and *luau* were a marketing resource for the entertainment of tourists. All of the spiritual elements were absent and the ancient performances were modified for the *haole* and Asian palate. Today, because of the Native Hawaiian renaissance, many *hula* schools (*hālau*) teach in the ancient tradition. These schools have gained popularity around the world. *Hula* competitions, exhibitions, and festivals are held in different places several times a year and are attended by thousands of Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians. With ancient Hawaiian protocol demonstrations, knowledge of Hawaiian culture is disseminated in Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian communities. Ironically, Hawaiian hotels are responding to the desires of tourists who want to see authentic Hawaiian activities by including ancient traditional performances in their commercial acts (Ching, 2007).

*Genetic explanations.*

Scientists offer other explanations for the creation of Polynesian people; Polynesians are reported to have originated from present-day Taiwan. Tiejaut et al., (2005) explored Polynesian migration through matching genetic affinities with the analysis of mitochondria. They reported that over 85% of maternal oceanic lineages could be traced back to a common ancestry found in aboriginal Taiwanese. In his book, *The Evolution of the Polynesian Chiefdoms* (1984), archeologist Patrick Kirch discusses the analogies of the “founder principle” and the evolution of prehistoric chiefdoms and how they relate to the Hawaiian culture today. *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia, An Essay in*

*Historical Anthropology* provides other powerful evidence of those phylogenetic roots to modern Polynesian cultures (Kirch, 1984, p. 199).

Phylogeny is defined as the basis of common evolutionary descent, which differentiates over time through distribution of admixtures of dissimilar populations. Human diversity results from long periods of isolation after migration waves, followed by long stretches of immobility. Kirch and Green (2001) used an adapted phylogenetic model to study the commonly inherited structures shared by all Polynesians, or what is referred to as the Proto Polynesian. They found that behavioral features of the Proto Polynesian culture, such as language, rituals, and social structure, are common in all Polynesian groups, regardless of the distance and time that separates the oceanic archipelago. Furthermore, many of those elements are intact in contemporary Polynesian societies today. Other evidence indicates that there are familiar physical features of Hawaiians such as skin color and body shape that differ slightly from other Polynesians, possibly because of centuries of isolation and natural selection.

### *Disruptions from a Sociocultural Historical Perspective*

*From their source, the Kanaka Maoli perspective*

#### *Losses.*

Trask (1992, p. 912) writes, “When Hawaiian land is destroyed by development, by resort complexes, by military installations, it is *our* family, *our* history, *our* past, and *our* future that are destroyed. No non-Hawaiian can understand this.” According to Yamanaka (1995) after the United States annexed Hawai’i in 1898 there was a surge in the development of the tourism industry in Waikiki. He argues that resort expansion

disregarded environmental factors that sustained local (people), such as fishing and farming. Furthermore, he writes that the history of commercialism in Waikiki served as a model for resort development all over the world.

Trask, (1992) in an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio address, characterized state government and tourism stakeholders as misrepresenting their intention to preserve Hawaiian culture. Trask voices how resorts have displaced the Hawaiian people and replaced them with “the urban rich.” She called the destruction of Hawaiian lands for the sake of increasing the tourist economy as the “prostitution of our culture.” As a professor in the Department of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, at the University of Hawai’i, she claims that Hawai’i is the female object of degraded and victimized value... lands are not any longer the source of food and shelter, but the source of money. According to Hawaiian historian Lilikalā Kame’eleihiwa (1992),

The Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas. Such an orientation is to the Hawaiian an eminently practical one, for the future is always unknown, whereas the past is rich in glory and knowledge.

Culturally, Hawaiians are not accustomed to demand land ownership, individual entrepreneurs, or governmental protection. Their attitude stems from pre-contact (before Cook’s arrival) customs, where living on their land was a birthright, the community success was valued above individual success, and their chiefs served the welfare of the Hawaiian people. Land ownership was a foreign concept introduced to Kamehameha I. He and his successors provided land ownership to traders in exchange for goods and services. According to Levy (1975), the land tenure system evolved as greed by hostile foreign interests increased. Commoners were left with secondary lands that were difficult to cultivate, or they were unable to pay the fees or taxes to ward off

seizures from the government. Levy writes that the legal structure for land ownership was modeled on Western property laws, and that model enabled a rapid takeover of Hawaiian-owned lands by Westerners. By the late 1800s, Western Imperialism was well established.

Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni (2004, p.1) discusses the absence of Hawaiians in academia and the political arena: "Comprising substantially less than 1% of the U.S. population, indigenous Hawaiian people are often missed in most academic and popular discussions of race and ethnicity." Osorio (2001, p. 363) explains discrimination against Native entitlements as an economic threat to those who are not accustomed to limitations. He writes: "In a place where over half of the land is held or controlled by the federal and state governments and fee-simple ownership is rare and expensive, it is hardly surprising that Americans, unaccustomed to having their opportunities limited, would question the land entitlements of Native Hawaiians" (Kamehameha Schools, 2007, para. 4).

*Centering, from the hapa perspective*

*Forming the Christian landscape.*

Bernice Pauahi Bishop was born in 1831 to royalty and was the great-granddaughter of King Kamehameha I. She married a wealthy, successful New York businessperson, Charles Reed Bishop, and lived in Honolulu. From her own Protestant missionary education, her Christian beliefs, and her witness to the declining numbers of Hawaiians, she formulated her vision for her people. She believed her people needed a Christian and rigorous education in order to succeed and increase their population. Therefore, she established an endowment for the education of Hawaiian children that supports the Kamehameha Schools. After her death, her husband was quoted as saying,



“That there would come a turning point, when, through enlightenment, the adoption of regular habits and Christian ways of living, the natives would not only hold their numbers, but would increase again like the people of other races” (Kana’iaupuni, 2004). The endowment, known as Bishop Estates, has had a pivotal role in navigating the socio-cultural determinants of Hawaiians. The estate includes over 365,000 acres of Hawaiian land, and supports the largest private educational system in the United States. In addition, the five-member Board of Trustees has historically been managed by *haoles* (Levy, 1975). Consequently, the executors of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Will have mandated Protestant-Christian orthodoxy for their schools, have controlled a large portion of Hawaiian lands, and have profited from non-Hawaiian investments. The irony in Bishop’s vision is that in order to perpetuate Hawaiian traditions; Hawaiians would be forced to abandon their Hawaiian traditions, as described below.

Beyond the conversion to Christianity, economics and prestige were motivators for Hawaiian parents to send their children to Kamehameha Schools. They knew their children would be banned from speaking Hawaiian, would be forced to dress and behave as Westerners, and would be forbidden to practice ritualistic activities. In exchange, they were assured that the majority of Kamehameha graduates would graduate from a four-year college. Thus, graduates of Kamehameha Schools are generally privileged and, accordingly, they have a higher status in Hawaiian society (Hagedorn, 2006).

*Societal reallocation.*

When the resurgence of reclaiming Hawaiian traditions and language developed in the 1970s, Kamehameha Schools changed their curriculum, and since have become leaders in preserving the Hawaiian language and culture (Kana’iaupuni, 2004). Yet the

sociocultural ramifications of establishing Kamehameha Schools and the management of Bishop Estates can not be underestimated. These establishments have perpetuated a long-standing Polynesian structure, the caste system. In a discussion brief, the University of Hawai'i (February 2007) reported that a dual-class education system was created when some children were unable to attend Kamehameha Schools.

The system continues to be a divisive problem in Hawaiian society: "Children of the elite attended exclusive private K-12 schools, mainland colleges and returned to assume membership in the top rung of society. Public schools were for everyone else with no room at the top" (University of Hawaii at Manoa. Office of the Chancellor, 2007, p.1). They also report that this might be just as true today as it was 100 years ago.

This may explain why the lower rung of Hawaiian society is overrepresented in prisons and underrepresented in government, why alcohol and drug abuse are endemic in the Hawaiian communities, and why so many Hawaiians leave their homes for the mainland (US Mainland). Thomas Kalama (personal communication, June 5, 2007) discusses the problems Hawaiians face if they move to the mainland to "start over." For many, moving to the mainland is very difficult, especially if they are from small tight-knit towns. Kalama explains that Hawaiians may speak differently, they are mistaken for other cultures, mostly Hispanic, and they are not trained for the multitude of jobs found outside the islands (personal communication, June 5, 2007). The success of a transplanted Hawaiian increases when he or she lives in pockets of Hawaiian communities, such as in Southern California and recently, Las Vegas. Several web sites or web blogs reveal the emotional decisions that force families to separate from their land (Twain, 1975, pp. 12-13).

*From the outside, the haole perspective*

About 100 years ago, Mark Twain wrote and lectured on how California could pull its financial weight in the United States (Twain was disappointed with the lack of financial contributions California provided to the federal system). Twain suggested that if California invested \$400,000 for a steam liner, they could then “send capitalists down here [Honolulu] in seven or eight days time and take them back in nine or ten, she can fill these islands full of Americans” (Twain, 1975, pp. 12-13). He also praised the hard work of missionaries who successfully freed the Hawaiians from the tyrannous authority of their chiefs. He felt sorry for all of the souls who went to hell before they were converted to Christianity. He writes: “The contrast is so strong-the wonderful benefit conferred on this people by the missionaries is so prominent, so palpable, and so unquestionable” (p. 54). Twain’s observations and recommendations exemplify the tenets of ethnocentricity.

The ethnocentricity of the *haole* in early colonialism affected the Hawaiian people two ways: altruism and the great potential to profit. Many of the developments in the Hawaiian landscape unmistakably reflect those motives. However, Whittaker (1986) explored reasons why the *haole* choose to live in Hawai‘i other than due to their altruism and greed. Her ethnological study discovered that many *haoles* create a fantasy around the idea of living in paradise. The result of adopting this fantasy was that they stayed longer; however, the *haoles* changed their Hawaiian environment to simulate mainland culture. Their homes turn into another version of their mainland homes, and that change gave the *haole* authenticity and security. This mainland culture develops to the exclusion of Hawaiian culture. This is very evident in Oahu, where one can see gated estates along ancient Hawaiian lands.

Ken Conklin, PhD, is a retired schoolteacher who moved to Hawai'i in 1992. He has been an outspoken critic of Hawaiian nationalism. He contends that Hawaiians make up traditions, they inflate the importance of having quantum blood percentage of Hawaiian ancestry, and the Hawaiian sovereignty movement promotes racism. He stirs up controversy by challenging the notion that Hawaiians have some cosmological connection to the land (Conklin, 2002).

In response to Conklin's almost anti-Hawaiian stance, many *haoles* have gathered to support Hawaiians. They work with the Native Hawaiian communities and governmental agencies to affect the existing laws so that Hawaiians are afforded indigenous rights. The contentious political environment between Hawaiians, *hapa*-Hawaiians, Asians, and *haoles* are never mentioned in tourism campaigns, but one only needs to read the web blogs or have entrée in the Hawaiian community to know that there is little agreement in how Hawaiians should steer its future.

### Stature

*From their source, the Kanaka Maoli perspective*

Hawaiians describe stature in a variety of ways; primarily stature refers to either the physical structure of their bodies or their place in a hierarchical social structure. For instance, Hawaiian obesity was a designation of royalty, a designation only afforded by genealogy. Accordingly, stature is based on the close proximity to their gods, and that proximal distance is symbolically represented by the physical stature of the *ali'i* (chiefs). The influence of social stature continues to exist in contemporary Hawai'i; for example, Hawaiian families continue the loose adherence to a tribal hierarchical structure. These

structures are more obvious and prominent in families and/or communities that have a higher percentage of Hawaiian quantum blood, or they have cultivated their Hawaiian identity to the extent that they “fulfill the Hawaiian expectations” of kinsmanship. Today, the caste system is structured around educational attainment, financial success, and island-centricity, rather than the ancient, inherited structure.

*Centering, from the hapa perspective*

It was Kamehameha I who ordered the death of Captain James Cook, which could be seen as a symbolic gesture to keep foreigners away; however, Kamehameha was also a visionary. He understood the concept of a world trade market as a source to fortify Hawai'i. He aptly negotiated a trade market with voyagers that served that purpose; he used new metals, weapons, and the worldview knowledge of other countries to establish Hawai'i as a world power structure. As with other economically powerful nations, he understood the value of intermarriage between rich and influential foreign families. William C. Smith (1934) writes about the socio-cultural changes because of “hybrid” marriages. He describes how the royal families had no qualms about intermarriage: “King Kamehameha I gave his sister to be the wife of Isaac Davis, another English sailor. There was no opprobrium attached to these marriages, and the children came to be persons of prominence and distinction” (Smith, 1934, p. 461). Kamehameha's foreign policy was “managed with considerable skill and the American government's presence was not felt sharply until after Kamehameha's death” (Seaton, 1974, p. 196). What Kamehameha did not predict was the impact of foreign disease and the subsequent rapid decline of his population. Remarkably, this ultimately accomplished the shift in power, resulting in changing the “stature” of Hawaiians.

*From the outside, the haole perspective*

*Diminishing Hawaiian population.*

Ralph S. Kuykendall known as an eminent historian on Hawaiian cultural changes produced three volumes on *The Hawaiian Kingdom* (1938). He documents the changes in the cultural landscape primarily as a result of intermarrying with foreigners, foreign greed, and Christian conversion. He marks the year 1854 as the beginning of the “modern” period in the Hawaiian kingdom. By that time, the Hawaiian socio-political structure had effectively marginalized Hawaiians so that they had become “the minority in their own kingdom.” This revolutionary reversal started with disease dissemination and later was facilitated by Hawaiian royalty.

Nutritional ethnologists offer a functional theory of the Hawaiian physical stature and a possible explanation to the Hawaiian’s physical vulnerabilities. McGarvey (1991) argues that thermogenesis (food energy storage) played a role in selecting which Polynesian individual would travel. Because Hawai’i is situated about 2,400 miles northeast of Tahiti, the longest voyage between any of the other Polynesian islands, those who gained the most weight in pre-voyage feasting were able to use and store food energy efficiently, and that became the criteria for selecting voyagers. McGarvey (1991) describes a *thrifty-genotype mechanism*. Efficient metabolism allowed Polynesians to store large amounts of fat that formed a protected insulation against the cold and served as energy reserves readily available. Consequently, the first groups who survived the long voyage “might also have been culturally adaptive strategies, producing a similar morphological and genetic sample of aboriginal Polynesian settlers” (McGarvey, 1991, pp. 1591-2S).

## *Huli*

*Huli* is a verb defined as “to turn, to curl over, or reverse” (Meller, 1997). This word is frequently associated with a flipped-over outrigger canoe; in the sociocultural context, it adequately describes the changes in Hawaiian life after James Cook arrived. The following literature review describes the phenomenon of colonialism to post-colonial Hawai’i. Attempts to *huli* the Hawaiian culture conjure differing images depending on one’s perspective. *Kūpuna* (elders) have a historical-cultural viewpoint, intellectuals provide a philosophical-theoretical perspective, and “common” Hawaiians’ worldview is formulated from the need to survive.

### *From their source, the Kanaka Maoli perspective*

#### *Hawaiian identity.*

In the late 1960’s, the resurgence of reclaiming Hawaiian identity began to surface; it was the beginning of the now formalized Sovereignty Movement. The Hawaiian sovereignty movement is basically possible in three predominant propositions: Hawaiian Nation Separatists, Nation-within-a-Nation, and the Hawaiians who desire a status quo, but with additional subsidies. Each proposition is compared to the ongoing struggles and success of the American Indians (Conklin, 2002, p. 3B). The movement indicates complete or partial failure on the part of outsiders to ensure fidelity to the Hawaiian people. The Hawaiian recognition that their rights have been violated promotes a movement to unite and protest. Hawaiians use the word *lokahi*, for a deeper meaning for unity. In regards to their political agenda, the meaning of *lokahi* inspires the Hawaiian

people to protect their ancestors and their culture. The movement's intention is to return to their land and find the source of their roots (Zak, 2006).

*Centering, from the hapa perspective.*

*Cultural resiliency.*

The Hawaiian community blames their disequilibrium on colonization, yet their culture demonstrates years of adaptation, resilience, and creativity. Hawaiians have public radio shows that showcase talk story sessions, Hawaiian culture television programs, and community activities that are culturally relevant. Hawaiians are connected to the Internet, which has brought Hawaiians together from around the world. From the *hapa* perspective, Hawaiians have acculturated or adopted western values enough to succeed.

Hawaiian music is a good example; its sound is distinctively Hawaiian, though many of the instruments used today are Western. Most recently, Israel Ka'ano'i Kamakawiwo'ole, better known as "IZ," has been featured in several films, television programs, and commercials. He has become an international star and local hero in Hawai'i. He died at the age of thirty-eight, leaving a legacy of hope for all Hawaiians. Uncle Charlie (1997) writes: "through his music, the basic needs of his people were expressed and the strong desire to *malama* the *aina* (take care of the land). His songs contained subtle messages to the future generation of what was important to our ancestors and what should be preserved for the future" (<http://www.moolelo.com/iz.html>). Consistent with the Hawaiian oral tradition, Hawaiian music symbolically reflects experiences that are Hawaiian and attach new traditions to social customs, expectations, and laws.



*From the outside, the haole perspective*

*Cultural discourse.*

Conklin (2002) describes how important Hawaiian ancestry is today and how different this was in the 1930s. He writes,

It is interesting that some people who have only a small quantum of Hawaiian ancestry assert great pride in their Hawaiian ancestry, while never mentioning their other ancestries of far larger quanta. 50-100 years ago people with such an ancestry might have been ashamed of their Hawaiian portion (webpage: kenconklin.org).

In effect, the sovereignty movement has facilitated a greater sense of racial pride through Hawaiian-language immersion schools, government support for community programs, and U.S. Congressional awareness culture. (Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission (Hawaii), 1994)

### Hawaiian Health Delivery System

Many of the ancient skilled *kūpuna* could be compared to modern medical specialists: They had “bone-setters” (*kauka ha’iha’i iwi*) for fractures, herbal doctors (*la’au lapa’au*), dentists (*niho*), massage therapist (*lomi lomi*), diagnosticians (*haha*), and midwives (*ho’o hanau keiki*)” (Larsen, 1999, p. 259). However, today most of the healthcare services are provided by Western medicine. Over the last twenty-five years, ancient Hawaiian medical methods are more available because of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act. The bill is meant to provide a process for federal support:

Federal recognition of the Native Hawaiian governing entity...it establishes an office within the Department of the Interior to focus on Native Hawaiian issues and serve as a liaison between Native Hawaiians and the Federal government. Finally, it establishes an interagency coordinating group to be composed of representatives of federal agencies which administer programs and implement policies impacting Native Hawaiians. (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2003).

To establish the governing board, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services received a 22-member list from organizations such as the Department of Hawaiian Health and the University of Hawai'i School's of Medicine and Nursing. Their membership represented a three-year term on the board whereas members of other stakeholder-type groups such as the Nurses Association, Kamehameha Schools, and the Hawai'i Medical Association served two-year terms. Members of invested groups such as the Hawai'i Psychological Association, Social Workers Association, and the Dental Association served the one-year terms. Together, decisions on who should obtain grants were made. However, eventually, the membership was replaced by an organization called the *Papa Ola Lokahi Board*. The new five-member group consisted of E Ola Mau; the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Alu Like Inc.; the University of Hawai'i; and the Office of Hawaiian Health in the Hawai'i State Department (Native Hawaiian Health Research Consortium. Historical/Cultural Task Force, 1985).

The *Papa Ola Lokahi Board* continues to remind the United States Congress that the health needs of Hawaiians are severe and unmet. The health status of Hawaiians has been far below that of the general population in the United States for many years. In response, Congress declared and reauthorized the policy, in fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations to the indigenous peoples of Hawai'i, to raise the health status of Hawaiians to the highest possible health level; and to provide existing Hawaiian health care programs with all resources necessary to effectuate this policy" (United States Surgeon General's Office, 1979, pp.613-14).

### *Health Delivery Programs*

Approximately one million individuals in Hawaii have private insurance, including 700,000 people who participate in the Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA) (a prepaid non-profit HMO program), and 277,000 people are members of Kaiser-Hawai'i (a prepaid for-profit HMO). There is also a "bridge" program called QUEST that offers care to those who meet the following criteria:

- People who are eligible for the following Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or General Assistance (GA)
- Income is below the AFDC standard of assistance for pregnant women and children under age one with household income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- Children age 1 but under age 6 with household income up to 133% of the FPL
- Children under age 19 born after September 30, 1983, with household income up to 100% of the FPL
- Foster children and children in subsidized adoptions up to age 21
- People who lose their employer-sponsored coverage or extended coverage in a group health plan because of loss of employment within 45 days of their date of application. (State of Hawaii, 2007)

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association (HPCA) is another healthcare program. HPCA started in 1989 and is organized to provide underserved Hawaiians access to healthcare. The HPCA uses a multidisciplinary approach to improve dental, medical, mental health, health education, and research in a culturally motivated environment (Evans, 1994).

### *Hawaiian Health*

The traditional Hawaiian concept of wellness incorporates the word *pono*. *Pono* is to make right. This means that persons are to have proper wellness in all aspects: the physical, the environmental, the spiritual, the emotional, the social, and the interpersonal relationships - all have to be in balance (Pukui, 2001). For example, the literal meaning of the phrase *malama 'āina* means to take care of the land. However, when Hawaiians discuss wellness, this phrase takes on a deeper meaning; the phrase means to make *pono* with the land. That phrase means going back to Hawaiian roots (*taro*) and listening to what the plants have to say, then asking the land for permission before using it, and finally, thanking the land before entering or taking. These elements of *pono* nourish and heal the mind and body.

Juliet McMullin (2005) explores the contextual meanings of health and Hawaiian identity. She used a convenience sample from community centers on the islands of Maui and Hawai'i and employed personal contacts to recruit participants. McMullin conducted semi-structured interviews of thirty-five participants whose average age was 42 years old. Her sample participants had 12 years of education, were fully employed, and their income average was below the 1999 U.S. Census average income of \$38,829 at \$20,615. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents described health as living without chronic illness or pain as the primary definition.

There is mounting evidence that Hawaiians have a genetic propensity for some diseases. According to Boyd (2003), because there was a large reduction in the Hawaiian population, a genetic bottleneck was created in the Hawaiian population. This bottleneck makes Hawaiians more susceptible to polygenetic disorders, such as hypertension,

diabetes, and renal disease. Other studies have found that Hawaiians are more likely to have a hereditary condition that causes gout, alcohol addiction, and lung cancer (Wergowske & Blanchette, 2001).

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) reports the following: “The burden of disease is considerably higher in the tropics than in temperate climates. Health outcomes are far better in temperate-zone countries: infant mortality in temperate-zone countries is 50 percent lower; life expectancy in temperate countries is 8 percent higher” (Sachs, 2001).

A paper published for the University of Hawai’i reported that, in the mid-1980’s, over 250 Hawaiians living on the island of Molokai were in need of healthcare for serious diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Most of them were not aware they had any disorders (Curb, 1991). The same phenomena are found in California, where studies found that Pacific Islanders were “less likely than other ethnic groups to be aware of having hypertension, less likely to be in treatment, and less likely to have their hypertension controlled” (Wergowske, 2001).

### *Exploring Health Determinants*

The determinants of health are complex and differ from population to population. However, most researchers agree that there is a correlation between life expectancy and a variety of social status measures such as income, education, occupation, and residence (Evans, 1994). In general, the health of the Hawaiian people has been in jeopardy since the invasion of Europeans. Hawaiian writers refer to this phenomenon as a disruption to their culture of shared behavior, beliefs, and values. Studies that describe the emic perspective of Hawaiian wellness are typically limited to the scholarly efforts of

Hawaiian researchers, which are often published by small local publishers and Internet web sites. Healthy People 2000 provided sparse data on Hawaiian health mainly because the heterogeneity of Hawaiians, and the fact that Hawaiians are grouped with other Pacific Islanders.

### *Learning from the Kūpuna and Kūmu*

*Kūmu* are recognized teachers of Hawaiian traditions and culture. Many *kūmu* are also *kūpuna* (elders or grandparents). To be qualified as a *kumu*, specialty in a given area has been mastered through apprenticeship from other *kūmu* or *kūpuna*. 'Ohana (family) values are nurtured as a result of the relationship to their *kūpuna*. The *kūpuna* incorporate the living spirit (*mana*) of their ancestors, and they promote *pono* and respect as the guiding concepts for Hawaiians to achieve a sense of balance and self-determination (Zak, 2006).

Berry et al. (2005) addressed the worsening health in Hawaiian men. His data found that Hawaiian men felt disenfranchised because of the lingering effects of colonialism and post-colonialism. Hawaiian men feel helplessness and hopelessness because they no longer contribute to their community as their fathers or grandfathers did. Berry et al. explored how the political-cultural environment supplanted the ability of Hawaiian men to live fulfilling lives. The researchers point out the paucity of research demonstrating a causal relationship in making negative lifestyle choices and feelings of self-worth. There is, according to the researchers, adequate subjective evidence linking vitality and emotional fragility to early mortality rates. Using the Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit (ACPU) program as a model, they hypothesized that Hawaiian men can be taught how to reclaim wholeness and health. The ACPU brings together small groups

from the Aboriginal community to develop their restorative programs. This approach is similar to the *Kanaka Maoli* philosophy where there is a cosmological connection to wise ancestors and a moral leadership from their *kūpuna*.

The literature on Hawaiian health and wellness was examined researched using Google Internet search engine, dissertation reviews obtained through the library services at the University of San Diego, journal retrievals primarily through JSTOR, and visits to the medical library at Queens Medical Center in Honolulu and the John A. Burns Medical Library at the University of Hawai'i in Manoa. The results confirm the paucity of information on this topic.

#### Philosophical Elements that Shape Socio-Cultural Determinants

Philosophical elements of the Hawaiian culture provide for a better understanding of the implicit and broader meanings of social wellness. According to Feinberg (1988, p.291) in Polynesian cultures, social relations are “expressed in spatial terms and represented as an elaborately articulated, hierarchically ordered set of binary oppositions.” This representation includes the shape and size of the islands, and forms the symbolic social structure that follows the height, sides, and points of land and sky. Feinberg refers to the cosmological order of the “ring of islets” and the Polynesian hierarchical social order as “mutually reinforcing.” If these structures continue to persist in contemporary Hawaiian society, it would mean that collective actions follow a transparent outline of ancient beliefs. The following cosmological connections to social determinants are explored.

*Ka Lewa* is the Hawaiian term for the space between the heavens and the earth. Malo (1971, p. 12) writes that the concept of space refers to a meeting place or a point

juncture. Space is described as a semi-circular structure above the earth. The highest level is directly beneath the heavens (*lewa-lani*) and the lowest level is the space between the earth and a man's body when he dangles from a tree (*lewa-ho'omakua*). Hawaiian ways of knowing include the ability to distinguish many levels of height in this space. Malo writes: "The ancients applied the following names to the divisions of space above us. The space immediately above one's head when standing erect is spoken of as *luna-a'e*; above that *luna-aku*; above that *luna-loa-aku*; above that *luna-lilo-aku*; above that *luna-lilo-loa*; and above that, in the firmament where the clouds float, is *luna-o-ke-ao*."

Oliveira (2006) describes how the setting of the cosmos dominated Hawaiian actions and behaviors. The moon, for instance, influenced when and where Hawaiians should fish and farm. For Hawaiians, time is cyclical and days and nights were divided into segments for which Hawaiians used specific terms to denote the transitions between day and night. Based on the color palette created by nature, day was described as *ao* or *'eleao* and night was *po* or *'elepo* (Oliveira, 2006). Philosophically, each day and night would appear in unexpected new colors. This may explain why Hawaiians state they use their past to live in the present.

Other indigenous beliefs are found in the cosmos, lending philosophical understanding to the Hawaiian social structure. Often seen in the literature is the reference to *nānā i ke kumu* or "look to the source." The meaning is elusive and cosmic, and according to Hawaiians, it is essential to follow for their sake of cultural survival. Seemingly, when a Hawaiian looks to the source, they find themselves. This is done through some sort of channeling of their ancestors and God, and the message is clear: when they look to the source, they acknowledge their inner soul, a necessary element for



harmony. Holmes (1996) writes that Hawaiian elders (*kūpuna*) construct fixed values for future generations based on these philosophical concepts.

Looking to the source is strongly associated with Hawaiian land. Literally, *‘āina* is defined as land, but for Hawaiians, the word reflects the form from which they were created and nourished. *Kama‘āina*, for instance, means born of the land. Those who are born of the land are related mystically plants, animals, and their family *mana* (elemental forces with miraculous power). Looking to the source is also connected to moral character. Hawaiians use the word *pono* to express one's integrity and future thinking. This seems especially true when Hawaiians relate their *pono* to their own mortality.

Caskin's (2001) dissertation supports the notion that values of *pono* are integral to the Hawaiian belief system. These values may explain the relationship Hawaiians have with living according to their culture and their health issues. According to Caskin, expressions of *pono* include love, kindness, harmony, humility, and patience-values that continue to steer the underlying behaviors of Hawaiians.

### Rationale for the Study

Hawaiian medicine and Western medicine are both employed to accomplish the same goals, improving or maintaining the wellness in the Hawaiian community. The United States continues to face depressing health statistics, especially the increasing problems of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancers, and obesity. When Hawai'i was listed in 2007 as the state that has the longest life longevity, good health resources, and optimal environmental factors, it would appear on the surface that this included the population of Hawaiians; however, the report refers primarily to outsiders (*haoles*).

Statistically, this could mean that retirees from the mainland have displaced Hawaiians who do not enjoy the same luxuries of *paradise*, nor the longevity afforded to *haoles*.

There are studies that look at wellness from the emic perspective in other cultures, but few in the Hawaiian community. The emerging studies are problematic because of the variances in Hawaiian identity and the emic perspective is not well understood. The rationale for this study is to further understand the emic perspective of Hawaiians in order to increase the awareness for needed changes in the healthcare delivery system, and to provide a platform for further research.

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Faced with dismal health statistics, Hawaiians live on land where all other groups live longer and enjoy better health. The magnitude of Hawaiian health disparities was realized in 2000 after the U.S. Census bureau changed their questionnaire to collect data on Hawaiians/Native Hawaiians as a distinct group. Yet efforts to improve their health outcomes and to minimize their risk factors have challenged researchers to understand the Hawaiian perspective of wellness. The *Background Report on American Asians and Pacific Islanders* (AAPI) from the National Institutes of Health (2000) concludes that cultural demographics are important variables to consider when attempting to understand underlying perspectives of Pacific Island cultures as noted in the following:

An investigation of the linkages between the individual, family, and the environment is important to understanding the health behaviors and needs of AAPI people. Thus, a simple scrutiny of individual choices is inadequate and will fail to explain the reasons why behaviors do not change even when information about health benefits is readily available (p. 35)

This statement makes a strong argument to implement qualitative research methods. Qualitative methodology provided a culturally sensitive method for this study, which enables the collection of meaningful data and the appropriate analysis to explore Hawaiian values and concepts of wellness. According to Creswell (1994, p. 15), “A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.”

## Grounded Theory Methodology

A grounded theory approach allowed an exploration of Hawaiian wellness, as it is valued in terms of the past, present, and future. This methodological approach uses a familiar format in Hawaiian communication of talk story. Assumptions underlying grounded theory research are ontological (nature of being), epistemological (origin of knowledge), axiological (nature and types of value—morals, religion), rhetorical (speaking, writing), and methodological (Creswell, 1994). In other words, theory development may be rooted in a way of being, knowing, believing or valuing, and speaking. Inherent in grounded theory is the sociological concept of symbolic interactionism, which explains that the meaning and interpretation of behavior are derived from social interaction and interconnectedness among people in a given culture or context (Blumer, 1969, 1980). This process is informed by the following premises of symbolic interaction theory (Blumer, 1969):

1. Human beings interpret and define each other's actions.
2. Human beings can be the objects of their own attention, when the objects have meaning for them.
3. Social interaction and social history develop meanings of objects.
4. Meanings of objects are transformative and dynamic.

Grounded theory is steeped in the sociological sciences, developed out of the School of Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco, by Drs. Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser in 1967. Strauss and Glaser's grounded theory methodology involved separating data into pieces (codes), which are then grouped into categories. On a higher and abstract level, theoretical memoing helps in refining theory from the original

categories (Glaser, 1967). According to Dr. Phyllis Stern, before using what she describes as neo-classical grounded theory, researchers should understand classical grounded theory first and then modify methodology accordingly (Stern, 2007). The following paragraphs in this section provide a brief introduction to classical grounded theory with an explanation to its evolution to neo-classical grounded theory. Lastly, the justification for choosing the appropriate methodology for this research is described.

Stern (2007) notes that modifications to Glaser and Strauss's "classical" grounded theory differ primarily in how a researcher regards data. Debates continue to raise the questions: "What elements are data?" and "How should data be coded?" Although Glaser and Strauss collaborated on their first book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, in 1967, their subsequent writings reflected important differences in their methodologies. Most notable was Glaser's (2001) response to the data debate:

All is data as a well-known Glaser dictum. What does it mean? It means exactly what is going on in the research scene is the data, whatever the source, whether interview, observations, documents, in whatever combination. It is not only what is being told, how it is being told and the conditions of its being told, but also all the data surrounding what is being told. It means what is going on must be figured out exactly what it is to be used for, that is conceptualization, not for accurate description. Data [sic] is always as good as far as it goes, and there is always more data to keep correcting the categories with more relevant properties.

Glaser (1992) encourages his students to let the research take the researcher where it wants, and more specifically, the researcher should follow his or her own intuition and senses. Rather than being caught up in every word, expression, and environmental factor, Glaser believes that theory contextually and naturally forms from the "sense" of the data. In other words, theory emerges from the data. According to Glaser, in order to ensure emergent theory, "two formal, neutral, not preconceived" questions need to be asked: "What is the chief concern of the people in the substantive area under study and how is it

processed [and] what category or what property of what category does this incident indicate. (p. 4).

For this research project, there is a practicality and a reality that need to be considered, namely: how much of the researchers' subjectivity can be removed from data analysis? In Kathy Charmaz's (2006) book, *Constructing Grounded Theory, A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*, she asserts that all researchers are influenced by their experiences and the socio-cultural context in which their worldview is shaped. She writes, "I view grounded theory methods as a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages" (p. 8). Her idea of constructing theory incorporates the underlying principles of classical grounded theory methodology, and finds that true reality occurs when the interactive process discerns the temporal, cultural, and structural context. Regarding the extent of the experience of this researcher with the Hawaiian community (discussed later in the reflexivity section), the reality and practicality of insisting on total objectivity in the classical grounded theory paradigm seems tedious and unnatural, if not impossible.

### Data Collection

The data collection section explains the procedures used for sampling, recruitment, and choice of setting. Before discussing these procedures, cultural etiquette in conducting research in the Hawaiian community is reviewed.

### *Hawaiian Culture Considerations*

Robinson and James (2003) write specifically about researching Hawaiian communities. Accordingly, Robinson recommends approaching *kūpuna* first; this is

because *kūpuna* are the respected elders and he infers that by not doing so, the community would perceive the researcher as rude or naïve. *Kūpuna* are knowledgeable and the *kūpuna* can speak for the community. When the community sees their *kūpuna* share their knowledge and time with the researcher, the researcher has earned honor and respect in the community. This entrée process reflects the researcher's ability to demonstrate a genuine concern for the community. Furthermore, the researcher needs to be humble and cautious about not over-asserting the researcher's agenda or expertise. Robinson and James (2003, p. 107) advise the researcher to "become open receivers and listeners of [Hawaiian] culture and its dynamics in the local community." These elements are consistent with a grounded theory approach.

### *Recruitment*

The community liaison person was responsible for telephoning potential participants for recruitment, updates, and reminders. This person served as a local insider who initiated my rapport by introducing me as a *haole* researcher from the mainland. The community liaison introduced me as a mother of Hawaiian children related to Kona and Kohala families, and that my Hawaiian family relationship by marriage has lasted over thirty-five years. The first time I met the *kūpuna* at the community center was in August, 2007. I explained why the research was important to Native Hawaiians in understanding wellness, and I explained the research was in partial fulfillment of a PhD program in nursing. I identified myself as a family nurse practitioner, actively seeing patients in Pasadena, California, and a nursing faculty member at a local university. The *kūpuna* were excited about their potential to contribute to the body of knowledge and to future generations. The *kūpuna* engaged in casual conversations about my role as student,

teacher, and researcher. Some expressed their experiences with nurse practitioners as being very positive.

### *Setting*

Alu Like, Inc., funds the *Kūpuna* Wellness Program on all of the Hawaiian Islands where *kūpuna* meet weekly at community centers. Their meetings are designed to promote health, they are interactive with each other, and their activities are structured around their culture. Two groups chose to meet at the actual community center, while other groups chose sites close to the community center so that they could be part of their family. A permit to use the community centers was signed and approved, and a letter of support from the center's director was obtained. Potluck food was served in a banquet format, and the researcher brought food as well.

In the first focus group, only one person agreed to sign a media release form, the other three did not want to be identified on the videotape. I placed the video camera at a distance where facial recognition was impossible and that was agreeable to everyone; however, the distance did affect the sound quality from the camera. The level of noise was a factor for recording purposes, especially with the placement of the video camera. I expected the interview to last approximately one hour, but the casual atmosphere lent itself to unpredictable interruptions: children occasionally came by to get a hug from their *kupuna*, a loud breathing pug dog decided to sit under our table, and on more than one occasion, one or two participants left the discussion to greet family (*ohana*), get something to eat, or use the restroom. The group was able to hear and respond to each other. At first, this seemed too chaotic for me to continue, but I decided to relax and allow the discussion to continue in the organic manner that is typical of Hawaiian "talk



story.” This group knew me through my family connections, and I had a history with them directly or indirectly because of those connections; however, most of my experiences with them were when I lived in Kona over 30 years ago. Because of the poor quality of videotape, the transcription was done after tediously listening to the tape over and over again while reviewing field notes.

The next two focus groups were held in the planned community center. All of those present at the center were introduced to me by the community liaison five months earlier, and they expressed their enthusiasm to be volunteers as soon as I arrived. The first focus group gathered for approximately 1½ hour before lunch, and the other group participated for about one hour after lunch. Those that arrived at the center that chose not to participate joined the alternate group in activities in another area of the center. Participants watched the 13-minute film in an area that was enclosed and is considered the center’s dining area. During the sessions, rain came down in torrents and there were several loud, reverberating percussions from thunder and lightning. These episodes caused laughter in the group because their discussions were often about the spirits of the land. The group was videotaped watching the film and the discussion that followed. I used two video cameras and a portable tape recorder that had a detachable microphone as backup systems to potential equipment failure, and to ensure good sound quality. Those who volunteered to participate in the focus groups were informed of the goals of the research, and they signed a consent form prior to the start of interview (Appendix B). They also filled out a demographic form (Appendix E) and signed a media release form so that their interviews could be donated to the archival repository.

Focus groups five and six were conducted in a location near the centers; they were indoors and there were very few interruptions. Food and beverages were served during the talk story discussions, and electric circulating fans were employed to keep the room comfortable. Two video cameras were used: each one placed on opposite sides of the group. The microphone failed on one of the cameras so the backup camera was used for transcribing. Most of the participants knew of me or remembered meeting me “way back” as a result of my marriage and because some of their family members stayed with my parents in California while I was in high school. I was careful not to have the family feel obliged to help me, and on several occasions I reminded them that we could just talk story and eat together without the research. They read the consent form, signed it, and asked for the movie to start with interest. They told me not to “bring out the media release forms” because none of them wanted to sign them, and they did not want their tapes to be donated to an archive. Cameras were placed in such a way that they were satisfied with the quality of the images.

The seating arrangement was either around a table or in seats organized in a half circle. The design configuration was based on the best way to view the film and the room’s shape. The groups had good visual and audio access to the screening equipment. Each participant ordered one of two DVDs that were used in the edited version for the study. The community liaison had indicated this was a proper gift even if the participant did not own a DVD player.

Since the community center did not have a television set and a DVD player, I brought both pieces of equipment. As a sign of gratitude for the center’s generosity, I left

the equipment for their future use. Transportation needs of the participants were met through car-pooling/self transportation.

### *Purposive Sampling*

I used a convenience sample  $N=26$ , where I have access in the Hawaiian community, which is normally very limited to outsiders. In additional samples, I used other similar people and settings. The goal of purposive sampling was to obtain data that will represent the topic of the study. In this case, the research participants were an older generation of females and males who were self-identified Hawaiians, and who resided on the island of Hawai'i in the State of Hawai'i. According to Carey (1994), preparation in selecting a sample (for focus groups) should be based on common experiences and should be related to the research topic. Samples for this study all had cultural commonalities, particularly because they shared the lived experience of living through generations of changes in Hawai'i.

Samples selected in the state of Hawai'i was limited to the Kailua-Kona area, a city on the island of Hawai'i (Big Island). The Kailua-Kona area was chosen for several reasons, and from a practical standpoint, the researcher had established connections that provided smooth entrée. The Kailua-Kona area has geographical and economic diversity that permitted the collection of data across a range of the topic. The process of theoretical sampling and guided data are reflected in the findings. Therefore, data gathering was guided by the concepts emerging from grounded theory. After three focus groups were interviewed and the initial data was analyzed, the initial interview guide was revised to reflect the emerging categories and themes. Using the revised interview guide in two subsequent focus groups it was evident that data saturation had not been met. Using the

constant comparative method and continuing to review and analyze the data, core categories emerged. Further theoretical sampling was done through a sixth focus group interview: interviewing two separate *kūpuna* who watched the film but did not participate in the formal focus groups, and follow-up phone interviews with selected focus group participants. The process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation continued until categories and theoretical connections were completed and there was evidence that emerging theory was grounded.

#### *Demographic Data of the Kūpuna*

Seven males and eight females were born in Kailua-Kona, three females were born in other towns on the Kona coast, and two females were born in the Hilo area—all towns on the island of Hawai'i (Table 1). Of the rest of the participants that were female, one was born on Molokai, three were born on Maui, and one was born in Oahu. One male was born in Oahu.

#### *Age*

All of the participants identified themselves as *kupuna* because of either their age or their status as a grandparent. The ages ranged from 49 through 81 at the time of the interviews in 2008; the 49 year-old *kupuna* was included because she identified herself as a grandparent and excluding her would have been rude and against social protocol (see IRB approval).

*Percentage of Hawaiian blood quantum (HBQ)*

Nine reported 100% HBQ, six reported 75% HBQ, one reported 73% HBQ, one reported 70% HBQ, one reported 58% HBQ, and eight reported 50% HBQ.

Table 1. General Demographic Summary

<i>Identifier</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Focus Group #</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Birth Place</i>	<i>% Blood Quantum</i>
0-55-i	55	Interview	M	Kona	50
0-70-i	70	Interview	M	Oahu	100
1-72-i	72	Interview	M	Kona	100
2-72-1	72	1	M	Kona	100
3-59-1	59	1	F	Kona	100
4-70-1	70	1	F	Kona	100
5-81-2	81	2	F	Maui	50
6-68-2	68	2	F	Oahu	70
7-55-2	66	2	F	Waipio	50
8-73-2	73	2	F	Honaunau	50
9-68-2	68	2	F	Kona	50
10-78-2	78	2	F	Kona	58
11-57-3	67	3	F	Hawi	75
12-73-3	73	3	F	Molokai	100
13-77-3	77	3	F	Kohanaiki	100
14-73-3	73	3	F	Kona	100
15-62-4	62	4	F	Kona	75
16-58-4	58	4	M	Kona	75
17-63-4	63	4	M	Kona	75
18-55-5	55	5	F	Kona	73
19-57-5	57	5	F	Kona	75
20-66-5	66	5	F	Maui	50
21-76-5	76	5	F	Maui	50
22-56-6	56	6	M	Kona	50
23-57-6	57	6	M	Kona	100
24-49-6	49	6	F	Hilo	75

### *Interview Guide*

Charmaz (2006) described distinctive principles for conducting interviews that underlie the entire interview process. She assumes the participant's comfort level has a higher priority than obtaining data. Based on that premise, she is mindful of when to probe, especially if a participant is re-experiencing feelings. She tries to validate the significance of the described experience by attempting to see it through his/her worldview, and she closes the interview on a positive level. Charmaz writes "the rhythm and pace of the interview should bring the participant back to a normal conversational level before ending" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 30). The focus group questions (Appendix A) followed the structure based on the premises just described and the Krueger guide for developing focus group questions. As with Charmaz's methodology, I was culturally mindful of when to probe and when to just listen. The interviews all ended on a positive level. In fact, after the focus group discussions were over, I continued to socialize with the groups for about 15 minutes. Before I left, I thanked them for their generous time and contributions to my research efforts and for their contributions to Hawaiian wellness. The manner in which I addressed the participants was congruent to Hawaiian culture.

The interview questions (Appendix A) commenced after the groups watched part of a film that produced images, actions, and stories that were culturally prevalent. The rest of the film was designed to stimulate a discussion based on the participants' experiences, memories, and beliefs. The opening questions, which were based on the film's story line (Appendix D), were used primarily to make the group feel comfortable. The film started with a segment intending to increase the comfort level of the group: Papa K who is a Hawaiian teacher (*kumu*) from Hilo tells a funny story about his childhood

and his experience with five pigs (“How many of you have heard this story before?” “Why do you think Papa K decided to tell this particular story?”).

Initial open-ended questions focused on the *kūpuna* perceptions of wellness (“What does wellness mean to you?” “Where does that meaning come from?”). Probing questions were used to explore deeper insights into the participants’ meanings (“Where does meaning come from, your ancestors?” “Where does meaning come from, practicing Hawaiian traditions?” “Where does meaning come from, your family?”).

Intermediate questions informed the researcher about socio-cultural changes that may influence the *kūpuna* perceptions of wellness (“What influences your perception of wellness?”). Probing questions explored the specific socio-cultural elements that formed over their lifetime (“Are there connections between honoring your traditions and maintaining wellness?” “Do you see value in passing down your traditions and rituals to future generations?”).

Ending questions brought some closure to the discussions and allowed normal conversation to begin (“Is there one statement that describes your meaning of Hawaiian wellness that has not been discussed today?” “Of all of the meanings discussed, which one is most important to you?”). However, typical of Hawaiian talk story, it was common that any questions provoked more talk story. A short summary question was asked after the researcher took a few minutes to summarize the discussion (“How well does this summary capture what was said here?”).

The liaison clarified responses because Hawaiians speak in a very efficient style; they eliminate many unnecessary words, and they use Hawaiian and/or pidgin words. The

liaison demonstrated comfort in her role after the first two focus groups by anticipating the groups' needs.

### *Focus Groups*

Focus groups were used as a qualitative data collection approach. According to Krueger (1994) focus groups are designed to expose meanings that influence opinions, behavior, or motivation, which is the goal of this study. The group size was intended to consist of approximately eight *kūpuna*. However, the average group size was four members, which was optimal because the topic was complex and meaningful to their community. Furthermore, because the group members consisted of elders, the smaller group provided an opportunity for each member to speak. Carey (1994) sees the advantage of a small group where the leader can better guide responses of the group more easily. Each member has more opportunity to speak than in a larger group, and the smaller size has been found to work well with older people. The disadvantage of a small group is that data collection in small focus groups can be labor intensive. The potential for better quality data in small groups outweighs the disadvantages.

Film clips were derived from the literature and were culturally congruent. They reflected Hawaiian traditional activities and were introduced as a concept to generate discussion. All of the participants discussed how much they liked the film. In fact, at the end of two of the focus groups, prayers were said that mentioned the film as a blessing given to them. A summary of the film clips was made available (Appendix D) to the participants after the discussion.



### *Video-Elicitation Methodology*

According to Shuck and Kearney (2006), video can stimulate rich data by stimulating good conversations. Furthermore, they stress that this technique may help interviewees decipher more quickly the meaning of researcher questions, provide a focus for their responses and prompt their memory of past events.” (Shuck and Kearney, para. 9). Film scenes were used to elicit the conversations during the focus groups. The film included clips from two professionally produced documentaries primarily from Hawaiian film producers or Hawaiian production companies, which insured sound and visual quality.

### *Equipment Considerations*

According to several video transcribing services, focus groups should be filmed indoors because the quality of sound is better indoors. More than one camera was used to avoid recording the backs of half of the participants, and the limits on the visualization of everyone’s reactions, postures, and gestures. Unfortunately, the sound quality of the first focus group was compromised because of an outdoor setting, interruptions, and weather. The researchers experienced equipment failure in some way in every session. The backup systems were indispensable.

### *Ethical Considerations*

#### *Informed Consent*

The first group of participants was acquainted with the upcoming study for a minimum of two weeks secondary to the recruitment efforts of the community liaison

using a formal description prepared by the researcher. After the first groups were interviewed, other community members called the community liaison and expressed interest in participating as well. Prior to the focus group interviews, the participants had an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the study. The consent form (Appendix B) is in accordance to the University of San Diego's general requirements, and it includes another release form (Appendix C) for media distribution.

The participants were informed by the community liaison prior to meeting that if they wanted their interviews preserved on videotape; they needed to sign another release form. This process was to serve a way to negate any suspicions of signing a form presented by a *haole* woman. However, there were three groups that questioned their role on videotape and expressed fear that their role in the community would be compromised if the videotape became public. They were reassured that signing the consent form was not the same as signing the media release form, and their identity was confidential. Initials were used in the transcripts of those participants. The consent included the agreement that the videotapes would be shown to the participants at their convenience and at their discretion, and they determined where the videotapes would be stored. Participants were notified that if they agreed to sign the consent form they would be asked to fill out another short demographic questionnaire; the questions were designed to determine age, cultural influence, and identity (Appendix F). The use of an alias or initial was employed by some of the participants.

#### *Subject Risks and Benefits*

Participants were reassured that they could leave anytime without suffering any punitive attacks or losses. The Hawaiian community is motivated to be proactive in

fighting their growing health disparities. They have local television programs that interview local community leaders, elders, activists, and people who engage in traditional activities. The community has been acclimated to new technologies. The risk was minimal and potential risks were evaluated when a variety of emotions were evoked while watching the film, and while participants discussed their lives. Some reported that they felt feelings of nostalgia and sadness, but at the same time joy for the warm memories of their past, and hope for their future. The discussion following the film did trigger a feeling of disappointment towards the healthcare system, and those participants discussed ways the community could improve the availability of providers. As a trained clinician, I have experience in observing stress and anxiety in individuals. During and after the sessions, I spoke to each person and assessed for any signs and symptoms of distress; I found no signs or symptoms of distress.

## Data Analysis

### *Procedures*

There are recent publications that describe the advantages of using film as a source to stimulate focus group discussions. Banks (2001) writes that *photo-elicitation* invokes comments, memory, and discussion. Furthermore, photos can reduce researcher/participant awkwardness, lessen potential cultural inappropriateness (such as maintaining eye contact), and decrease the sense of researcher power status. The participants watched a film using video-elicitation as they were filmed by videotape. Saferstein (2007) discussed the benefits of using videotape for data collection in what he called *video-centered analysis*, which he states has the potential to expand the frames of

reference for analysis. In his presentation, Saferstein demonstrated a video where students were learning biology. Students were observed as they struggled to learn new information, collaborated with other students, and visually struggled at different points of the learning process. The film was subtitled in the same way contextual text is coded, and then the subtitles were linked to notes and memos. This methodology was unique and afforded the audience a deeper appreciation for content analysis, and the software he used provided hard copies of the textual analysis. Furthermore, his approach models a flexible, visible, and verifiable method that suits this research.

I used video capturing software called, Movcaptioner v. 1.4.1 (SlidesNowSoftware, 2006). Movcaptioner automatically rewound the tape every 11 seconds until I could type in each correctly. Once the clip was captured, the clip would be added to the transcript. After the entire video was captured, the software converted the movie to QuickTime Player (Apple Computer Inc., 2008) and a timed sequenced or narrative transcript was generated. The transcript was imported into qualitative analysis software called Tamsanalyzer (Weinstein, 2008). All of the participants' responses were transcribed verbatim and the researcher used open coding initially; after further analysis, selective coding led to theoretical coding, and categories were developed. As data was constantly compared and contrasted, themes naturally began to aggregate. The process was dynamic and the researcher returned to open coding often and revisions were made. This process of making revisions is common and expected. Memos and comments were written after each analysis, and memos were referenced when categories needed refinement (Charmaz, 2006).

Negative case methodology was explored, in particular, because the film did elicit more reactions and discussions than expected. The participants were passionate about their culture, which is similar to the emic perspective found in the literature review. The *kūpuna* invariably accounted for their perspective of wellness based on their Hawaiian heritage. They reviewed their heritage in the context of cultural change rather than in the context of biological change. The data did not support the hypothesis that Hawaiians are genetically predisposed to certain diseases. Also, the data did not support the hypothesis that Hawaiians were different than other Proto-Polynesian groups because of the “bottle necking” effect, caused by long periods of isolation.

Data analysis took place alongside data collection, thus allowing me to refine my questions after each focus group. For example, asking the first group to define Hawaiian wellness was too unique; respondents tried to answer the question with questions or they looked to the other person to answer it. I realized this after I did my initial analysis of focus group one. In the subsequent focus groups, I changed the question to describe their meaning of wellness. Removing the “Hawaiian” from the question removed my assumptions that Hawaiian wellness was different. After collecting data from three focus groups, additional analysis was done; however, categories did not emerge until two interviews were done with *kūpuna* that met the inclusion criteria and watched the film, but could not attend the focus groups. Refining the categories through constant comparison narrowed the focus on subsequent interviews; it did not indicate a need to change the film that was watched.

After collecting data from focus groups three and four, further analysis refined the categories and themes. Once theoretical themes emerged, focus group five and subsequent interviews commenced, which added data to the findings.

### *Translation*

The focus groups were encouraged to communicate in their vernacular, known as Hawaiian pidgin. Hawaiian pidgin blends Hawaiian words with English, and the style removes all or most extraneous words. Instead, Hawaiians clarify their statements when they ask “you know?” and their use of “*da kine*” is understood in the context of the topic. Transcription was done verbatim; however, when verbatim transcription was transferred to the findings, their meanings were lost or needed clarification, especially for non-Hawaiian audiences. I became concerned that the participants may be negatively portrayed. Therefore, when there was any hint of illiteracy, editing was done. The selective editing was reviewed by the Hawaiian expert and approved by the IRB.

### *Coding*

The process of coding data began while the researcher was listening to the participants; a mental map began to form a framework for the process of open coding. Open coding required the researcher to ask questions of what, how, and when, and then place them into “units.” The next step was to identify key concepts from the quotations that shared the same phenomenon, and then place them into categories. Developing theory emerged by the process of making comparisons and identifying differences. Selective coding was used when themes and categories were fairly well identified.

Subsequently, only relevant data was selected to code and that process revealed categories. (Charmaz, 2006) outlines a “code for coding”:

- Remain open.
- Stay close to the data.
- Keep your codes simple and precise.
- Construct short codes.
- Preserve actions.
- Compare data with data.
- Move quickly through the data.

Videotaped discussions were transcribed through the use of software, and when necessary, translation from a Hawaiian expert was employed. The researcher watched the videotapes and reviewed field notes. The following describes the steps that were involved in coding the videotaped interviews:

1. Transfer the film into iMovie from Macintosh and edit the tape to include only the focus group discussions. Transfer the completed iMovie to QuickTime Pro v7.4 in a MPEG-4 format.
2. Load the MPEG-4 format in Movcapturer software and capture the discussion and produce a transcript.
3. Transfer the transcript to TAMS Analyzer version 3.41b4s-fat all (3.4) for initial coding and organizing. Selective coding was done when the researcher unified all of the categories and was ready for a “last pass through the data.”

The last pass involves looking for differences in the well-organized concepts and then reorganizes them into major themes (Charmaz, 2006).

### *Rigor*

Rigor in qualitative methodology is vital in order to ensure credibility. My in-depth knowledge of cultural protocols and my ability to understand much of the language decreased early suspicions that I was an outsider. I was able to elicit the help of my Hawaiian niece, Rolinda Bean, to introduce me or reacquaint me to the *kūpuna*. She regularly participates in the Hawaiian *kupuna* community centers as a volunteer and as an advocate through a non-profit foundation. She also works for the University of Hawai'i as a Hawaiian-community liaison. Rolinda was trusted and respected by the participants, and she was able to reassure the groups that my personal connection with the community and my desire to help them was sincere. Furthermore, each time Rolinda facilitated the focus group meetings, she was more aware of the process, thereby, she was able to anticipate the needs of the researcher as well as the participants. Rolinda was able to inform me about the group dynamics and the special needs of individuals, and she was able to assist me in time management. After each focus group meeting, Rolinda and I would have rich conversations, particularly with her own experiences and her perspectives. These discussions inevitably exposed layers of Hawaiian culture that I needed to explore more.

The expert who assisted me in language translations and data interpretations was M. Keala Ching. Ching is a well-known Kona *kumu* (teacher) and director of a *Nā Wai Iwi Ola*, a non-profit organization. After he read the transcripts of five focus groups, we tape-recorded a meeting (to ensure accuracy) where he reviewed my understanding of the



data, and he clarified any ambiguity. Because of the review with Keala Ching and two follow-up interviews with two of the participants, the emerging themes and categories were verified. However, a sixth focus group was conducted to ensure data saturation.

### *Conformity and Reflexivity Issues*

[H]uman beings have the ability to create those constructs we call “theories” which can provide a high degree of accuracy in predicting what will happen, as well as accounting for what has happened, in the world around us. It has been discovered, further, that these theories can embody other values too, such values as coherence and fertility, and that an insistence on these other values is likely to enhance the chances over the long run of the attainment of the first goal, that of empirical accuracy. (McMullin, 1982)

There were challenges to view the data with a degree of objectivity necessary to maintain rigor. In the early stages of my analysis, I interpreted the data that embodied much of my own experiences and values. However, as I progressed to higher levels of coding, I returned to my earlier work and recoded much of my data. The process shed layers of meanings each time I reviewed and compared my analysis. I believe I recoded the data approximately three times, and each time I removed my voice. By doing so, I found new and unexpected meanings and insights to the Hawaiian culture. At times, the process distanced me from the Hawaiian culture enough to give me glimpses of how non-Hawaiians would interpret the data. This experience provided me a unique perspective in developing the core category.

### *History of My Role in the Hawaiian Community*

Starting with my parents who met in Kalihi during World War II, my brothers and sisters were transformed by the stories my mother told us about her experiences. As it was, she was a Maryknoll nun, teaching at St. Anthony’s Elementary School in Kalihi.

Maryknoll nuns operated in much of the same way as modern-day social workers. They would interact with the community by frequently visiting neighborhood families. Her stories were always told with affection, and she could tell them to us repeatedly, as they never tired us. She cherished her time there and, evidently, she left an impression on the locals as well, as we heard from her old friends all through my childhood.

My oldest brother was the first to go to Hawaii. He spent time in Oahu and when he returned, he met some “guys” on Torrance Beach, California that looked Hawaiian and lost. He somehow convinced my parents to take in four Kona boys. I was fourteen years old and from that time on, our family had a non-stop exchange program with Kona families. My first stay was when I was sixteen. I lived with a *mauka* family (a family who lived in the mountains) and with my brothers and sister in Kailua. I returned after my graduation and eventually married a “pure” blooded Hawaiian. Most of the time we slept on the floors of our friends’ houses, and our work was low paying and temporary. When I became pregnant the burden to survive overwhelmed us; we became dependent on his family for survival.

Being married to a Native Hawaiian made me subject to the rules of his culture: I had to accept them or leave Hawai’i. I chose to stay for some time, and eventually I transformed my way of thinking and acting. We are no longer married, but we have continued a close friendship and we have an enduring respect for each other. Our two Hawaiian children and one *hapa-haole* grandson tie us together forever.

I work as a Family Nurse Practitioner and educator and I was startled and frightened by the Hawaiian health statistics. My adult children were developing many of the same health problems, and I was losing my precious Hawaiian in-laws to diseases of

diabetes, lung cancer, and colon cancer. Two things motivated my research: the knowledge that I have the expertise and the ability to be an agent for change, and that this change could enhance my family's well being.

Although I have family connections, a substantial history in Hawai'i, and Hawaiian children, I know my identity is *haole*. The literature review of the phylogenetic and cultural theories provided me a platform to start my inquiry as I straddled both worlds.

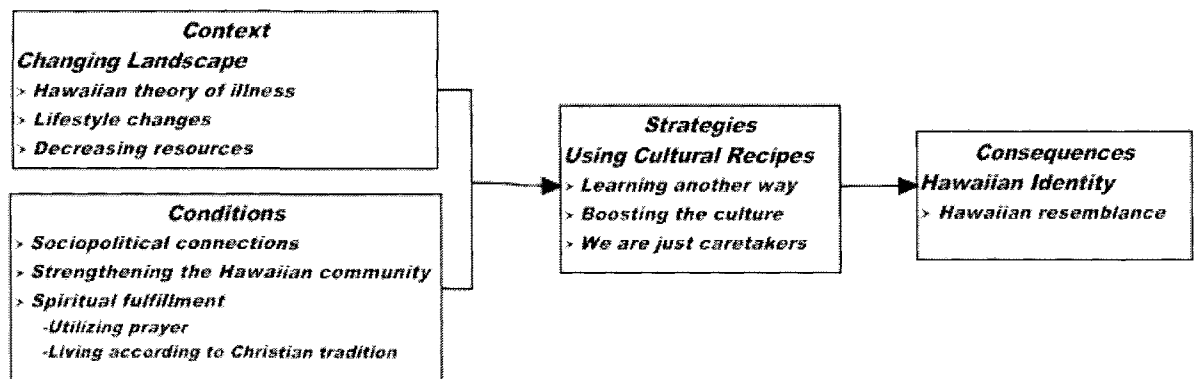
## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

It is difficult to arrive at an understanding of the Hawaiian concept of wellness without taking into account the images and cultural explanations used by Hawaiians to explain their interrelatedness to the world around them. In conversations with the *kūpuna* on the topic of wellness, the theme of “keeping balance” repeatedly surfaced. For this reason, the core category is “keeping balance” as described by the *kūpuna*. Its associated elements, to be outlined in detail throughout the chapter, are: *aloha*, mastery, and belonging. The discussion is organized around themes that reflect the context, conditions, strategies, and consequences of those domains (Figure 1). In brief, the findings of this study reflect strengths in the Hawaiian culture that have endured since Captain Cook arrived on Hawaiian shores, particularly because of determined efforts by the *kūpuna* to perpetuate the cultural meaning of wellness for future generations.

## **Core Category: Keeping Balanced (Pono)**

*Elements of the Core Category*

**Aloha, Mastery, and Belonging**

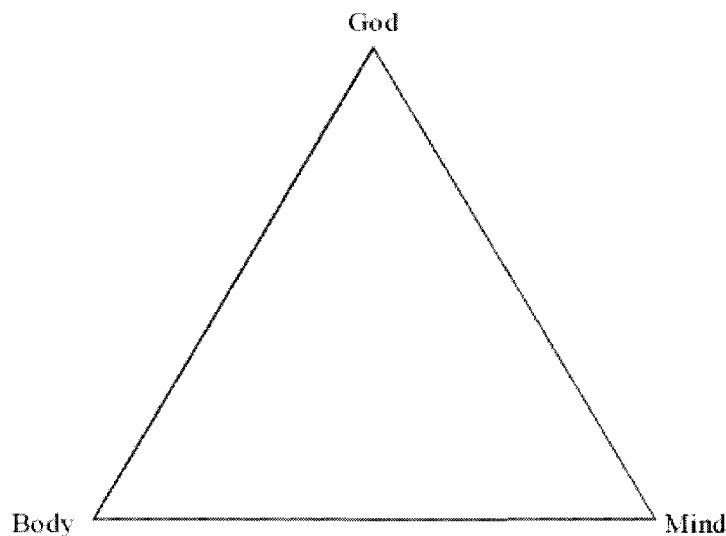


*Figure 1. Model of the Kūpuna Perception of Wellness*

### Core Category: Keeping Balance (Pono)

When the *kūpuna* were asked to define wellness, they used the phrase “keeping balance.” For Hawaiians, keeping balance stems from the philosophical underpinnings of the ancient Polynesian belief system, where three concepts (spiritual, physical, and mental health) are observed in through modeling, history, and believing (Figure 2). At the top of the triangle is God. *Kūpuna* believe that God dictated what was for Hawaiians, God dictates what is for Hawaiians, and God knows what is in store for Hawaiians. The latter is based on their depth of belief and their duty to foster His gifts. Mental and

physical health occupies the lower corners of the triangle, and these last two concepts are on the same level of importance.



*Figure 2. Model of Hawaiian Balance*

Another dimension of the concept of keeping balance involves the Hawaiian understanding of the word *pono*. In fact, Hawaiians are known to use the two concepts, wellness and *pono*, interchangeably. Pukui & Elbert (1971) define *pono* as: “Goodness, uprightness, moral qualities, correct, equity, ...proper” (p. 341). In the following statement a *kupuna* offered a broader understanding of the word *pono*:

Now, try to live that which is *pono*, which is right, *pono pono*, you know, to be *pono* with yourself. When you're *pono* with yourself you're happy, but when you're not *pono*, all hell breaks loose and you wonder, “Why all the trials and tribulations?” And that's what I mean. “You have to be *pono* with yourself” means to learn to forgive and let things bad, let it go. And *pau, pau* means end. And it's a daily process. Find a way to live it. Work at it and live it. (21-76-5)

For the informant, *pono* captures a certain degree of self-reconciliation the Hawaiian individual should have in order to live in harmony with others in community. When the *kūpuna* said to “work at it and live it,” she states that expectations to achieve

wellness require a dedicated amount of daily effort, humility, and forgiveness. This effort is made not only for the self, but for the welfare of the entire community; and this is the essence of wellness.

This concept of keeping balance within the community was evident from the behaviors demonstrated by the *kūpuna* in focus groups, especially while they viewed the research film. Laughter, swaying in unison to the music, and nodding in affirmation were observed. More strikingly, the viewers even conversed with the personages in the film just as they were conversing with each other. These behaviors were not only evidence that the portrayal of Hawaiians within the film (i.e., men paddling, fishing, and growing crops) matched their vision of the ideal Hawaiian, but also that the socially reinforced behaviors are appeared to be a natural constitution of this people. Furthermore, a common thread of mutual concern and an extraordinary amount of respect for one another reaffirmed the point that balance was communal. Their tendency to maintain balance amongst one another, whether through their acts of kindness directed toward each other or their expression of mutual agreement, essentially contributed to the *pono* of this community.

Another *kupuna* offered another reflection on how the past informs the current perception of keeping balance within Hawaiian culture:

(Ancient) Hawaiian activities came with a purpose; their games were for a time of peace. The activity was at a different level and (they had) activities to stimulate the brain. They had many games, many riddles, and many activities for that. The physical physique, the cardiovascular, agility, the balance, it is at a different level for our people back then. Because if you didn't work, you didn't eat. If you didn't feed the *ali'i* (king) and the *ali'i* take care of the *Kakua* (God), you would get eliminated (laughter). It was as simple as that. (20-66-5)

Implicit in the above commentary on the past is the belief that ancient Hawaiian living was more predictable and honorable than is apparent in the contemporary culture. To some extent, the attributes of predictability and integrity that characterized ancient Hawaiians offer a model for today's society to live by if they are to return to a state of wellness.

In addition to a positive-self concept, which flows from an awareness of the historical strengths of Hawaiian culture, the *kūpuna* speak with optimism about what they perceive are their inherited abilities to correct the declining healthcare outcomes. They rationalize that Hawaiians did well for 2000 years without any health problems, and that acculturation to non-Hawaiian ways of life disrupted their state of wellness. Thus, the belief that Hawaiian wellness largely involves a maintenance of traditional ways of life is most clear due to their use of vivid images that resonate within the Hawaiian psyche. They reflect almost nostalgically on the ways of the past, stating:

Our energies went into that environment of activities, sports and stuff. We go to the beach together. But when we started to go to the supermarket and in a sense we lost out into the basic traditional Hawaiian culture. (14-73-3)

When we were growing up, we went through the whole thing (simple life), outside bathroom, no electricity, no running water. You know? All this. If you did anything wrong, anyone of your family or close friend can grab you and give you a spanking. There was a sense of safety to grow up in a small community where the *ohana* (family) was near. (15-62-4)

Hawaiians frequently describe their link to the past using deeper, symbolic images that communicate a sense of unbroken connectedness to their past ways of living. The *kūpuna* repeatedly boasted, "We have the canoes, you know?" drawing attention to the fact that it symbolized stable elements in their culture. The image of the outrigger canoe, as it was presented in the film, elicited varied yet unanimously reinforcing sentiments



about wellness and balance. Characteristically “stable” in its construction due to the addition of an attached stabilizer called the *ama*, it has been instrumental in the maintenance of the traditional Hawaiian way of life over the past centuries. Through the use of these canoes, Hawaiians have been able to travel from island to island to interact with others, to go where the fish are, and to go to a place where God is praised. Because of the canoes, Hawaiians have had the means to reap the benefits of the ocean, to disseminate knowledge, to master the challenges of artisanship, to become expert seamen, to work together as one, and to respect the value of their ancestors and elders. Again, this image personifies the perceptions that participants voiced about the idealized, well Hawaiian. Far from being simply a description of a concrete external object, the outrigger is in actuality a metaphor for the Hawaiian in the well state. It also provides an appropriate metaphor for describing balance, which overlaps with the elements of *aloha*, mastery, and belonging.

You listen to grandparents or you listen to the parents. They are the role models. They teach you, like fishing and canoe fishing. Just like the paddling. It's our culture. (3-59-1)

At the end of the research film, one of the main characters in the film said, “first you *kuka kuka* (talk story or self-reconciliation) with yourself and then you *kuka kuka* (reconcile) with others. That is *pono*” (Zak, 2006). This statement resonated strongly with the *kūpuna*, because they were reared with the values of unrightness and integrity. Consequently, keeping balance reflects a central unifying determinant that underlies the Native Hawaiian philosophies that are founded in their ancestral belief system, which ensures wellness.

## *Aloha*

The concept of *aloha* conveyed a many meanings involving traditional Hawaiian respect for interrelatedness. For the *kūpuna*, interrelatedness means that the loving nature of God is manifested in their actions and those actions are connected to their respect for themselves, for the land, and for the ocean. *Aloha* is described broadly as a concept that is inherently tied to the identity of the Hawaiian culture: “beloved, loving, kind, compassionate, charitable, lovable; to love, be fond of; to show kindness” (Pukui, M. K. & Elbert, 1971, p. 21).

In the context of their worldview, *aloha* is a strength that can bring the Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian communities together; the concept of *aloha* serves as a model for other cultures and it can function as a bridge for understanding:

I believe the *aloha* is to relate to every element of Hawaiian culture. You can also think about *aloha* as *lokahi* (unity), because it is also the relationship to the relatedness (to each Hawaiian). [In other words] when you have a relationship, the relationship is between two individuals, or it's your relationship to the land, your relationship to the ocean, your relationship to the mountain, and all of that is the relationship to God. (0-55-i)

The symbiotic philosophy of sharedness underpins *aloha*, because it serves as a means of managing wellness through relationships between the different Hawaiian communities. Thus, the components of *aloha* guide the social orderliness that functions to keep balance.

Whereas, if we would come to the ocean and gather what we need, and also give back, our people here in Kona very wonderful, that the first concept was to give, and their giving was to seed the fish reefs on this side and this is very simple, in a *'olelo no'eau*, a Hawaiian proverb that says "*aloha aku, aloha mai.*" We give love and love would return. So our people would take this food and they would feed the *ko'a* (fishing spot) knowing the *ko'a* would eventually feed the people yeah? So, we only take time, currently to understand that concept that in order for us to take, we have to give. (0-55-i)

*Aloha* guides the will to care for each other when Native Hawaiians are confronted with special needs (i.e., illness, babysitting, and community volunteering). The *kūpuna* stated that shared caring increases their sense of being loved and respected. These feelings extend to the community, and *aloha* is one of their essential values of wellness.

Another aspect of *aloha* is how it is connected to behavioral expectations, mainly propagated by the tourist industry. For economic reasons, some Hawaiians are expected to performance-act, this is especially true if an individual's livelihood is dependant on entertaining visitors. The following participant describes her need to understand enough of the Western cultures in order to give tourists what they are willing to pay. This process focuses on the Hawaiians' ability to keep balance while they modify existing forces exerted on their culture.

You have to work hard. You have to learn the process (Western ways). You got to learn how they (tourists) learn and ask questions to find out what they want out of you. In the meantime, you add your own personality in order to make (successful) business with (Westerners). My job is also when the people come in, (I use) my presentation and my approach in order for me to get them to buy the ticket and sell the tour. I welcome them and I say *aloha*. The people say they have enjoyed my tour and there is a tip at the end. (3-59-1)

*Kūpuna* describe potential tensions between the Hawaiians and outsiders. They explain that tourists expect them to freely share their *aloha* spirit while they witness unacceptable behaviors from the tourists. They suggested the more they gave *aloha* to strangers, the more the strangers took from the Hawaiians. These feelings of distrust increase their anxiety and they are challenged to find the balance between their trusting nature and their feelings of fear. They described this trepidation:

I guess everybody (Hawaiians) has a way of openness, you know? Just like there are strangers, but they are greeted with *aloha*. It (is) just the way a lot of things

has changed. But it is not giving lightly like before, (even though) we still have the spirit. The *aloha* spirit [to give away], well you (have) to be very careful now. Things have changed a lot sometimes you do your best and then you get slammed like that (snaps finger) so now we just watch what we do. (4-70-1)

The *kūpuna* gave many positive references to the word *aloha*. The *kūpuna* believe that their desire to give and share with each other is the essence of their character. The older *kūpuna* remember an *aloha* life in which bartering was their main method of exchange of goods and services. They believe those times were happier and stress-free; *kūpuna* felt secure and cared for as children, and they desired the same for younger generations.

### *Mastery*

In order for the canoe to move swiftly in the ocean, the structure of the canoe must be strong and stable, the paddles must be shaped so the Hawaiian can effectively push away the most water, and the paddlers need strength and stamina in order to synchronize their paddles so that when the paddles are driven into the water, the force of their efforts are unified and well-organized. If the boat tips over, they have a prescribed method to right the canoe, and the measure of their success is dependent on their level of mastery.

Hawaiians define mastery (*mākau kau*) as “able, competent, capable: to know how and to know well” (Pukui, M. K. & Elbert, 1971, p. 228). *Kūpuna* describe how their expertise and competency has to be passed down in order to boost the Hawaiian community’s strive for self-determination and to reverse the poor healthcare outcomes of Hawaiians.

The *kūpuna* describe their behaviors, language, beliefs, attitudes, and values as distinctive from other cultures. Those elements provide the framework in which to achieve mastery. Certain scenes in the research film illustrated the importance of mastery in the relationship of grandparents and grandchildren; in one scene a grandfather teaches his grandson how to grow and use *taro* (Hawaiian plant). In another scene, an elder and his nephew masterfully throw out a fishnet from an outrigger canoe to net mackerel (*opelu*). These scenes set the platform for reflection; the participants thought about their childhood and compared those times to now. They believe that these are survival mechanisms that are transmitted from one generation to another. Mastery of knowledge, energy, and strength is necessary to survive [as a culture] over a long period of time.

When a *kupuna* was asked to describe Hawaiian wellness, he described the ancient activity of preparing for a *luau* in his explanation. The most important ingredient in a *luau* is a pig. To get the pig, one needs to know where thousands of wild boar/pigs roam in the forest areas. It was common to deliberate for hours with expert hunters in the family and discuss where and how they will find an appropriately sized pig. Hunters avoid killing babies and mama pigs so that more pigs would be available for the future. Sometimes, hunting excursions lasted longer than a few days, so that Hawaiians must possess the skills needed to survive in the wilderness. Since wild boars attack when they are provoked, it is also important to acquire expertise in using the right weapons, to possess the correct execution techniques, and to develop the ability to haul the live pig (that could weigh up to over 300 pounds) down a mountain. To “get the pig” is a measure of expertise among the *kūpuna*, and this accomplishment points to their need to pass down ancient traditions in order to possess the knowledge to survive on their own:

First, you have to get the pig. The men including the boys would go out with the bow and arrow or the rifles. And, we kids would go out to the woods and learn how to kill the pig. (0-70-i)

Once the pig is brought down the mountain, Hawaiians make use of every part of the beast. Again, the element of mastery provides subsistence for their community:

When we bring'um back, we would kill the pig by cutting the artery and save the blood, then we would take out the intestines—all of these parts were delicacies. Then as a group, we go cutting the *ti* leafs and get the taro leafs together, we needed to gather the lava rocks and we even made our own Hawaiian salt! Then we would dig the *imu* (hole) and take the wet *ti* leafs, line the *imu*, put the lava rock and make it so that lava rock got hot enough, then we would stuff the *puua* (pig) and then cover it up and stay together for, you know, days. (0-72-i)

While the pig is cooking underground, the Hawaiian community (family) continues to prepare for the upcoming festivities; by working together, they reinforce cultural cohesiveness:

And, we all worked together, talking stories. Plus, the *wahines* (women) got together making the *leis*, *lomi lomi* (salmon salad), making the *lau lau* (wrapped fish and pork in taro and *ti* leafs), and getting ready. Everyone was sitting together talking stories. (0-70-i)

As the *kūpuna* watched the different roles of Hawaiians in the research film, they described their own roles as being creative and flexible during times of food shortages. They valued their skills in adapting to food shortages that they explain often developed because of war, shipping strikes, or because of high prices. They exhibited an air of confidence as they claimed to have made the best out of canned foods that were shipped to them from the mainland. For example, during World War II and after the ports in Hawaii were controlled by the American military, commercial shipping was limited. Hawaiians were given Spam as a source of protein and today Spam is a Hawaiian favorite found in specialized dishes.

Women had a major role in providing subsistence in the family and were proud of being flexible. In the research film, one mother discussed their roles in taking care. Once they received foods, it was mainly up to them to prepare the meals and care for their babies and children. This scene triggered a few women to nod in agreement and discuss methods in which they mastered the art of expanding small amounts of food in order to feed anyone who came by. One *kupuna* described this phenomenon:

We would always have fish. Fish was always our stable food. We were already surviving because we had the avocados, the guava, and we had the protein. We had the *olo* (eel fat), the *poi* (starch), the mangos and the papayas, you know what I mean? Depend on what they (Americans) shipped over. You have to figure this out; the canned stuff was the cheapest. You know what I mean? The corned beef, the sardines, the Vienna sausage, the pork and beans. Those were the affordable things that we could purchase. And, as you know, we utilize every piece. (3-59-1)

The *kūpuna* perceive that problems of younger Hawaiians are a result of a lack of mastery or knowing how to live as Hawaiians. As they reflected upon this, they were able to put this in the context of social and physical problems. Today, most of the *kūpuna* perceive that education in modern culture as well as in Hawaiian culture provides other means for thriving. These ideas are central to the concept of mastery; if children are given educational choices (traditional and other cultures), they could make effective changes to improve the welfare of Hawaiians. Also, the *kūpuna* stated that higher education would provide the means to protect the Hawaiian community from deceptive overtures from Westerners or other stakeholders, as described by one local in the following:

If you don't get the education, then what you have is this-where we are. You see, without education, Hawaiians are just victims. If Hawaiians had known what was being stolen from them, we would not have lost so much. I tell, it makes me so angry to know that we were lied to; the education system was set up for us to be ignorant. But the best thing we can do is get educated. We have to push for this. Otherwise you keep the generation to generation of Hawaiians who have self-pity and they don't do anything about their status. (0-70-i)

In order to return to the idealized healthy Hawaiian, the *kūpuna* emphasized the need for revitalizing traditional activities. The participants chatted before and after the focus groups about their successes. Grandchildren are volunteering to clean and care for fishponds, exercising by paddling and dancing *hula*, and they are attempting to change the way they eat. Regarding the older children, who are also striving to reverse their poor health conditions, the *kupuna* reflected as follows:

But I look at my children today; they all suffer from some kind of high blood pressure problems, arthritis, apnea and all of those kinds of things. It is because of my children's lifestyle. Now, they try to think about what they do and don't do, and they realize that. Today, they are suffering from it and they are trying to make their living habits better, but they are already suffering from high blood pressure, overweight, you know they really have to work at that. And so many of my children say, "If I could be as healthy as my mother, I would be really good." In terms of keeping the traditions of our ancestors, I feel it is very important.  
(5-81-2)

The core category of keeping balance is achieved if the elements of mastery are shared; this means they possess the ability to communicate as Hawaiians, they take time to reflect upon what is needed, and they demonstrate respect for others. The roles of the *kūpuna* are essential for infusing these values; they become precious resources for younger generations in teaching Hawaiian ways of living. *Kūpuna* believe that in order to be well, Hawaiians need to be self-reliant as they use Western resources.

### *Belonging*

The need for Hawaiians to belong to their culture can be compared to paddlers inside an outrigger canoe. The metaphor accurately describes the interdependent relationship with each paddler; the first person sets the pace and the last person steers them to their destination. For larger canoes, the weight of the canoe is buoyed because of the concerted efforts of other paddlers. Just as the paddlers need to work in unison or the



canoe would slow and drop down in the water so does the Hawaiian culture if traditions do not continue. The same sort of unity was exhibited through the way the *kūpuna* interacted within their Hawaiian community; there were behaviors that were specific to their culture. They exhibit belonging by adhering to cultural protocols such as the way they address each other as family, i.e. auntie, uncle, tutu. They wore similar simple clothing, thongs (called slippers), and Hawaiian jewelry.

The *kūpuna* modeled the values of belonging, and by doing so, they evoked ethnic pride in others; as they followed other cultural protocols, those around them did the same. The Hawaiian traditions of kissing each other as a greeting, taking slippers off before entering a home, or demonstrating hierarchical respect, provide a sense of cultural cohesiveness. Belonging also incorporates the importance that they have an environment where traditional activities can be exercised (i.e. family gatherings, talk-story, luaus, singing, and playing music). When all of the elements of belonging are combined, the *kūpuna* state they are happy and they feel contentment. This perspective symbolizes a state of well being when Hawaiians feel harmony and balance.

When Hawaiians are happy, and no worries at all, [they] play music. You learn to play ukulele by not saying nothing, it just comes to you. Talk story is important, it is everything for us, it is [our] therapy. Yeah, just like we were saying right here, we work hard [and] play hard (laughter breaks out). The two ladies in the film, singing and playing the ukulele--it was a good balance, mentally...they were happy. Yeah, like the song they were singing, singing together, especially with the Auntie on the left, a lot of Hawaiian. (22-56-6)

Belonging to their own ethnic group is also comforting; when Hawaiians gather, their behaviors and expressions are culturally suitable for the occasion. It is common for them to rejoice by just being together, including participating in festivals of life and ceremonies for the deceased. This was evident while the participants spoke about seeing

people that they had not seen for some time and described the food that was served at a recent funeral. Initially, the *kūpuna* were responding to a research probe for their meaning of good food versus bad food, then the discussion led to a twenty-minute talk story session about the funeral. Their actions demonstrated a cultural coping mechanism for losing a valuable member of their society by not directly acknowledging their feelings of sadness. Instead, the nature of talk story was therapeutic and facilitated the group's movement forward in the interview.

Talk story is important, it is everything for us. It is important and it is therapy. When Hawaiians talk story it is a form of (special) communicating. (22-56-6)

The strength from commonality increases their sense of certainty and security, both of which contribute to the well being of individuals and the Hawaiian community, and are vulnerable to change. Hence, if Hawaiians fail to adhere to the rules of belonging, there is a concerted effort to correct those behaviors. In the following story, a very troubled teenager had been court-ordered to attend a daily Hawaiian community center. Hawaiian protocol requires that one acknowledge God's presence before entering a communal center. The commitment to this boy started at the door; he was not allowed to pass through the door until he acknowledged God's presence and seemingly listened to God's calling. With each passing day, the boy became more confident and learned to respect his culture:

The first day he walked in, 'I say to Francis (not his real name), *Pule a Ka Haku*' (say the Lord's Prayer before entering) and I point to the door. He says 'what are you talking about?' I say to him 'you go home.' The next day [he returned], he asked me what he needed to do, on his own (showing a willingness to learn). He asked the *kupuna* what [meaning of praying before entering] he meant as he pointed to the door. A week and half later, the judge tells me (who lived right next door to the center): 'Hey, I see the kid.' I say: 'What kid?' The judge replies: 'the one that comes in everyday. He's improved. I see him asking questions and then he leads the prayer at six o'clock, standing there at the door.' I know what the

judge is talking about, because each day I asked the boy: 'Francis what are you going to do now?' When Francis comes to me he says 'excuse me, Uncle.' I say: 'Hey Francis, what's happening?' This was the first time he called me uncle. You know what the kid is doing today? He's at UCLA medical school to be a doctor! (16-58-4)

This *kupuna* described in this a situation his own sense of contribution to his Hawaiian community. At the same time, this *kupuna* discussed how each ethnic group had their own ways of belonging, and this story exemplified the Hawaiian way of belonging. While he told this story, the focus group nodded to him seemingly as a sign of respect and appreciation, in keeping with their sense cultural cohesiveness. The goal to unify the Hawaiian people will help perpetuate Hawaiian culture. In the metaphoric of the outrigger canoe; when the crew of paddlers works together, they reach their destination. Other traditional activities work in the same way:

We work hard now to spread the Hawaiian culture and practices through *hula* protocol, ceremonies, the use of the Hawaiian language, and by embracing the stories of our *kūpuna*. We believe it is the way to spread our *aloha* to the world and when we do, it comes back to you the right away. (0-55-i)

Beyond the literal meaning of unity (*lokaʻahi*) defined by Pukui & Ebert's (1971): "Unity, agreement, accord, unison, and/or harmony" the *kūpuna* describe belonging in terms of wellness. They often refer to the unity of the body, mind, and spirit as a desirable state of balance. The focus groups demonstrated agreement when they discussed their sense of belonging to an ideal of themselves. The *kūpuna* referred to belonging as their way of unifying historical experiences to the present and comparing the past and present to Hawaiian wellness for the future. This dynamic process provides predictability; when these sociocultural determinants are in a state flux, the levels of wellness are also likely to change accordingly.

Finally, the Hawaiian concept of belonging involves being connected spiritually to the natural elements of the land and sea. This includes taking the necessary actions to care for those elements. These actions underlay the value of *aloha*, because actions of nurturing provide the means to sustain life for themselves and for future generations. For example, the *kūpuna* think of attributes of belonging to the land as an extension of their identity. One informant repeated the following song when she tried to explain these attributes:

Born on an island accustomed to our ways. Nurturing our *ohana* (family) that strengthens us each day. The *kalo* (spinach-type plant) from the *aina* (land) we cherish and preserve. The *ia* (fish) from the *moana* (ocean) we take minimum (amount) to conserve [for future use]. (24-49-6)

The remainder of this chapter will discuss each category as it is organized from themes that reflect the context, conditions, strategies, and consequences of the phenomenon of core category of keeping balance.

#### Context: Changing Landscape

The philosophical contexts of landscape changes are premised on varying degrees of authenticity of culture. The variances are dependent upon the stronghold outside forces have had on the ecological and economical determinants of Hawaiian culture. The following section outlines briefly the backdrop the *kūpuna* perceive to be influential to their sense of well-being:

Commercialism affected and changed the Hawaiian image for tourists, and was created by advertising images of large happy women in muumuus, fun-loving beach boys, and happy-go-lucky Hawaiians playing ukuleles under coconut trees. Essentially, Hawaiians were encouraged to keep up with the expectations of travelers for the sake of

earning a living. Very few movies or television shows depicted Hawaiians as intelligent, superior beings as described by early travelers. The result was a co-operative form of individual where societal determinants influenced the self-identity of Hawaiians.

The marketing campaigns effectively motivated large numbers of mainlanders to live in “paradise.” The migration of outsiders, especially *haoles*, eventually resulted in the incidences of cultural cross-pollination.

In the old days, we could do this and that, we know everybody. It was simple, but then when we see what the tourist have, we say “hey I want that too!” So, then the Hawaiian language didn’t seem important so the parents no teach huh? (1-72-i)

*Kūpuna* believe that intermarriage changed the values of the Hawaiian family. Accordingly, when Hawaiian women married *haole* (outsider) men, they moved away from their culture but when *haole* women married Hawaiian men, the opposite usually happens. The *kūpuna* state that *hapa-haole* (part *haole* and part Hawaiian) children are reared differently than all Hawaiian children.

I would say (Hawaiians marrying Hawaiians would be better) because they know the Hawaiian heritage. For the culture and the harmony and practices would prosper farther (culturally). We were taught (that) from a young time. And in my aspect when the Hawaiian girls marry the mainlander, (they) moved and made it their life with their (*haole*) families. But when they give themselves to their husband up there (mainland) they are with their *haole* families. But the *haole* girls didn't know how to cook Hawaiian foods; they ended up having to cook (learning to live as a Hawaiian). And the more they cook the more they are providing (to the culture). (3-59-1)

They feel that children of Hawaiian parents exhibit stronger adherence to Hawaiian cultural values, especially when it pertains to traditional discipline practices. For the *kūpuna*, these different parenting styles have changed the manner in which they, as *kūpuna*, can relate to younger generations. Thereby, the *kūpuna* transmission of values that they feel is essential for keeping balanced requires new approaches and extra effort.

The participants shared in these sentiments in different types of examples; some pointed to the disrespectful behaviors of children, and other participants discussed the changes in collectivist behaviors.

I think we should go back (to the old lifestyle). The film made me happy because it brought lots of memories of when I was little from my *tutu* man and *tutu* ladies, aunties and uncles. And sad, because I don't see that anymore, but hopeful. (9-68-2)

Finally, in itself, Westernization has influenced Hawaiian parents to ensure that their children benefit in the same way as non-Hawaiian children. Hawaiian children want the same items that non-Hawaiian children have, such as cars, motorcycles, and computers. This cultural influence makes it very difficult for Hawaiian parents to demand adherence to traditional Hawaiian activities and it is a cause for frustration as described by a *kūpuna*:

You would be basically depended on the land...well to us (Hawaiians), we believe if you have land, a lot of land and you got to do the work. (Today) The children are not going to help. Because the *other (haole)* children can go play and *ours* have to stay home and work and help. (12-73-3)

#### *Hawaiian Theory of Illness*

The Hawaiian theory of illness is an abstract theme derived from the participant's holistic perspective, and based on their knowledge of the pre-Cook healthy Hawaiian. Illness is not described in the literal definition for disease, rather, the *kūpuna* describe illness as a Western manifestation of domination and recklessness. The data illustrate the *kūpuna*-lived experiences and the historical perspective of the changing landscape.

The *kūpuna* feel they are suffering higher than average mortality rates because they have *haole* diseases. They rationalize that Hawaiian diseases would be relieved by their traditional knowledge of the natural elements found on Hawaiian land and ocean.

However, they spoke of their land as either not prepared to heal them or their land is unavailable to heal them of *haole* diseases.

The *kūpuna* theorize that they suffer as a consequence of behaving according to their inherited nature of sharing their spirit of *aloha* with strangers, and they distrust Westernized medicine. The *kūpuna* described how their ancestors were introduced to unfamiliar characteristics of greed, selfishness, carelessness, and disrespect when they met *haoles*.

So many of our holistic diets and many of our holistic herbs will take forever for them to do it (work). That is a good example of when the missionaries came; our people weren't able to deal with Hanson's (leprosy). They weren't able to heal themselves. They couldn't heal the measles. So, when the (Western) medicines came in, our people had to adapted to it, which (caused) changes to our genes. Many of our people don't want to go to Western doctors. That is because we are put into a square pegs that are not made for us. That's why they don't want the Western medicines. Modern diseases equals [*sic*] modern society and artificial chemicals. When the whalers came to Hawaii, they brought the measles and all of these diseases here. The Hawaiians never even had a cold. You never had doctors; you had *kahunas* (traditional healers) because *tutu* (grandparents) took care. (0-55-i)

The *kūpuna* perceive these Western characteristics as the reasons for not receiving adequate healthcare resources at the state and federal levels. Therefore, they see illness as another component of Western culture that they must navigate around.

The big problem we have is that we are lacking in medical services, here we have all the programs but that doesn't mean we have the doctors or nurses to give us the services. They leave because they get paid so little money from the state, they cannot afford to live here. It is really awful what we don't have (services as) compared to the mainland. (6-68-2)

The *kūpuna* who were over 70 years old discussed the possibility of needing long-term care as they fear that Western medicine is preferential to *haoles*. One participant angrily pointed out that she may have to leave her home and family and move out of state to get better care.

More people (non-Hawaiians) are living longer today because they have healthcare. You know Medicare is good (for them), but the services are not available here. (2-72-1)

With the high rates of disease risk factors and poor healthcare outcomes perceived as outcomes of their trusting nature, the participants' values of righting the imbalance they perceived imposed upon them are reasons to facilitate better research into the use of traditional healing. As one traditional healer stated:

When I see a *kupuna* come up to me with bags and bags of medicines, I try to help them say "seek what is the main ingredient in that medicine," more likely we will have a plant that does the same thing, and if there's a plant that does the same thing then do the plant. But many [Western] medical people will say "you can't control the dosage." And with our people we know that when you do the plant you do the prayers, and when do the prayers, you get the right dosage. (0-55-i)

### *Lifestyle Changes*

Their perceptions of keeping balance are placed solidly in the context of lifestyle changes. For instance, the *kūpuna* acknowledge that they rely on modern conveniences rather than working together in the traditional Hawaiian way. These lifestyle changes add to the propensity to suffer from Western diseases:

Speaking for myself, I have been heavy and obese. Along with that, there is the high blood pressure, diabetes, a lot of different things. The majority of people who are big nowadays eat all of the fast foods; junk food and a lot of them have those problems, gout, and lots of different things. Even I had experience in that. (17-63-4)

Other *kūpuna* understand that modern conveniences are replacing the traditional lifestyle of elders in a deeper meaningful way. The tradition of passing down the mastery of survival is dependent on maintaining structure in their society; the family hierarchy in the order of importance is *kupuna* (elder), *makua* (parent), and *keiki* (child). The older *kūpuna* lived when their primary language was Hawaiian, when most homes had



outhouses, and when transportation was limited to walking or paddling canoes. Those conditions built character, confidence, and hardiness, concepts that the *kūpuna* feel are necessary to perpetuate their culture, and ultimately ensure improved wellness. Their sense of uncertainty as to how children in modern society will be affected without those resilient characteristics was evident:

The parents are younger nowadays, the *kūpuna* are all dying, so you know before, because of the Westernized world, you know, bringing in all McDonalds and convenience. [It is] Very convenient to go the store yeah? (15-62-4)

The *kūpuna* were self-analytical about their lifestyle changes. Although they understood the dynamics of capitalism, they also saw that they needed to make personal choices to improve their health by changing negative behaviors. They proudly spoke about their fit children and grandchildren when they participated in paddling, volleyball, *hula*, surfing, and sailing.

### *Decreasing Resources*

Decreasing resources are multi-dimensional: land loss to outsiders and commercialism prevents the practice of traditional Hawaiian agriculture, commercial fishing has diminished the Hawaiians' access to fish, pollution and the use of insecticides have made medicinal plants unusable, and economic conditions reduce the resources families can provide. At the same time, Hawaiians feel forced to work in jobs that perpetuate the decline in their resources. They work in the construction industry that builds the hotels, roads, and houses. They work on commercial boats that pollute the waters and decrease the fish population, they drive cars that pollute the air, and they spray the flora with insecticides provided by the government that employs them. These jobs replace traditional activities. They are subject to a labile economy that when

Hawaiians are laid off, they are forced to move their families outside of Hawaii in search of employment. They see these decreasing resources as polarizing conditions that are outcomes of colonization. The loss of self-efficacy is the impetus to unify within the Hawaiian community and it strengthens their argument for Hawaiian nationalism:

Well, yes, like you know how the Indians have their land, you know? The government, I guess pays them for the use of the land. Is that how it works? I know they have something like that, where the Hawaiians are trying to get. Like what the Indians are having. If I had the power...I would give them the land. (22-56-6)

Look at the homes, today \$400,000 and up and then you get two people making one small income carrying two jobs a piece, where is the family time? You don't know if something happens. It's vicious cycle, but you learn to survive anyway you can, you know? And sometimes, in a business sense, as far as using the easy way out and that's how it is, but like she just said, a gallon gas, how far can you go on a gallon gas-not too far. (17-63-4)

Decreasing resources includes limited knowledge of their Hawaiian culture.

Formerly, children were not allowed to speak and act Hawaiian in schools. In their homes they desired the American lifestyle. These generations are now many of the elders in this study. They described how they wished they knew more so that they could be more resourceful to younger generations:

When I was in school, I went to Kamehameha (a private school for Hawaiians) that was back in the 40's. At that time, we were not allowed to even speak Hawaiian. They taught us how to use utensils and eat at the table like *haoles*. They told us that we had to learn to like this (way of living) so that we can get accepted in college and stuff. And to some degree they were right, my whole class went to college, many of us live in the mainland. But the point is, we were told to get rid of the traditions and ways of our people to succeed. (0-72-i)

The following participant worked in California for many years and returned to Kona to retire. She and others like her illustrate the cultural landscape that demarcated their abilities to carry on Hawaiian tradition. The *kūpuna* now gather at the community center once or twice a week to enjoy their Hawaiian revival. At the end of the focus

group meeting, they formed a circle, prayed together in Hawaiian before they played their ukulele and sang Hawaiian songs:

And to me, to be Hawaiian for me makes me very proud. And I try to learn as much as I can *oleo o Hawaii* (speak Hawaiian), by participating in playing ukulele, reciting *oleo* as much as I can to increase my Hawaiianness. I am 68 and will be 69 shortly, and I am trying to grasp within myself as much as I can about being Hawaiian. Because this is where I am now. I would like to leave the legacy from what my ancestors have done for us to respect the *aina*, and do everything in a timely fashion. (9-68-2)

It was important to these *kūpuna* that they could live with the resources available to them. For instance, as they were discussing the decreasing access to some of their beaches, they would point out that there were still plenty of beaches available. When they spoke about losing the downtown area for meeting friends to talk story, they mentioned that they could “bend” or make detours to other places. Also, participants discussed how they must navigate around limited access to natural available foods for subsistence. They discussed Dr. Shitani’s Hawaiian diet as a method to reverse recent trends of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity:

The Hawaiian diet, they can give you at least 3 weeks or so, you stick to it you know, everything will just *pū pū* (come together). You get right back to the Hawaiian thing cause you are eating the same kind of foods you used to have. But just sticking with the type *dakine* (Western diet) was not Hawaiian diet, so you know all *dakine* (Western foods has too many) preservatives. And, (you are allowed to eat as much as you want) eating a lot, yet you don't fat. I think a lot of us would like to go back there and do that. (17-63-4)

This positive outlook reflects their sense that they can adapt in the context of diminishing natural habitats. The profound changes in resources affect the practices of Hawaiians who value living in close harmony with the sea and land. Yet they appreciate the efforts of a non-Hawaiian researcher’s efforts to improve Hawaiian health. This

perspective acknowledges that, in the context of decreasing resources, Hawaiians are capable of accommodating Western interventions as long as they are culturally sensitive:

Dr. Shitani has proved that Hawaiian people (can reverse disease). He took about 10 people that were bad diabetics. (Their diet improved their diabetes) it came way down in 3 weeks; they didn't have take pills or shots anymore. (17-63-4)

#### Conditions: Connections

The surge of immigrants has increased competition for jobs. This has forced families to move to the mainland and ultimately separate from kinships. The *kūpuna* also fear their medical care could be better on the mainland and consider their options about leaving Hawaii. These are the conditions that set the backdrop for Hawaiians who separate from their homes and families. These conditions also form the notion that staying together is a functional and essential part of keeping balanced (*pono*). *Kūpuna* strive to revitalize the Hawaiian milieu. Their actions in the community serve to build connectors from their ancestors to future generations. As a result, there are language immersion public schools for Hawaiian children, there are programs where *kūpuna* are connected to younger generations transmitting oral histories, and partnerships have developed with major institutions that provide connections through technology:

The old Hawaiian saying, like my mother used to say, the *pule* (prayer) will answer because you always come back to your roots. You know, like she sent me to California to finish my school and as a kid, I wanted to be Western. She always said, no matter how far you go you still *pili koko* means the blood follows you. I don't care, you can be Westernized but a time will come you go back to your roots, and that is what happened to my son. And when he moved to Maui, now all of a sudden he is back to his roots, he is a connector. Now that means to be *pono*, he had to make things right, him being a grandpa and the kind of business he was in. (21-76-5)

There are still *kupunas* [sic] who are sharing their tradition, like for instance, raising our taro to keep it as is and not even accept anything else. By the way it is planted and the reason why you are doing it. And (teaching) patience and we

should all have patience. You see what we taught our children, I see it now in my children and they are doing it to their children. (13-77-3)

The research film had a scene where mothers prepared freshly caught fish on lava rocks as their small children watched and waved flies away; the scene displayed children fully involved and attentive to their mothers. After the participants watched the film, they reminisced how their lives were similar to that scene: simple and stress free. They perceive the *kūpuna* traditional roles are changing because increasingly *kūpuna* are caring for their grandchildren while both parents work. They believe that when both parents have to work, it increases stress between family members and having children in the care of others robs children and parents of the chance to experience a traditional Hawaiian lifestyle. The effects of stress are perceived as a negative wellness factor that may lead to death:

My grandfather, and thinking about it now, they lived simple lives as far as I know, they did not drink alcohol, both of them did not smoke, and their lifestyle (was good). Tutu *kane* (grandfather) lived on the ocean along North Shore and yet as far as I know he had a massive heart attack at age 60. I don't know what would cause this other than stress. (5-81-2)

Stress is what children have today. We never had that. I think it is very important to get back to stress-free activities and the element of *ohana* (family), and peace is important. (12-73-3)

Efforts to design programs that realign the traditional family structure are ongoing. One *kupuna* discusses how she perceives the need to facilitate connections to the family and to the community by being there. Other *kūpuna* struggle over the differences they perceive in children who are in traditional programs and those who do not have this opportunity. They felt that traditional Hawaiian programs should be available to all. Some of the *kūpuna* have taken the initiative by starting their own

mentoring programs, e.g., gathering youths to clear land plots to make the land useable for multi-purpose Hawaiian activities:

There are lots of young children that volunteer and go to the university to learn our culture, they know more than I do! But they never lived it you know? What I'm saying, they living like this, (tapping the table) [contemporary lifestyle] but look at the film. [Try] moving them back to something (the old ways) they're not accustomed to, they will not accept it. (16-58-4)

### *Strengthening the Community*

Strengthening the community was a defining theme that emerged when the participants described their roles as leaders. Overall, community and political activism have surged over the last twenty years, especially in terms of reinstating Hawaiian sovereignty. The efforts toward sovereignty highlighted the needs of the Hawaiian community, especially in terms of their physical health. The *kūpuna* were motivated to participate in this research because they were aware of the high morbidity and mortality rates of Hawaiians. The *kūpuna* perceive that the government should afford more autonomy and a financial benefit to Hawaiians especially when they perceive their access to healthcare is too limited:

I think the main thing is that the Hawaiian people as they get older don't have a lot of healthcare. They don't have enough provision to take advantage of it (healthcare) and then, so, sometimes you get a little angry. (2-72-1)

Deciding who qualifies as a Hawaiian posits another type of problem, which has created philosophical conflicts. According to the *kūpuna*, the heartbeat or the *mana* is part of all Hawaiians, regardless of the percentage of the Hawaiian quantum blood. Furthermore, it causes a quandary as to how dividing those with 'x' amount of Hawaiian blood to those with 'y' amount of blood will facilitate connections:

You know the Hawaiian Nation has one of the worse problems we ever had, we have two hundred different groups of Hawaiians and you have two hundred different ideas (of who qualifies as Hawaiians). (23-57-6)

Facilitating connections in the Hawaiian community is desirable, however, not at the cost of sacrificing their Hawaiian traditions. The goal is to stay together and yet they understand that they are vulnerable to their own people who do not live according to Hawaiian ethics. The dilemma of who to trust becomes paramount:

All of a sudden when they found out Hawaiians can get money, then everyone Hawaiian (laughs). Then all of these organizations came up. There are over two hundred organizations in Hawaii, one in this and one in that. They all figure if they get their own *aina* not as one group, they are going to get a bunch of money. They are not thinking about the other Hawaiians, just their group. (23-57-6)

No longer do the *kūpuna* trust outsiders to take care of their welfare and they feel they need to model their role to ‘take care,’ as illustrated by this interviewee:

I'm very active in politics and the Hawaiian Homestead, you know. That's the best thing you should do as far as being truly a Hawaiian. My job being a family *kupuna*, I have to be the example within my home and this is where you have wisdom that you've learned and what you have learned you pass on to your children and they pass it on to their children. (21-76-5)

The perspective of the *kūpuna* reflects their long struggle to make sense of their current health status. Seemingly, they have confidence in their ability to get over their anger and grief in order to restore the fullness of their idealized self. Hawaiian traditions include motivating beliefs to “right” themselves and become balanced. These are life-saving values. Strengthening their resolve to participate in these practices will allow them and future generations to bridge the cultural divide. This bridge is a necessary structure in order for the Hawaiians to regain their ancestral fitness.

### *Spiritual Fulfillment*

Two sub-themes emerged from the *kūpuna* when they described how Hawaiians could improve and sustain their spiritual fulfillment: 1) utilizing prayer and 2) living according to the Christian tradition. Participants illustrated how they integrated these concepts in the context of their traditions and connect them to wellness. The *kūpuna* describe that it is traditional to listen to their elders and to pray together in Hawaiian. These activities reassure the importance of self in the eyes of God and in the hearts of the family, forming a sense of spiritual fulfillment. Ultimately, the *kūpuna* realize the depth of their spirituality in the physical environment--when they see the ocean, when they wait for the sunset, and when they hear the voices and laughter that emanates from the unique character of a Hawaiian:

Go to the ocean and sit there by yourself, just listen to the waves crashing and the waterfalls and have a good spirit of mind. The same thing up in the mountain, where it's peaceful and quiet it's part of the peace of mind. To me, the Hawaiians always had a special connection to the *Akua* (God). The Man up there (pointing to the sky) and everything we do, and live today, always you give thanks. You can go to the ocean and you know you are talking to the Man. Anything we partake in here, is a *pule Akua* (prayer to God). We always believed in that, and I think it will keep carrying on, no matter, and we will always teach our children that.  
(17-63-4)

### *Utilizing Prayer*

This theme reflects the *kūpuna* philosophical principles that the body cannot be healed without healing the spirit. Hawaiians start their healing by giving thanks to God (*Akua*) before entering into any activity. Elders teach the right prayers and the right prayers must be said with total faith that God will be directive. The *kūpuna* consequently enjoy a sense of spiritual reward when they witness not only learning as a result of their



teachings within the community, but also when they witness the community's spiritual reflections.

*Living According to the Christian Tradition*

The *kūpuna* perceive that most Hawaiians endeavor to live by the ideals of monotheism without surrendering their stakehold in the ancient polytheistic tradition. While *kūpuna* were mindful that their beliefs may have the appearance of contradiction, their logic illustrates their resolve to unite differing interpretations of varying legends and oral histories:

Hawaiians have gods of many things, god of water, god of land, god of whales, god of fire, but for Hawaiians, it really is about one God for everything. So in Hawaii the people have a spiritual culture that is different than say, Germany even though that is (Europe) where Christianity started. For Hawaiians, it comes from the center of the *opu* (gut). (1-72-i)

Achieving spiritual fulfillment through Christianity was strongly desirable for the *kūpuna* and utilizing their influence as community elders was equally important. They expressed their belief that wellness must start with Jesus Christ. The *kūpuna* also strive to pass down the ideology of Christian living by sharing the Bible, attending church, volunteering, and giving back to the community. This is evidenced in the *kūpuna* commitment to principles of living a morally righteous life every day. They accomplish spiritual wellness when they participate fully as a *kupuna*. Participation in Christianity is practiced within the four walls of a church or on a boat out to sea, either form of praise increases their sense of wellness. The following *kupuna* reflects how she connects to God by participating in church:

My *Amakua* (God) is Lord Jesus Christ. I lead the chorus in my church, we sing only Hawaiian hymns, and it is really beautiful. And then my husband and I, we

volunteer, we teach the ukulele to the *keiki*'s (children), help out in Sunday school. There are many Hawaiians that live this way. (24-49-6)

There are Hawaiians who practice their faith in other ways, such as finding spiritual fulfillment on the water, described in the story told by one of the participants.

His father modeled his Christian tradition and the breath of God's work in nature:

Like my father, he hardly goes to church, and my grandfather was a minister of the church. He was a big bugger, so we had to go to church, no ifs and buts about it. But my father never went to church and one day I asked my mother, 'how come papa never goes to church?' My mother said 'oh he goes to church on the boat.' One morning I asked my father: 'can I go to church with you?' 'You want to go to church?' 'Okay we go.' We went fishing. His church was in the boat, in the water. (23-57-6)

The Hawaiian worldview is directly tied to the omnipresence of God and the belief God has expressed His greatness through the goodness of Hawaiian land and ancestry. The relationship of these focal points creates an enduring interrelatedness to each other, each Hawaiian is bound by the internal elements of Godliness: meeting one's potential (mastery), having compassion (*aloha*), and connecting to each other (belonging). Therefore, these elements act as the *ama* (balancing arm) of the outrigger canoe in order for Hawaiians to keep balanced. Theoretically, in the absence of those elements, achieving balance is very difficult and tedious but possible if Hawaiians can possess the abilities to connect to other support systems.

In summary, for the *kūpuna*, connections define a measure of physical proximity, the need to be of one voice, the emotional attachment to those that live close or far away, and the fortitude of being Hawaiian. These factors are most evident during a time of cultural trauma. The *kūpuna* described feeling linked to the trauma of previous generations. They account for societal and cultural woes on conditions that work against

the grain of Hawaiian traditions. These sociocultural conditions remind them of their perceived losses and that motivates them to work harder in keeping connected.

### Strategies: Using Cultural Recipes

The strategy of using cultural recipes was a theme that emerged from the *kūpuna* after they viewed traditional ways of living in the research film. The film elicited memories that allowed them to describe the significance of various activities to Hawaiian culture. Pointing to the images of Hawaiians chanting, dancing hula, fishing, planting, etc, the *kūpuna* explained that ancient protocols exist behind each of those activities. These protocols constitute the means that they use to perpetuate their culture, leading to the theme of cultural recipes. The *kūpuna* believe that traditional activities are important in order to return to a life that is less complicated and less stressful and is a step toward improving wellness.

He (referring to the grandfather in the research film) left the boy up there for him to learn for himself what needed to be done. By dwelling there patiently, he created something, he started to teach and he started to use the animals as part of his class, so he managed to find something to keep him occupied. It was the knowledge and teaching experience in the olden days, when your grandparents tell you stories from their past, so they like tradition passes on to each other. (2-59-1)

What children have today, we never had, stress. I think it is very important to get back to stress free activities. (12-73-3)

When they compared those times to present day living, the *kūpuna* emphasized a need to be proactive in order to return to this lifestyle. This means imparting to youth the recipes that are considered necessary to developing the habits specific to Hawaiian culture. The onus belongs to the *kūpuna*. The following quote is an example of memories elicited after watching the interaction between a grandfather and grandson in the research

film. She describes the importance of her role as the family *kupuna* while she admits that as a parent she was only partially successful in transmitting cultural recipes. Her reflections reinforce her beliefs that she needs to be proactive:

Like that little boy (referring to a scene in the film of a grandfather and his grandson planting taro together) only one of my daughters learned how we got food from the mountains. As far as learning the culture, I think some of them (her children) did. My son, he doesn't know how to clean fish, you know? My granddaughter will ask me: "tutu (grandmother) what do you do when the *poi* is lumpy, how do you take out the lumps?" So I have tell her how to do it, that she has to cook over in order to get all that lumps out of the *poi*. "Okay" she says. You see they weren't taught that (her children did not learn so they could not pass down cultural recipes). Everything is go get it (fast) (at convenience markets) and eat, you know? (12-73-3)

As the analysis revealed that the traits and behaviors of being Hawaiian in the past continue to be valued today, the participants perceive these attributes as support for their resiliency.

Three sub themes emerged from the theme of cultural recipes—*learning another way, boosting the culture, we are just caretakers*. These sub themes will describe how cultural recipes are implemented.

### *Learning Another Way*

In their daily living, the *kūpuna* describe how they make it possible to maintain their cultural recipes in the midst of change. The *kūpuna* explained that part of their response to change involves adaptability, or the *in vivo* code “learning another way.”

Learning another way...Opening your mind and seeing what you need. To sustain in order to have something. (22-56-6)

This sub theme surfaced frequently, especially when the participants compared the way they used to live and contrasted those times to present day. For example, the *kūpuna* discussed losing their favorite meeting places because of tourism. In the

following quote, a *kupuna* describes his method of getting to a new meeting place (previously in town) by making several detours:

You never take the Hawaiian out of the Hawaiian. How far do you take it? [the gauge to wanting to keep their traditional activities] [In order for me to find my family and friends] you go in a triangle. Yeah, I went that way, uh? But before I went that way I saw more cars outside here. So, I went over here (laughter with everyone) a triangle huh? I don't have to go to town at all. (17-63-4)

This *kupuna* described a method of adaptation that is built on the premises of cultural recipes. The response of the other *kūpuna* (i.e. their joint laughter) demonstrates a mutual understanding of complex patterned behaviors with very few words. Also, his quote, “You never take the Hawaiian out of the Hawaiian,” demonstrates the confidence that comes from his sense that his capabilities are connected to his Hawaiian ancestry. This reaction validates the notion that an underlying pattern of behavior dictates their group interaction and promotes their ability to learn other ways.

Learning other ways intersects with other adaptive behaviors, such as when Hawaiians need to seek Western healthcare. The data provides an understanding of successful interactions between Hawaiians and Western-trained healthcare providers, as this *kupuna* described his experience with Western medicine:

His physician told him that his blood sugars were too high over a period of four years. Instead of treating him with dietary changes and medications, he was just told to continue paddling. He had been paddling for years, but he had also gained about fifty pounds. There was no follow-up support or diabetes/dietary education. He interpreted his wellness as balanced (*pono*) with the exception of one component; he had limited access to Hawaiian foods. He worked in a steady job that provided for his needs, he mentored younger Hawaiians, he was a coach for an outrigger racing club, he paddled at least five times a week, and he kept close to his family. At the same time, a Hawaiian community elder requested that a group of Hawaiians participate in a Hawaiian health study led by nurse researchers from California. The entire group volunteered for the study because ‘uncle asked’ and because Hawaiian culture required cooperation. As it turned out, the *kupuna* agreed to have a physical examination, nutritional and exercise education, and each week he was phoned to record his food and activities diary.

The *kupuna* said that the nurse researcher was always supportive, she laughed at his jokes, and he felt a connection with her. After one month he lost twenty pounds, he felt better, and he was looking forward to continuing to lose more weight. He said, “I learned that it was more than just paddling.” (23-57-6)

In summary, learning another way is a strategy Hawaiians use to find detours around roadblocks, they need to grab onto innovation that enhances their traditions, and they need to implement culturally prevalent yet modern healthcare strategies when traditional healing fails to cure them.

### *Boosting the Culture*

The theme for boosting the Hawaiian culture is an *in vivo* code that reflects the strategies used to promote Hawaiian culture to younger generations and to outsiders. This was done when the participants referred to their past models, specifically their own grandparents. The participants described that as children, they were taught to take only enough from plants for nourishment and medicine. In the following quote, the *kupuna* describes the reason the film characters’ grandfather left him up in the forest alone. Then she continues to relate that story to strategies the *kūpuna* use to maintain traditional activities while adapting to modern medicine:

That's why (explaining the grandfather’s actions with his grandson) we teach our kids. From birth, we teach the kids the way we were taught. And the only way our culture continues is by educating them. The kids today, they learn one kind of tradition (Western), but they don’t have the same things (as traditional Hawaiian). So now, we try to teach the Hawaiian ways, the medicines yeah? Then they have it both ways. So, you can’t go back, you have to make do (adapt). (3-59-1)

Boosting the culture captures promotional efforts from the community; many sponsored by a non-profit corporation ‘*Aha Punana Leo* and their partnership programs. The goals of ‘*Aha Punana Leo* are to build “healthy communities by becoming confident, secure, and successful individuals” (‘*Aha Punana Leo*. 2007). The *kūpuna* referred to

these programs such as language immersion public schools, *kupuna* programs, ancient *hula*, and side-by-side programs for parents and children as a means to boost their culture:

Kamehameha schools teach Hawaiians things that need to be taught so they can be put to use. That's why they have the *Pūnana Leo* (language immersion) schools. They (families) have the Hawaiian immersion and so they are bringing back the language. All those students who go through those programs, their parents have to go to Hawaiian language classes too. So, when they speak with the students, they can communicate in Hawaiian to each other. Now, if you know Hawaiian, you communicate with other Hawaiians in the community. It is boosting the Hawaiian culture. (4-70-1)

The value of these Hawaiian cultural boosting programs includes the collective efforts of the Hawaiian society. This process describes the advantage of using cultural recipes, because cultural recipes always start within the inherited realm of knowledge, experiences, and the lessons of the past. In other words, when Hawaiians live by the protocols they know best, they are powerfully fortified with strategies to maintain balance.

#### *We are Just Caretakers*

Caretaking is the other theme of using cultural recipes from the core category of keeping balance. The *in vivo* code “We are just caretakers” exemplifies their perceived role in having the absolute dominium of keeping balance in the Hawaiian society.

Caretaking includes cultivating enough for future generations to survive. In a modern world this cultivation is seen as improving their children’s choices through education and restoring wellness in their community:

The love passed on, and the knowledge for this and that might have an impact on their (Hawaiian) wellness. The whole nation depends on those things. So, you can't give up on it. You just need a lot of teaching on how it should be done. You

know a lot of the kids today go for the education, so everybody has the power to show their way physically and mentalship [*sic*], that is wellness. (4-70-1)

The following quote is an example of the perspective that caretaking is entrusted to them by God. For the *kūpuna*, God made everything; Hawaiians must learn from their ancestors about God's gifts and then pass those lessons down to their descendents. They need to do so in order for future generations to survive:

Like with *da kine* in the film, that guy. He wasn't talking about the pigs, he was using that story to explain *our* ways. We take care of the land; we teach each other what we need to know. The grandfather knows he (the main character in the film) wasn't paying attention to where he got his food; all he do is eat, eat, eat. So, the grandfather was only doing what *kūpuna* do, pass down the tradition. The story about the five pigs is just for us to understand what he learned when he tries to be like his grandfather. (1-72-i)

The issue of land use is paramount for the *kūpuna*. Accordingly, the *kūpuna* reacted to the film as they watched the main character relate his experiences of picking medicinal berries, and the scenes of a grandfather and his grandson tending the taro fields. Typically, when the participants told of having the use of Hawaiian land, they discussed concepts of being of the land, a source they need for nourishment and nutrients. As custodians of the land, they are also custodians of an energy source (*mana*) derived from the land. This source of energy has healing qualities; however, in order to be healed, the participant must believe in the strength of the energy source from God to the land:

It just only a handful might know, plus the people that do herbs on earth that God gave us. He planted on earth; it's up for man to know what it is so that they are able to fix themselves. In my case, there is certain medicine that I know works and I have used it. (2-72-1)

The *kūpuna* explained that they as Hawaiians are able to exist anywhere in the world because they possess the "heartbeat" inherited only by them. These beliefs or qualities continually define being Hawaiian even in foreign lands.



As a Hawaiian, we always go to look for things that very similar to home so when we go, we look for the ferns, that looks like the *popoli*, we go to the coconuts, that looks like a coconut tree, we go and seek these we look for *ti* leafs, that are very similar in properties. Once we see that, then we know that there is a movement of our people that went into that area once you know that, then we are able to say that this is our land too. (3-59-1)

### Consequences: Hawaiian Identity

Hawaiian identities result from the tailored transference of ancient Hawaiian values and the process of assimilation or adaptation to Western values. The *kūpuna* felt comfortable with the integration of variances of either identity, i.e., looking less Hawaiian or acting more *haole*. Somehow, Hawaiians are able to compartmentalize the incompatible parts of Hawaiian identity as separate independent pieces. The participants described these parts as non-issues because they maintain their inherited heartbeat prevails, regardless of the quantum blood percentage.

There are some other people that do *da kine* (meaning: there are some outside people who do care for the land). The Hawaiian kids (who grow up on the mainland) do other things. Like the (mainland Hawaiian) people do lots of physical exercises and people do detoxing. So, I feel this way, if you're Hawaiian you be Hawaiian wherever you are. Keeping Hawaiian keeps you balanced. We need to instill that feeling with our young parents; that wherever they may be, they still have something within them (as Hawaiians) that is precious. (3-59-1)

The participants also argue they have the only authority to authenticate Hawaiian identity, which could explain variability to ethnic resemblance and acceptance. The Hawaiian integration of their identity encompasses the meaning of interconnectiveness and belonging.

I feel that way...*haoles* would not understand. They would think we're crazy, but they have not been formed in our culture. (3-59-1)

One *kupuna* discussed how his children attach their maiden Hawaiian name to their married American name in order to maintain their Hawaiian identity.

My children or my grandkids have the Hawaiian lineage. They all say “I got the name K.....” My daughter wants their kids, and my grandkids to know that is important and to continue passing down the Hawaiian name. Because they live so far away, their Hawaiian name keeps them connected. (2-72-1)

Discourses pertaining to the idealized truths of Hawaiian identity reflect the nature of how *kūpuna* process information. They have a historical reference point to their state of wellness and they construct the conceptual image of their culture as a society that functions in the calm center of a philosophical vortex. This phenomenon describes the perception that Hawaiians live by stable behaviors developed from their ancient past and that outsiders (*haoles*) misinterpret these behaviors. The participants explain they do not understand why *haoles* walk around speaking pidgin and use Hawaiian words they do not understand when they were taught to speak perfect English on the mainland. They describe the mimicking behaviors of *haoles* demonstrate ignorance and disrespect for the local people, and they maintain distance from those that do so.

You try to go to town now, you never find one local, and they went somewhere else. The only thing you see now are wantabes, all of the wantabes; wantabe Hawaiian. "Oh I have been here 10 years" that doesn't mean you are Hawaiian. *Haoles* don't know how to be Hawaiian. Anyway, they can learn some things, and that would be good for them, because Hawaiians know how to love life. (23-57-6)

Hawaiian identity also means not adopting the perceived negative aspects of non-Hawaiians. This was very evident when the concept of taking was introduced in the discussion. The groups' negative reaction to possibly identifying themselves as takers was immediate because they sensed that disruptions were a consequence of outsiders taking from the Hawaiians, such as in land or space. The *kūpuna* associate their character of giving as their way of perpetuating their philosophy of keeping balance. They struggled with using the words taking and takers, and take-words that they associate with selfishness.

Capt. Cook came, we gave *aloha*. Western people came, they see all of this *aloha*, so we give it, and they take it. In some ways, you have to compromise. Opening your mind to what everyone (outsiders) are doing (to us), it is more like surviving. Hawaiians don't want to take. (22-56-6)

The *kūpuna* perspectives on identity were made evident by two other ways: when they describe the way the film reflected their ways of being Hawaiian and by observing their emotional reactions to scenes in the film. In essence, they were seeing themselves in the behaviors of Hawaiian in the film. At the same time, they are making commentaries of what Hawaiians are not, i.e., greedy, selfish, and disrespectful. One consequence of following their cultural recipes is strengthening their perceptions of being Hawaiian:

I see one big word "Hawaiian" when I see uncle on the film from Milolii. They come down to bring you food and you give them fish. Just like he said, "You no sell um. You get the fruit, vegetables, we no sell." I take care of you. You take care of me. (22-56-6)

The *kūpuna* fear that if they lose their identity, their culture is lost. Both the context and the condition set purpose for returning to ancestral strategies, and their perceptions of the healthy pre-Cook Hawaiian. Hawaiians are becoming more sophisticated in their critical posture towards their identity. As such, when Hawaiian ideas, creations, and behaviors are modified, they are done so from the Hawaiian cultural perspective, not for consumers, such as tourists and business stakeholders. The following description of the main character was a confirming perception of highly desirable qualities that would otherwise missed by outsiders:

When Papa (the *kupuna* in the film) was relating back to when he was young in a story form, there was a twinkle in his eyes, his color in his cheeks. His whole body seemed to light up. (9-68-2)

When the *kūpuna* reference the pre-Cook Hawaiian, they are describing the ideal Hawaiian prototype. This prototype includes physical features that make it possible to

distinguish their Hawaiian identity. As such, Hawaiian resemblance emerged as a sub-theme to Hawaiian identity.

### *Hawaiian Resemblance*

Essentially, from their perspective, the *kūpuna* reacted to the positive human qualities that include physical qualities of speech, laughter, wisdom, and stature of people that were depicted in the film. These are the qualities that they deemed as resembling their perception of a Hawaiian. The following quote attempts to explain why the *kūpuna* perceive things differently than outsiders, and yet Western influence is palpable:

Papa is the normal look of a Hawaiian, a healthy Hawaiian. He is very big, you know? High stature in the video. He is kind of sitting very tall. When he speaks, he speaks with every quality of an older Hawaiian, slurring many times, laughing you know? *Haoles* would say they see Papa differently. Hawaiians are looking into Hawaiians by seeing him, because we would know that's how Hawaiians look. When the other *kūpuna* said that he had rosy cheeks, you know she is influenced by the *haole*, because that reflects the Western perspective. We don't have rosy cheeks. In the medical Western world, if they look deep into his eyes, they will think that he is very sick. (0-55-i)

Several *kūpuna* reflected on their ability to see simple things that are meaningful and more important than material wealth. The following *kupuna* attempted to explain value in the way Hawaiians once lived:

Teaching the simplicity of what is Hawaiian, how do you say it? The wellness of your soul, if things are right, no matter what you do from thereon all the things will come to you. *Pule no keola pono* means all good things will come to you. (20-66-5)

The *kūpuna* were mindful of health problems caused by modern obesity and acknowledged that most Hawaiians were too big by Western medicine standards. The *kūpuna* reconcile the different perspectives in this way: large-sized Hawaiians are normal and the only difference in unhealthy obesity and normal large-sized Hawaiians is in their

diet. Western foods made them obese and unhealthy, whereas Hawaiian foods could maintain their size but they would be healthy. This was reflected by the following participant:

Papa K had wellness, he was jolly and his expressions meant well. He has a way that he tells the story that is good. But if *haoles* watched him, they wouldn't think he was not well. They would compare him to the Western identification of what is healthy. Well, they would think that he was nothing special (unlike her and other Hawaiians). (4-70-1)

Psychologically, the *kūpuna* describe their need for continuity in belonging. They described an urge to preserve traditional behaviors, values, and symbols. They demonstrated hope that those values could be transmitted to other cultures and ultimately the shared importance of looking Hawaiian would reflect beyond physical features:

I have three of children and one was very westernized. He is finally coming around to his roots. We have to learn by making mistakes and we have to recognize that; but there are new generations that will turn to the influence of the westerners. What's nice is, if you're able to get together and talk things out, to *ho'oponopono*-that means you take it to the source (God). Then the western world can learn from that. All I have to do is meet someone and sit and all they have to do is go on (talk about them). Then I know there's this fear that is your inner self. In order to be happy with yourself, you'll have to work it out with the person that you talk to, in relations, and what have you. It's wellness. You know the white man and the Hawaiian it's all the same. Now, it's important to exercise (this concept), to try to live that which is *pono*, which is light. (21-76-5)

Another *kupuna* described feeling respected because he looked Hawaiian when he is in Hawai'i. Otherwise, when he traveled to the mainland he is confused for other ethnic groups, mostly Mexican. He explained that when he visits the mainland he is treated differently, for him, he is relieved to be home, where looking like a Hawaiian is celebrated (23-57-6).

The participants ultimately relate wellness to a way of knowing, living, and believing. Each theme in this study described a unique set of properties that form the

Hawaiian identity. In the context of a changing landscape, Hawaiians evolve from their ancestral belief system and they continue to be formed from their experiences with outsiders, their lifestyle, and how they feel about diminishing resources. The Hawaiian sociocultural conditions are polarizing forces that are motivating factors to reclaim a Hawaiian identity. The data reveals seemingly simple talk story references to Hawaiian identity, often connected to the film's character. Their stories are very similar, but more importantly, these participants were always responding to the research probe: their meaning of wellness.

#### Theoretical Model

The theoretical model that is derived from the data, and is presented below, is a pictorial explanation of the process behind the apparent intactness of the Hawaiian culture. The theoretical model helps to explain the sociocultural determinants of wellness from the *kūpuna* perspective. The *kūpuna* stated that Hawaiians have always depended on stabilizing mechanisms that are described as cultural recipes in this chapter. The theory maintains that, through enforcement from their culture, the Hawaiian cultural values remain relatively unchanged while permitting growth, particularly through the adoption of outside forces of whatever they think is valuable. However, the participants describe many adaptive changes that were determined by social and cultural trauma. It is this last point, namely that Hawaiians are not completely opposed to change as long as Hawaiians feel empowered to have some control over the changes. By extending to Western influences, a dialogue between Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians over issues of wellness exists. At the same time, the constancy of their culture and the ways in which they have historically dealt with forces of change—ultimately speaking to the predictability of their

behavioral protocols as a people—enable them to develop strategies that would promise greater effectiveness in terms of wellness. Perhaps the greatest utility of stabilizing mechanisms is cultural confidence fortifiers. This finding is particularly important when Hawaiians are persuaded to adopt Western values. The *kūpuna* see their present state of well being as an unsuccessful outcome of racial domination from outsiders. The *kūpuna* expressed dissatisfaction in the conventional wisdom that assimilating to the Western belief system is culturally protective. The outsiders' failure to protect the welfare of the Hawaiian people promotes the Hawaiian's drive to return to self-preservation techniques. The participants find moderate success in returning to Hawaiian traditions as they describe Hawaiian schools, Hawaiian healthcare facilities, and Hawaiian homeland opportunities.

The data repeatedly point to the existence of stabilizing factors within Hawaiian culture that enable this people to assimilate aspects of Westernization while preserving the traditional integrity of the Hawaiian identity. These factors previously referred to as *aloha*, mastery, and belonging, function as a cultural nucleus, in so far as they define the actual identity of the Hawaiian people. The landscape changes influenced the Hawaiian perceptions of outsiders because of the diseases outsiders introduced to the Hawaiians, their conversion to Christianity, and the progressively declining resources. These perceptions are validated by the reality of their vulnerability. The model pertains to the conditions under which Hawaiians are motivated to follow cultural strategies, called recipes. The arrow pointing from the cultural recipes to Hawaiian identity indicate that identity is an outcome of some assimilation and adaptation. According to the participants,

assimilation and adaptation do not change the underlying stable elements of Hawaiian culture. The model is outlined as follows:

- Hawaiian cultural recipes directly impact keeping balance that include elements of *aloha*, mastery, and belonging.
- The impact of changes are mediated or moderated by Hawaiian cultural strategies.
- Hawaiian culture impacts changes of intrusion and uses information to incorporate into their daily life.
- If adaptation occurs, it may bolster cultural values and their expressions
- The process developed centuries ago that continues to persist in Hawaiian culture has not been previously described.
- Using cultural recipes ensures the continuation of Hawaiian identity
- The continuation of Hawaiian identity keeps the Hawaiian culture balanced

The participants felt confident in representing their community's beliefs that keeping balance is a crucial part of their survival. The *kūpuna* believe that persistent values provide hope that one day they will return to their ancestral state.



### The Contemporary Hawaiian Perception of Wellness-Process Model

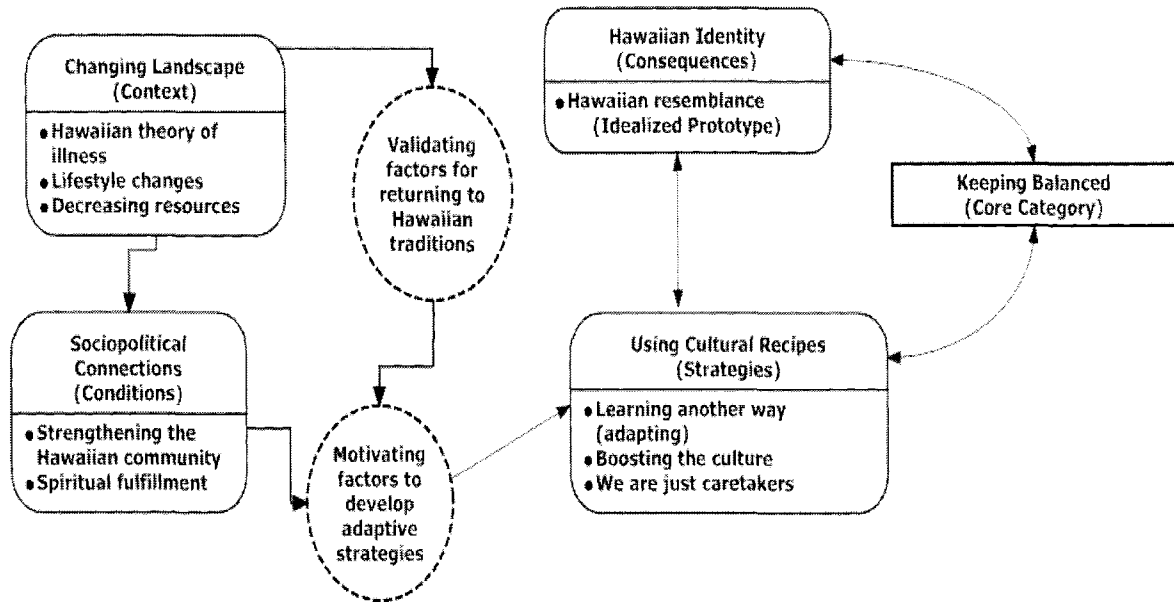


Figure 3. The Contemporary Hawaiian Perception of Wellness (Odell, 2008).

## CHAPTER FIVE-DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Hawaiians have higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy than almost all other ethnic groups in the United States. Health studies have found several possible reasons, for instance, there is a correlation with Hawaiian blood quantum (HBQ) and disease; increased HBQ significantly increases health risk factors. The studies that include cultural health have promoted many pro-active, well-supported health programs in Hawai'i (Meng, 1997; Grandinetti, 2002). There is a dearth of literature on Hawaiian-specific perspectives into the Hawaiian culture, partly because Native Hawaiian health research is difficult to conduct because of past research abuses and many studies combine other ethnic groups (Fong, 2003).

The methodology in this study was developed to be copasetic to the Hawaiian culture, and, by using a trusted facilitator, the potential for distrust in the researcher was minimized. The findings represent data from Hawaiian elders who had at least 50% HBQ, most of them lived in a community that have rigid requirements for proving their ancestry, rather than relying on self-reports. These demographics assured Hawaiian specific representation. The participants were encouraged to “talk story” after they viewed a video, talk story is a common or preferred manner of Hawaiian communication. Finally, rather than limit the focus to mental health, physical health, and emotional

health, this study focused on the perception of wellness, which broaden the responses to childhood memories, cultural values, and traditions. As such, a core category for Native Hawaiian wellness emerged as “keeping balance.” The researcher’s use of interpretative analysis in grounded theory explored relationships and conditions that perpetuate the Hawaiian identity. This type of analysis was possible because of a long, intimate relationship between the researcher and the Native Hawaiian community. Thereby, the researcher was in good position to gauge the Western and Hawaiian influences on the participants. The differences between two worldviews have been widely discussed in the literature, often to the depreciation of the Hawaiian worldview. Recently, however, Hawaiian researchers have begun to develop strength-based theories on Hawaiian culture that present a more emic perspective (Kana’iaupuni, 2004; Kanahale, 1992). These theories are formed in the subtext that Hawaiian culture is meaningful.

### Keeping Balance (*Pono*)

Interviews with Hawaiian elders (*kūpuna*) disclosed issues they experienced during their lifetime. Remarkably, the literature provides little insight as to the processes Hawaiians use to maintain their culture intact and this study found explanations for Hawaiian cultural resiliency.

Kana’iaupuni (2004), in a recently published article in the *Educational Researcher*, argues that the construction of knowledge in indigenous populations can be evaluated based on cultural resiliency in spite of outsider influence. In many ways, his findings are consistent with this study, as the *kūpuna* revealed strengths that have been historically perceived as weaknesses by Westerners. The research participants were

forthcoming about their belief that Hawaiian culture is preferred. Thus, the interpretation of Western culture is often tempered by their ethnocentricity. Another researcher, Chun (2006), chose the concept of *pono* to explain Hawaiian cultural strengths. He found that, in the context of Americanizing Hawai'i, Hawaiians consistently portray their idealized worldviews to other cultures. Furthermore, Chun broke down Hawaiian values into conceptual elements of *pono*: belonging, mastery, observation, listening, reflection, questioning, independence, and generosity. Each conceptual element is well described as ancient ways of thinking that need to be restored or maintained in contemporary Hawaiian society. The data in this study reflected some of Chun's concepts, especially the term *pono*. Unlike Chun, however, the data in this study reflected a narrower definition of *pono*, mainly, "to keep balance," whereas Chun's work describes *pono* as much more than balance. According to Chun, in any reference to values of quality, the word *pono* can be employed.

In George S. Kanahale's (1992) book, *Kū Kanaka, Stand Tall: A Search for Hawaiian Values*, he writes that Hawaiians play a critical role in determining their values; that part of their task is to carefully uncover their traditions and reevaluate their "meaning and efficacy on the basis of their own merits and by comparisons with other primal cultures" (p. 22). This is in striking contrast to Western philosophies that emphasize an outsider's perspective of the meaning of culture.

These articles offer an assessment of some significant dynamics, otherwise presented as strengths, that the Hawaiian community considers as they try to improve their state of being. Representations from the *kūpuna* are in agreement with the strengths-based assessment. They contend that collective cultural values enable Hawaiians to use

their cultural recipes to resolve the problems within the Hawaiian community. By taking the constructivist position, a theoretical perspective seeks to answer how Hawaiians accomplish their goals, especially when the general outsiders' consensus is that Hawaiians fail often.

*The Context and Conditions of Keeping Balance: Aloha, Mastery, and Belonging*

The data was analyzed in the context that sociocultural changes are connected in some fundamental way to the manner in which Hawaiians think, behave, and believe. In Noyes (2003) book, *Then There Were None*, the author focused on the dramatic determinants that have changed the Hawaiian landscape since Cook's arrival. It is written in short, almost poetic passages linked to historical Hawaiian pictures. The effect is emotional as she chronicles the sentinel events that contributed to the decline of pureblooded Hawaiians from an emic perspective:

The world knows of our green mountains and blue seas. The world knows of swaying *hula* dancers and of Pearl Harbor. The world knows of pineapples, mai tais, Kona coffee, and macadamia nuts. The world knows of coco palms and white sand beaches, of flower *leis* and brightly colored *mu'mu'us*. But the world does not know of us. We are Hawaiian. (Noyes, 2003, p. 3)

The *kūpuna* described their ties to an inclusive, inherited spirit and they exhibited similar behaviors at the focus group gatherings; both attributes, though described in Noyes book, are not presented alongside the inherent cultural recipes that shed light on Hawaiian cultural resiliency.

Broader theoretical postulates contribute to the explanation of Hawaiian cultural behavior as a determinant of social identity. For example, Marshall (2002) proposes that

ritualistic practices develop the concept of belonging. Marshall studied the behaviors and beliefs of religious converts and concluded that ritualism is foundational to the formation of members' sense of belonging. Thus, beliefs and behaviors perpetuate once a group has established membership. Drawing on social identity theory, self-esteem is enhanced when the constructed social identity is associated with an intergroup discrimination (Vignoles, 2007). Mason (2000) explains that the commitment of belonging to a community will produce the sense of duty in caring for each person of that community. He distinguishes two types of community concepts--ordinary and moralized. Both communities share values and live in a common way and recognize each other as members, the moralized concept includes solidarity and mutual concerns. Mason advocates for improved public policy by incorporating cultural norms of community; that by doing so, widespread sense of belonging develops.

The participants contend they live according to what Mason calls an ordinary and a moralized community; this would explain the *kūpuna* duty to care for each other and the elements in which they live. The data reflected the *kūpuna* solidarity and mutual concern when they discussed self-determination efforts. In this study, the desire for self-determination was transparent, and made a substantial impact on the *kūpuna* efforts to improve on available health services, education, and land resources.

The desire to restore self-determination suggests that Hawaiians sense their subjectivity to Western influence. This has collectively increased their powerlessness to control ecological changes. Empowerment in this study is reflected within the conditions of Hawaiian wellness and the restorative value of identity power. R. J. Rummel (1975, chap. 19, para. 4) writes:

Turning to human beings, identitive power is the basic, the superordinate, upward striving to completion labeled variously by psychologists as the drive to power, to self-assertion, to self-esteem, to self-affirmation, to identity. It is that which gives underlying direction to our activities, interests, and goals.

The dominant posture conquerors impose on the conquered causes a dynamic process of marginalization that naturally progresses to asserting the need for self-determination. In this study, the short history of outside Western domination confirms the conditions suggested by Rummel. American Natives have a similar history and their progress towards self-reliance is a testament to their self-determining accomplishments. For American Natives and Hawaiians, the parallels are striking as their stories share the same type of emotional trauma. The following quote demonstrates the perception that persistent cultural values prevail.

We shared our food and our land and gave with open hearts. We wanted peace and love and hope, but all were torn apart. All this was taken because we did not know what the white man had in store. They killed our people and raped our lands and the buffalo roam no more. But those of us who still remain hold our heads up high, and the spirits of the elders flow through us as if they never died. (Manasco, 2008)

*Cultural Strategies of Keeping Balance: Aloha, Mastery, and Belonging*

This study provides insight to the processes Hawaiians use to continue their cultural traditions. According to Goodenough (1981), cultural traditions are learned by individuals as they interact with others in their community. People in these groups are mutually interdependent and they rely on cultural recipes to maintain and modify cultural traditions. Cultural recipes are purposeful activities that provide the necessary standards for transmission of cultural values across generations. The general anthropological agreement on culture and its use in this study is consistent with Goodenough: "Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted

mainly by...distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts” (Kluckhohn & Lueders, as cited in Hofstede, 2001, p. 9). The finding that emerged from this study about Hawaiian cultural recipes was that the cultural processes used today among Hawaiians are due to the transmission of cultural values of ancient Hawaiians.

There are well-developed social theories that attempt to explain cultural resiliency that contribute to a better understanding of common or ordinary behaviors found in many indigenous societies within the context and conditions of colonization. One controversial theory is out of the work of Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Typology.

Hofstede (2001) explored values of social culture and those differences between nations, especially as they pertain to business culture. He theorizes that societal norms cannot be understood outside of the historical context, arguing that values of those societal norms do not change unless the forces of change are exceptionally violent. His model illustrates the stabilizing constructs of cultures. Hofstede’s framework has culture in its center with five dimensions surrounding the center:

- Power distance-predicts the roles between gender and superiors
- Uncertainty avoidance-predicts a society’s tolerance of uncertainty
- Achievement versus nurturing-predicts a society’s ambition
- Long-term versus short-term orientation-predicts orientation to the future
- Individualism versus collectivism-predicts the changeability of society

McSweeney (2003) argues that Geert Hofstede’s assumptions lack evidence, are too generalized, and misleading. McSweeney objects to the sweeping generalities Hofstede makes on nationalities, especially when Hofstede’s (2001) analysis is based on a



small questionnaire. Hofstede claims to make certain behavior predictions based on a “national norm,” for corporations-such as IBM. For Hawaiians, Hofstede’s (2001) model is consistent to the participants’ perceptions, possibly, according to McSweeney, a pure stroke of luck that his theory and model apply so closely to the culturally persistent behaviors exhibited in this research. The distinguishing elements in Hawaiian identity are the Hawaiian’s will to adapt and assimilate as they value ancient beliefs and behaviors. Therefore, following cultural recipes leads to an *evolved* Hawaiian culture.

#### *Consequences: Hawaiian Resemblance*

Grounded theory methods produced a model of identity management through selectivity or modification directed by Hawaiian culture. According to McMullin (2005), the image of the idealized pre-Cook Hawaiian serves as a model for contemporary Hawaiians. In her effort to understand the Native Hawaiian meaning of health, McMullin (McMullin, 2005) conducted participant observation and semi-structured interviews on the islands of Maui and Hawai’i. She found the concept of the Healthy Ancestor and the manner in which the Healthy Ancestor lived, i.e. easy access to the ocean and land was a prominent theme among her participants. The Healthy Ancestor concept has become part of health campaign in Hawai’i because it reflects an image that is positive and hopeful. Consequently, the *kūpuna* feel their state of wellness is jeopardized because of ongoing encroachment upon their resources, they increasingly appreciate the values of their ancestors and they feel a need to return to traditional activities.

The current political movement for self-determination is, in part, activated because of the influence of the *kūpuna*. As a result, younger generations are recipients of

newly developed community programs and Hawaiian language immersion schools. The participants spoke about future changes generated because of Hawaiian community activism. They also believe that the State's newly elected officials are willing to make more culturally specific policy changes. These culturally appropriate actions of non-Hawaiians, who are large stakeholders in the Hawaiian landscape, demonstrate, at the very minimum, an appreciation for the resiliency and strength of the Hawaiian culture. In addition, the *kūpuna* perceive reallocation of resources for Hawaiian cultural activities as a sign that progress towards Hawaiian wellness will prevail, and that the resources necessary to maintain identity are obtainable. The hope is rooted in the sense that the dominant culture is responding to Hawaiian cultural needs.

The concept of identity includes the way Hawaiians aspire to define themselves. These aspirations are founded on traditional values of ancient Hawaiian societies. Consequently, Hawaiians put effort into meeting their aspirations, exhibiting unique behaviors that can be identified as particular to the Hawaiian culture; these values are shared with other exclusive cultures (Burke, P., 1980).

## CHAPTER SIX-CRITIQUE AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes a critique of the study and discusses implications for practice, social and political challenges, and guidance for future studies.

### Critique of the Study

#### *Strengths of the study*

This study is informative for the planning of health prevention strategies not currently utilized by Western medicine. The methodology of using a culturally relevant film to elicit the perspectives of the *kūpuna* has apparently not been done before. This approach contributed to their ability to articulate their feelings, understanding, and knowledge. The data demonstrates the multi-dimensional concepts that formed their definition of balance.

The findings provided insight to the processes Hawaiians use in order to keep balance. The model reflects the context and conditions the Hawaiian elders reason to be validating and motivating factors to use ancient strategies in order to form or re-form the Hawaiian identity. The *kūpuna* told stories that were passed down from their grandparents, they reflected on their childhoods, and they compared their current state of

wellness to their proximity to their Hawaiian identity. This study supports recent publications calling for more research on the strength-based processes the Hawaiian culture maintains.

### *Limitations of the study*

The study involves several limitations: First, the data are from participants from one small location of Hawai'i. This limitation was somewhat mitigated by the differing locations where the *kūpuna* were reared and by the amount of time they spent elsewhere as adults. Hawaiian communities have different characteristics, especially from island to island. The sample was also limited to *kūpuna* with an average age of 65 years old and does not represent younger generations who have different experiences and perspectives.

Analysis was done throughout the study, and the research continued until there was a point of data saturation. Data saturation occurred when the focus groups and the researcher's observations no longer elicited new information.

The ongoing and perplexing challenges to improve Hawaiian health outcomes motivate exploration into the phenomena of the Hawaiian culture. The literature review provides essentially the perspectives from two views: the Hawaiian and the Western. Most of the literature does not bridge both worldviews and this may explain the continuing decline in Hawaiian health. The Western medicine model provides little time and few resources to accommodate culturally specific needs. This problem of the Native Hawaiian population is common to other underserved cultures worldwide. Furthermore, the lessons learned from smaller cultures may apply to other populations.

In future studies, sampling multigenerational groups from different islands would be beneficial. Also, there are large numbers of Hawaiians living on the mainland and

studies comparing both groups would be beneficial. Because the Hawaiian language differs from the language of the researcher and is rich in meaning with few words, a Hawaiian expert reviewed the researcher's understanding of the data.

### Implications for Practice

In this study, the core category of keeping balance is analogous to the medical term homeostasis. It is reasonable to consider homeostasis as more than a physical mechanism regulated by an endocrine system. Rather, cultural homeostasis is probably pivotal to wellness in all cultures.

### *Personal practice changes*

Because this study provided insight to the stable cultural values of Hawaiians that keep or aid in maintaining the Hawaiian identity, we realized we could apply the same model to our patients in California. This realization was enlightening, as the majority of our patients are Caucasian and American and would not typically be considered culturally specific. By asserting that all people claim a definitive culture, our goal is to establish the amount of influence those values have on current behaviors. For instance, a patient may have been reared as an Irish Catholic but may no longer be Catholic, yet we find the values and behaviors of an Irish Catholic persist. By acknowledging these behaviors, our patients can predict and understand why they struggle with unhealthy outcomes. One patient came to see me for depression and high blood pressure. She had been unhappy with her weight and work environment-connecting the two problems with her obesity. After obtaining a full family cultural history, it was clear that her family rated self-sacrifice and hard work very high and self-pity very low. When the patient felt that she

was overworked, she would eat high calorie foods for silent self-gratification. When she realized that she was accommodating a long-held value system developed by her family, she was able to contextualize her behaviors.

### *Specific Hawaiian needs*

The practical problems the *kūpuna* described are specific to available healthcare resources and they were eager to participate in this study in the hopes that they would increase broader awareness of others. The participants felt that healthcare services were not adequate because of low reimbursement rates dictated by the state. Physicians in Hawai'i concur: In 2006, Dr. Raymond Itagaki, Vice Chief of Staff at Queen's Hospital in Oahu, represented many physicians in a letter written to the Hawaii's congressional delegation. In his letter, he explains the growing physician exodus from Hawaii is a consequence of the reducing Medicare rate reimbursement policy. He describes federal reimbursement policy as nondiscriminatory, and proposed to the delegation to remove the inequitable formulary that dictates state reimbursement. In summary, the Hawai'i Medicare reimbursement rates are lower than other states, yet Hawaii's cost of living is higher (Itagaki, 2006).

### *Advanced practice nurses*

The *kūpuna* understood the role of a nurse practitioner and they felt that a nurse practitioner would be more apt to understand their beliefs in traditional medicine. These concerns highlighted the need for integration of both models. As with all advanced practice nurses, nurse practitioners have a perspective that focuses on holistic care; this

includes practicing Western medicine in the context of their client's psychological and social life.

A recommendation to formulate a community partnership with medical and nursing schools inside and outside the state of Hawai'i could reinforce their healthcare programs until existing reimbursement policy changes. The challenge in achieving this exists in funding agencies. Nurse researchers have the training and skills to plan community-based funding at the national and state levels as well ensuring funding continuity through evaluation programs. As clinicians, nurse practitioners are collaborators with physicians, nurses, other allied health professionals, and clinical faculty. This places the nurse practitioner as a key educator and community liaison for educational programs.

### Social and Political Challenges

Knowledge and practice affect the wellness of culturally distinctive groups. Hawaiians are unique in American cultures: They were conquered and parts of their culture became the domain of rich stakeholders, especially in agriculture and tourism. Scientists have found that for about two thousand years, Hawaiian and other Polynesian cultures were remarkably fairly intact. The narratives of the *kūpuna* reflected their anxiety and disappointment in finding providers; they reflected that this was a consequence of colonization and progressive marginalization. These beliefs have led the *kūpuna* to increase their efforts towards self-reliance and self-determinacy. The implications for this study should lead to greater collaboration among community leaders and healthcare sponsorships. Further studies should include community participatory research. Hospitals, universities, and governmental agencies need to establish better

partnerships with mainland institutions in order to provide educational opportunities to local Hawaiian groups that would affect improved healthcare accessibility. Further research should also increase public awareness of the Hawaiian's plight to strive towards keeping balance and independence.

### Research Implications

Previous research and theoretical perspectives guide the conceptual framework on social and strength-based theories. In spite of the effects of assimilation, Hawaiians continue to preserve the traditional integrity of their Hawaiian identity. Furthermore, this study demonstrated that the perspectives of wellness are quite different than the Western perspectives. Gaining a better understanding of the Hawaiian attitudes towards Western medicine has analytic significance. Mainly, this is because Western medicine is an exemplar of advance medical technology and expertise. This gap acknowledges cultural variables that are not considered in Western health care delivery. In addition, since Hawaiians share so many of the same problems with other minority groups, especially Native Americans, issues of cultural translation have major implications for further inquiry and program development.

This study was developed on the premise that a novel method of communication was needed in order to infiltrate the translation and entrée barrier. The film that was used to stimulate the focus group discussions was culturally correct in many ways. The film had familiar characters and activities, the participants were immediately engaged by the talk story of one of the elders, and the film elicited fond and meaningful memories. The subsequent discussion was done in an informal talk story format, another familiar and comfortable form of communication. Finally, there was close attention paid to Hawaiian



cultural protocols in choosing the scenes in the film and in the behaviors of the researcher. The method has implications for developing research instruments, intervention studies, and evaluation research.

### Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to represent the essence of the Hawaiian culture that is not well articulated in the literature. The study reached beyond absolute terms such as illness, mental, physical and spiritual well being. Instead, using a very general term “wellness,” the participants were able to define their own perceptions of well being. Ultimately, wellness is the process of keeping balanced, and keeping balanced incorporates concepts of *aloha*, mastery, and belonging. According to Hawaiians, these concepts are inherent from God and passed down through Hawaiian genealogy. The findings reveal that traditional activities such as fishing, pounding poi, paddling, and talk story are desirable ways Hawaiians can experience their sense of *aloha*, mastery, and belonging. Not revealed in the literature was the Hawaiian’s resistance to commit fully to an ancient/traditional Hawaiian culture model; instead, they clearly wanted to have the choice to embrace elements of modernization. Additionally, they want to enjoy the same opportunities afforded other Americans while they distinguish themselves as a separate People. The following poem exemplifies the Hawaiian essence described:

*Oli Ho-oikaika*/Prayer for Strength

*E iho ana a luna*

*E pi'i ana o lalo*

*E hui ana na moku*

*E ku ana ka paia*

That which is above, be brought down.

That which is below, shall be lifted up.

The islands shall be united.

The walls shall stand upright!

(Anonymous. Poetry Chaikhana, Sacred Poetry from Around the World. Retrieved

December 5, 2008, from [\[chaikhana.com/H/HawaiianAnon/OliHooikaika.htm\]\(http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/H/HawaiianAnon/OliHooikaika.htm\)\)](http://www.poetry-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

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PRODUCTIONS.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Focus Group Question

## Focus Group Questions

### Introduction Script:

Thank you for allowing me to get to know you, I really appreciate your time and contribution. How many times does this group meet? Have you ever participated in research before?

You were selected because you are respected elders of the Hawaiian community. You have the advantage of living through several periods of changes that have affected your environment, your activities, and your culture. First, this is a research project and there are no right or wrong answers. Because we will be videotaping, please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from others in this group. Second, because I value what you say, please have only one person talk at a time. If more than one person talks at one time, the videotape will be garbled and I will miss some of your comments.

1. Are you all from the Kona region?

Probe: Do you know Papa K from Hilo?

Probe: How many of you have heard this story before?

2. Why do you think Papa K decided to tell this particular story?

3. What does wellness mean to you?

Probe: Where does that meaning come from?

Probe: Where does meaning come from . . . your ancestors?

Probe: Where does meaning come from . . . practicing Hawaiian traditions?

Probe: Where does meaning come from . . . your family?

4. What influences your perception of wellness?



Probe: Are there connections between honoring your traditions and maintaining wellness?

Probe: Do you see value in passing down your traditions and rituals to future generations?

5. Is there one statement that describes your meaning of Hawaiian wellness that has not been discussed today?
6. Of all of the meanings discussed, which one is most important to you?
7. After the researcher summarizes the discussion: How well does this summary capture what was said here?

Appendix B

Consent Form

## Consent Form

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE OF WELLNESS THROUGH THE VOICES OF  
THE *KŪPUNA*

*Anne P. Odell* is a doctoral student in School of Nursing at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research project she is conducting for the purpose of exploring the perception of wellness in Hawaiians.

You have been chosen because you identify yourself as a Hawaiian *kūpuna* and you have lived through several generations of changes in your community. As a *kūpuna*, your status in the Hawaiian community is respected and honored for your wisdom. The project will involve participating in a focus group that is comprised of other members in your age group. The focus group discussion will be videotaped and will last about 60 minutes and will include some questions about you, such as your age, and town of residence. The interview process will start with an introduction to the study and viewing a film on Hawaiian traditions and activities. Participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose not to answer any question and/or quit at any time. Following the film, interview questions will be poised to stimulate a discussion on your Hawaiian traditions, values, and beliefs. Should you choose to quit, no one will be upset with you and your information will be destroyed right away. If you decide to quit, nothing will change about your status in the community.

Following the interviews, the videotapes will be transcribed, reviewed, and edited by the researcher and an expert in the Hawaiian language and culture. At the completion of the project, the videotapes will be either destroyed or upon your request, donated to an archival repository. Because of the need to create and make available to scholars and the

general public a reliable historical document, it is important that your name appear as the interviewee on the transcript. This may potentially lead to a loss of privacy through the use of your name in any future publication. If you wish, you can use only your first name, nickname, or “Anonymous” as a substitution for your name.

There may be a risk that participating in the interviews may make you feel tired. Sometimes people feel anxious or sad when talking or reflecting on the things you will be asked about. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings, you will be referred to the local Mental Health Hotline. Remember, you can stop the interview at any time you feel tired or for any other reason.

The benefit to participating will be in knowing that you helped nurses, other healthcare providers, and medical researchers. You will also benefit your community by informing healthcare providers how to better serve Native Hawaiians healthcare needs. At the completion of the interview, authentic Hawaiian foods will be offered in a buffet format. A new DVD of one of the films you watched will be given as my gift to you for your participation. At no time, will I take your gift back if you decide to quit before the discussion is over.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Anne P. Odell at 626-303-2366 or 626-841-8328 or my advisor, Patricia Roth, PhD at the University of San Diego at 619-280-4800.

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix C**

**Media Release Form**

## Media Release Form

By signing below I, Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ (*client name*)  
 authorize *Anne P. Odell*, a *doctoral student* in School of Nursing at the University of San  
 Diego to videotaped, audio-tape, and transcribe myself at a Community Center in Kailua-  
 Kona, Hawaii.

I understand the videotapes, audio-tapes, and transcriptions will be used for informational  
 and instructional purposes only and will not be used to generate a profit or for any other  
 commercial purposes. I understand the photos may be used throughout the country by  
 other local, state and federal agencies for informational and instructional purposes. I  
 have not been compensated nor will I seek compensation for the videotapes, audio-tapes,  
 and transcriptions. I release *Anne P. Odell*, a *doctoral student* in School of Nursing at the  
 University of San Diego from responsibility should a third party violate the terms of this  
 release.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Anne P. Odell, PhD(c)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Appendix D**

**Film Storyline**



### Film Storyline

The 13-minute film starts with a scene of a Hawaiian pounding on the drums, chanting, and a Hawaiian dancing *hula* to the chant.

The second scene is of *talk story* with Papa K. He tells a story of when he was younger (age is not clear) when his grandfather decided that his grandson was only concerned with eating, going to school, and sleeping. The grandfather decides it is time for his grandson to learn the lessons from the land and his family spirits (*mana*). He takes his grandson up to his family's sacred ground and leaves him there for three weeks. In that time, the grandson (Papa K) learns to survive by learning the values of animals, plants, and most important the values of knowing himself.

The next scenes are of *kūpuna* speaking of *pono*, playing the ukulele and singing an old song, and teaching a grandson the art of taro growing, fishing, and cooking. Clips of other Hawaiian activities are included (paddling and working with family).

Appendix E

Hawaiian Wellness Research Demographic Questionnaire

## Hawaiian Wellness Research Demographic Questionnaire

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ (you may use only your first name  
or write *anonymous*)

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ (circle) Male / Female

Place (city or town) where you are from \_\_\_\_\_

How long did you live there? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever live outside of Hawai'i State \_\_\_\_ if yes,

Where did you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

How long did you live there? \_\_\_\_\_

Place where you now live \_\_\_\_\_

Do you identify yourself as a Hawaiian? \_\_\_\_\_ if yes,

What percentage of Hawaiian (you can estimate) \_\_\_\_\_

Did you live near your 'ohana? \_\_\_\_\_

Did your grandparents stay close to you and your family? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and considerations in filling out this form.

Appendix F

Hawaiian Language Glossary

## Hawaiian Language Glossary

The following glossary was retrieved from the database Ulukau, Hawaiian Electronic Library. Available online: [www.olelo.hawaii.edu](http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu).

### Hawaiian Word      English Translation

Note: The Hawaiian language does not use the English “s” for the plural form. The University of Hawai‘i allows for an exception in writing in English with Hawaiian (‘s) (s) in the possessive form. Because non-Hawaiian and Hawaiian writers commonly use the plural form “Hawaiians,” this paper will sparingly employ the “s” when ease of readability is at stake.

‘a’ina	Land, earth
ali’i	Chief, chiefess, officer, ruler, monarch
Aloha	Love, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace,
Haole	Caucasian; formerly, any foreigner
He’eia	Place name
Huli	To change, as an opinion or manner of living
Kahuna	Expert in any profession (whether male or female)
Kama	To bind, tie, wrap
Kane/ kāne	Man, husband; men
Kanaka Maoli	Indigenous Hawaiian
Kumulipo	Origin, genesis, source of life
Kupuna/ kūpuna	Elder/elders or grandparents

Lewa	Heavens (references of distances between the heavens)
Lokahi/lōkahi	Balance; to be of one mind; to be in union or unison
Luna	Above, over, up; on, in, to, into
Mana	Divine power, mana, miraculous power
Nānā	To look at, observe
‘ohana	Family
olelo pa’i ‘ai/Pidgin	Pidgin English, pidgin Hawaiian. Lit., hard-taro speech
Papa	To be a great many (depending on context and associated words)
Papa Ola	Health Board
Pono	Goodness, uprightness, morality, moral qualities
Pule Waialele	Prayer (of the) waterfall
Wahini	Female