

Sovereign Embodiment: Native Hawaiians and Expressions of Diasporic Kuleana

KĒHAULANI VAUGHN

This article highlights the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Recognition between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, ratified in 1992. Engaging in sociopolitical forms of recognition, such as treaty making, which acknowledge other Indigenous people and the traditional tribal territories on which they reside, diasporic Native Hawaiians living in California can also be understood as embodying a praxis of kuleana. Maintaining reciprocal relationships with land and people is an essential quality of being Indigenous. However, as displacement is a specific modality of settler colonialism, around 50 percent of Native Hawaiians now live outside of their homeland, with the largest populations of the displaced residing in California. This work reveals that trans-Indigenous recognitions actively regenerate social and political futures for Indigenous communities and are thus invaluable in combatting settler colonial institutions that continue to displace both California Indians and Native Hawaiians from their own lands and resources.

CORRESPONDENCE MAY BE SENT TO:

Kēhaulani Vaughn

Pacific Island Studies Initiative, University of Utah

201 President's Circle, Park Building Room 204

Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

Email: kehaulani.vaughn@utah.edu

Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being, Vol. 11, No. 1

Copyright © 2019 by Kamehameha Schools



In April of 1992, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, entered into treaty negotiations on the campus of the University of California–Irvine. Gathering in the traditional territory of the Acjachemen¹ and the Tongva, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i met with several Native nations to negotiate and sign treaties of mutual recognition. Carolyn Kualī‘i, a Native Hawaiian undergraduate student at the University of California–Irvine, organized the event, which included cultural exchanges of song, dance, and gifts (Margolin, 1992). Kualī‘i was born and raised in Southern California and is a citizen of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. She was one of the primary planners of the treaty with the Acjachemen.² During this period, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i was engaged in diplomatic relations with many Native nations, domestically and internationally, in an effort to strengthen Native Hawaiian self-governance.³

The ratification of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Recognition between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Acjachemen is a central consideration of this article. This treaty is an example of a nation-to-nation relationship outside of colonial governance and provides an alternative to federal recognition policies and structures. The treaty not only affirmed self-determination practices for the two Native nations, but also provided an example for Native Hawaiians living in California of a process that affirmed the lāhui at home. Hawaiians living in the diaspora who were involved in the treaty process embodied Native Hawaiian philosophies of kuleana and ‘āina, what I call sovereign embodiment. They engaged in kuleana as praxis: acknowledging both the land and their hosts.⁴ These understandings include working and assisting with other genealogical caretakers of lands where Hawaiians now reside and possibly will be buried. In doing so, trans-Indigenous recognitions, as exemplified in the treaty analyzed in this paper,

are invaluable both in combating settler colonialism and in actively regenerating social and political futures for Indigenous communities.⁵ In the following paper I provide analysis of the treaty between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Acjachemen, and through this example I argue that resistance to settler colonialism is a responsibility for both Kanaka ‘Ōiwi in Hawai‘i, as well as those in the diaspora.

Currently, close to half of the Native Hawaiian population resides outside of Hawai‘i (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2013). California is home to the largest population of Native Hawaiians living outside of their homeland (Lepule & Kwoh, 2014). Those who have been displaced are often seen as “no longer Native,” due to the centrality of ‘āina, or land, to the identity of Native Hawaiians and other Indigenous communities.⁶ Much of the scholarship within Hawaiian studies has yet to include populations in the diaspora. This gap within the field reproduces ideas of authenticity that contribute to a logic of Native dismemberment. Although ‘āina is of central importance in Hawaiian epistemology, I argue that one’s indigeneity and kuleana are embodied off island.

Indigeneity encompasses creation stories and details existences from specific places. It exemplifies genealogical responsibilities to land and resources for the next generations. For Native Hawaiians, these responsibilities represent specific kuleana tied to place and family. Taking these central notions of Indigeneity into consideration, including the Hawaiian concept of kuleana, how might Native/Indigenous people who are diasporic—particularly Native Hawaiians—become more integral in our Native nations while situating their stories within Hawaiian and Native/Indigenous studies?⁷ Additionally, how might Native Hawaiians living outside Hawai‘i

fulfill a specific kuleana that acknowledges their family and responsibilities to the greater lāhui? Furthermore, how are these actions a continuance of Native Hawaiian protocol and epistemologies that center ‘āina and kuleana and further demonstrate a sovereign embodiment? Following the work of Native Hawaiian scholar Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, which charted the values that frame Hawaiian studies, this article humbly accounts for and integrates the growing Native Hawaiian community that lives within the diaspora into Hawaiian studies and the active call for ea.⁸

One of the central questions within the discipline of Hawaiian studies, and for scholars of Hawaiian studies, is: Who are Kanaka Maoli? As Native Hawaiian scholar Jonathan Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio stated, “‘O ia ka nīnau maoli (That is the real question). Who the hell are we? If our own activism and scholarship do not continually seek the answers to that question, then it is activism and scholarship for someone else” (as cited in Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2016, p. 6). As Osorio points out, defining who we are and expanding our previous notions of ourselves should be central to research inquiries within Hawaiian studies. Furthermore, how do we understand and define the community in light of the dynamic shifts and changes in Hawai‘i and the diaspora? Defining identity through the logics of authenticity—which often is restricted to Native Hawaiians living *in* Hawai‘i—produces a diminishing Native community and lāhui. In this way, Native Hawaiians residing in California and elsewhere are often perceived as less culturally authentic. By perpetuating these logics, Native Hawaiians themselves reinforce and legitimize Native erasure, a modality of settler colonialism.

This article seeks methods to expand definitions of Indigeneity that are grounded in self-determination

and survivance. This article adds to the growing body of Native/Indigenous scholarship⁹ and contributes to the central questions about culture, nation, and identity raised by Osorio, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, and others. My work expands Native Hawaiian methodologies grounded in ‘āina to encompass Native Hawaiians in the diaspora.

Aho: Theoretical Framework

Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2016) describes the core values guiding Native Hawaiian methodologies and the principal goals of Hawaiian studies. The four values she defines as aho, or cords, are as follows: (1) lāhui: collective identity and self-definition; (2) ea: sovereignty and leadership; (3) kuleana: positionality and obligations; and (4) pono: harmonious relationships, justice, and healing (p. 2). Grounded in these values and definitions, my research adds to the growing body of research in Hawaiian studies that enriches our definitions of who we have been and who we continue to be. As a Native Hawaiian living in the diaspora, I engage with the aho that Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua articulates. Additionally, I ask, how can lived experiences on the ‘āina inform lived experiences and research in the diaspora? Furthermore, how can my research regenerate ways that allow us to be pono, or in balance with the ‘āina while in the diaspora?

As noted by Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, it is important to find practices and protocols that can be productive for the building and maintenance of the lāhui. In this vein, she draws from her own lineages while engaging with other ‘Ōiwi scholarship, and more broadly with other intellectual lineages and traditions. She calls this practice being “selectively promiscuous” (2016, p. 9). Thus, I also work closely with other Native studies thinkers and scholars



who center Indigeneity to inform my research and to engage with Native Hawaiian life in the diaspora *and* the people who now host us.

By highlighting a relationship between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a group of Native Hawaiians in the diaspora, and a federally unrecognized tribe formalized through a ratified treaty, I illustrate how Native Hawaiian values grounded in ‘āina are still central to those who reside outside of the homeland. Furthermore, it provides a model for those who are diasporic to engage in a recognition of ‘āina and its genealogical caretakers as embodied sovereigns. By being selectively promiscuous, this article demonstrates how a treaty reinforces both a genealogical responsibility to land and to Native nationhood. Moreover, by highlighting tribal voices, this methodology can be understood as a specific kuleana grounded within our own understanding of ‘āina and protocol. Therefore, this work will not focus on the rationale for the treaty between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Acjachemen, although it will provide some background. Instead, this work centers Native voices and the contemporary meanings of the treaty for the tribe. By engaging in these relationships, Hawaiians embody an understanding of ‘āina and kuleana, which simultaneously works against the state logics of recognition. These acts of sovereign embodiment honor kupuna, or ancestral knowledge, and serve the greater lāhui.

Like our homeland, there is and always will be a genealogical responsibility to care for and protect the land and resources. In this respect, California is no different than Hawai‘i, meaning that Kanaka Maoli who live outside of Hawai‘i should assist the people who have similar responsibilities to land. With a greater influx of Native people being displaced from their homelands due to settler colonialism, understanding who is Native

and who is settler is a central question to any particular locale. Although Native Hawaiians are an Indigenous people and have a genealogical connection and responsibility to land, we are Indigenous only to Hawai‘i. Native Hawaiian scholar Haunani-Kay Trask, in her seminal work, reminds us of the prevalence of Native erasure in Hawai‘i and in American society overall. She states, “As on the continent, so in our island home. Settlers and their children recast the American tale of nationhood; Hawai‘i, like the continent, is naturalized as but another telling illustration of the uniqueness of America’s ‘nation of immigrants’” (Trask, 2000a, p. 2). Therefore, Native Hawaiians living in the diaspora need to actively work against settler colonialism and its logics and structures that displace and marginalize Native people, with particular attention to the Native people of the land where they now reside. Furthermore, positive collaborations between Native nations affirm Native self-governance and work against the assertion of individual rights to land and resources within nation-state structures. For these reasons, we should align our struggles of self-determination and build larger social movements that center understandings and responsibilities to ‘āina as a collective.

Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation

To understand the full significance of the treaty between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Acjachemen, a brief history of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, is necessary. The Acjachemen have several creation stories.¹⁰ Like other Indigenous groups, they believe they come directly from the land. Like Native Hawaiian creation stories, Juaneño creation stories dictate an inherent genealogical responsibility to protect

and live responsibly with land and resources. However, this way of life was ultimately disrupted and severely affected by the mission system.

While there were foreigners who came to California and traveled along the coast, none of them had a significant impact on the Native people until the founding of the missions. The mission period in California began in 1769 with the establishment of Mission San Diego. Junípero Serra, a Spanish missionary, used Indian slave labor to build the Mission of San Juan Capistrano in 1775, from which the name Juaneño originates.¹¹ Located in the contemporary urban area of Orange County, the Juaneño have become severely outnumbered in their own land. Although they have consistently resisted Native erasure through the maintenance of culture and the protection of sacred sites, the Juaneño, along with other California Indians, have experienced multiple formations of colonialism. These include specific colonial histories and relationships with Spain, Mexico, and the United States.

Despite the public discourse of missions “civilizing” and being advantageous to the Natives, missions became the first prisons in California and the first institutions where sexual violence and genocide were naturalized as disciplining tactics targeting Native communities (Sepulveda, 2018). Poor food rations, coupled with the large number of people incarcerated at the missions, created high rates of disease, which also caused deaths. The missionaries forced Natives in the missions to adopt Christianity by outlawing Native spiritual traditions that were embedded in relationships with land. Although the mainstream history of the mission period is glorified—evident through the prevalence of mission-style architecture, the fourth-grade public school curriculum in California,¹² and the canonization of Junípero Serra—the mission period had devastating effects for California Indians, including the

outlawing of their language and culture, and the death of many (Miranda, 2013).

In 1846, the United States and Mexico went to war, and with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, California became a part of the United States. Due to the discovery of gold in northern California that same year, the population of settlers increased dramatically. With the large numbers of settlers arriving during the gold rush, a high percentage of California Indians were hunted and killed by settlers. The first governor of California, Peter Burnett, through the Act of the Government and Protection of Indians, legalized the kidnapping of California Indian children and made them indentured servants to white guardians. This act established a slave trade of California Indians and was followed by policies that legally authorized the state government to pay settlers for the killing of Indians—payments that were later reimbursed by the federal government (Johnston-Dodds, 2002). This made the genocide of California Indians an endorsed policy at the state and federal levels.

Devastated by introduced diseases and genocide, the California Indian population plummeted. Some tried to conceal their identities by adopting Spanish surnames and mixing in with the Spanish and Mexican population that still remained in California (Miranda, 2013). This was a strategy for survival. However, generations later, these survival strategies have become obstacles for the current generation in proving lineal descent to the Native communities from which they originate. Proving ancestry is required by federal governmental agencies, including the Office of Federal Acknowledgment, the agency which manages federal recognition procedures and stipulates proof of ancestry as a requirement for any federal recognition application.



In 1852, the United States signed eighteen treaties with California Indian nations. Unbeknownst to the Native nations who agreed to these treaties, the treaties remained unratified by Congress (Johnston-Dodds, 2002). The purpose of these treaties was to designate land for reservations; but since the treaties were not ratified, most California Indian reservations were not created until the turn of the century. However, a reservation was never created for the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, nor for other nearby coastal tribes.¹³ Currently, none of the California Indian tribes in Los Angeles or Orange County are federally recognized. While not having a land base, most of the Acjachemen reside in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, and Orange counties (Coffman, 2011). Some tribal members have been able to remain in San Juan Capistrano, which is the tribe's cultural center.¹⁴ Although two bands of the Juaneño have applied to be federally recognized, the federal government has denied them recognition. The rationale for this denial is that the federal government considers the Juaneño to no longer exist as a contemporary Native American tribe (US Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs, 2011). However, the band of Acjachemen that ratified the treaty with Ka Lāhui Hawai'i has never applied for federal recognition.¹⁵ Notwithstanding this designation, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, continues to assert their sovereignty through actions such as sacred site protection and representation within the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. They also continue to practice cultural and spiritual beliefs and to believe that they have an inherent responsibility to care for and protect their homeland.¹⁶

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i was formed in 1987 through grassroots efforts as a Native initiative for self-governance (Wong-Wilson, 2005, p. 146). During the period of the treaty signing, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i was one of the largest and strongest Native Hawaiian sovereignty groups in existence. It offered classes and workshops on self-determination, sovereignty, and political education, both domestically and internationally.¹⁷ Amanda Mae Kahealani Pacheco characterizes Ka Lāhui Hawai'i as "arguably one of the most mobilized and public native Hawaiian sovereignty organizations. Some of its key members have also held positions in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, as well as the Center for Native Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i" (Pacheco, 2009, p. 353). While there were many Native Hawaiian sovereignty organizations, Pacheco notes that Ka Lāhui Hawai'i had a diverse citizenry that represented different constituencies such as academics, cultural practitioners, and state officials.

A constitution structured Ka Lāhui Hawai'i's government, and the original constitutional convention was held in 1987 (Wong-Wilson, 2005, p. 146). Ka Lāhui's constitution, otherwise known as Ho'okupu A Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, outlines a unicameral structure of governance that was approved through consensus by both its citizens and honorary members.¹⁸ This was created with the intention of providing equal power and representation among people from nonurban and rural areas, and from less-populated islands. It also allowed for islands to engage in island-specific discussions and decision-making. However, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i's governance structure initially included no representation for diasporic Hawaiians.

In my interview with Mililani Trask, I raised the question of diasporic Native Hawaiians and political representation within Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. She said that originally Hawaiians residing off-island did not have specific representation or voting. But then she explained, “By working through nationhood we found the solution and it was a traditional solution” (personal communication, July 2015). The traditional solution was that Native Hawaiians residing off-island would be understood as yet another island named Moku Honu—Turtle Island.¹⁹ She states, “In Ka Lāhui we had all the islands represented and then we had another caucus specifically for those Hawaiians who were involved in the diaspora” (personal communication, July 2015). Although Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i eventually incorporated diasporic Native Hawaiians in the nation-building process, this was not done at the onset of the creation of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i.²⁰

Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s political work spanned Hawai‘i, the continental United States, and the international arena. This included working on Indigenous rights within the United Nations and treaty making among nations, including Native and non-Indigenous nations. Within Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s “Four Political Arenas of Sovereignty,” it notes:

Regardless of whether Nations/States (U.S.) recognize indigenous nations whose lands they have colonized, Native Nations can and must solidify diplomatic relations between themselves and other Nations/States. Indigenous nations face common threats and issues in the international arena. Native nations need to forge unified positions in the global arena for the protection of their lands, territories and human rights. (Government of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, 1994, p. 12)

The section further asked, “How can we benefit from or help other native nations who are dealing with similar health, housing, education, etc. problems and issues?” (p. 12). Part of the belief was that Native nations could help each other when dealing with similar issues of education, health, and the general welfare of their people.

In its efforts to strengthen diplomatic relations between Native nations, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i thus signed and ratified a significant number of treaties. Describing this achievement, the Master Plan stated, “To date, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i has negotiated and ratified 17 treaties with 85 indigenous nations on the American Continent” (Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i Constitution, 1994, p. 11). Therefore, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, as well as other Native nations, was engaged in treaty making as a continued expression of sovereignty to strengthen Native nations. Articulating the importance of treaty making among Native nations, Trask says:

We did find it was time to use our opportunities to begin to make treaties with other Indigenous peoples. Also, we noticed there was a strong bias. People wanted to look at treaties between Hawai‘i and the United States and Hawai‘i and Japan, but just as important or perhaps more important were modern treaties that were made with non-colonizers. So, this is the reason why we did what we did. It was part of a broader effort and not only Hawai‘i, but in New Zealand and the Pacific. So that was why we did this. It was really to strengthen their [Native] nation and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. And it was done in the anticipation that we have to work collectively on critical issues towards Indigenous peoples in a globalized world. (personal communication, July 2015)



Hence, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s political agenda included the building of a network of Native nations that was expressed in treaty making. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Recognition between the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i is just one of the many treaties Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i ratified during this period.

As the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was recognized through international treaties in the 1800s, it can be asserted that Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i is a government that is in continuance of practices of Native nationhood. Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i proclaimed that treaties ratified between the Hawaiian government and its signatories occurring prior to the illegal takeover by the United States in 1893 would be recognized and honored (Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i Constitution, 1994, p. 11). Haunani-Kay Trask described the self-determining practices of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i as “an alternative polity that was in opposition to federal and state entities” (Trask, 2000b, p. 382). Therefore, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i acted as a sovereign government that operated in continuation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

While Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i built new diplomatic relations between Native nations, it likewise advocated for federal recognition with the United States. However, federal recognition was not considered the ultimate expression of Hawaiian sovereignty for Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, as evidenced by interviews and treaty making with other nations. Mililani Trask elaborates, “There were limitations under the US system that could never be addressed under US domestic law” (Wong-Wilson, 2005, p. 148). Rather, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i advocated for a nation-to-nation status to “place the Hawaiian land base on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, since the land base still lies within the territory of the United States” (Dudley & Agard, 1993, p. 136). Clarifying the intended relationships

between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, the United States, and the United Nations, Mililani Trask says,

A lot of people looked at Ka Lāhui and said we were selling out, we wanted to be under the US system. This was not quite accurate because what we were saying was that the first priority was not a political relationship with the United States. The first priority was to protect the land, to protect the people; education, health, and cultural preservation. The first priority was to create a Hawaiian nation to facilitate self-determination at home. The political strategy for dealing with the United States was the second priority. Under the United States, indigenous people can achieve only limited rights, but we could obtain land for our people’s needs. And, we could at least get a share of our revenues to develop health, education, and culture. Those were Ka Lāhui’s priorities for the eight years I served as *kia‘āina* of the nation. (Wong-Wilson, 2005, p. 148)

Trask illustrates that although federal recognition was part of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s strategic plan, it was not the main goal. Rather, the development of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i was to implement a culturally appropriate government to address Native Hawaiians’ ongoing concerns. It can even be argued that Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i is also a federally unrecognized Native Hawaiian nation. Overall, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i was committed to honoring the prior commitments and relationships of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i while creating new diplomatic relations that epitomized Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i as an international actor.

Historic Treaty Signing

News from Native California, a quarterly magazine published by Heyday Books, included an article in summer 1992 that documented the treaty between the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i (Margolin, 1992, p. 33).²¹ The article explains that the treaty signing was an important occasion with significance for the Native people of California. Describing the contemporary lives of the Native people of the Los Angeles area,²² the article notes that “the federal government has never given recognition or acknowledgment as sovereign Indian nations . . . and anthropologists generally ignore the living descendants, having declared the culture all but extinguished” (Margolin, 1992, p. 33). The fallacy of the tribes’ extinction further reifies the importance of being recognized as living people within a contemporary tribal nation by another Indigenous people.

Describing the significance of the ratification of the treaty, the article states, “By signing these treaties the native people of southern California went beyond resisting a government that tries to erode tribal rights, and took it upon themselves to expand those rights as befits nations that are independent not only in name but in spirit as well” (Margolin, 1992, p. 33). Margolin recognized that the political significance of the treaty surpassed the limited sovereignty granted by the federal government, which places Indigenous nations into domestic dependent nationhood (Deloria, 1985, p. 114). Instead, the two groups acted as international sovereigns and recognized each other through the ratification of a treaty.

In addition to the gift exchanges, which included song and dance on the University of California–Irvine campus to commemorate the occasion, the two groups, as

ocean/water people, gathered at Dana Point beach, where they also shared in ceremony.²³ The article highlights the spiritual significance of the occasion as such:

As the ceremony on the beach was being held, suddenly and gloriously a humpback whale emerged from the ocean and spouted. This whale, native both to the coast of California and the coast of Hawai‘i, seemed by its presence to become part of the treaties as well. “All my relations” a voice muttered as the whale paid its regards and slipped back into the sea. (Margolin, 1992, p. 33)

Margolin, along with several people I interviewed, described the gathering on the beach with the appearance of the whale, and the cultural and spiritual confirmation that it provided.²⁴ This marked the occasion not only as political, but also as spiritual; often times for Native people, the spiritual intersects with the political.

Acjachemen Views of the Treaty

As several Acjachemen I interviewed noted the historic occasion of the treaty signing and its spiritual significance, this article also highlights contemporary views of the treaty, including its alternatives to federal recognition that are theorized and lived within Acjachemen communities. For example, Juaneño tribal member Angela Mooney-D’Arcy describes the treaty as surpassing colonial governments and institutions.²⁵ She says that the treaty represents

an ongoing commitment to upholding our traditional relationships with one another and to that extent outside of, and prior to, and will extend after the settler colonial government is gone. It’s



an expression of sovereignty. To me it's not relevant if it's with an unrecognized Nation because our engagement with each other is an expression of sovereignty. If we're serious about recognizing sovereignty, then settler colonial recognition or non-recognition should not be relevant. (personal communication, April 2017)

D'Arcy describes the inherent sovereignty that exists within Native nations regardless of federal recognition and maintains that the treaty is a testament to sovereignty that will endure beyond the current settler colonial government structure. Therefore, being federally recognized or having an unrecognized status has no relevance in regard to the inherent sovereignty expressed by the treaty.

Wyatt Belardes has similar views regarding the treaty as an expression of sovereignty.²⁶ He says:

We are self-determining who we are and we are not asking the government to be a part of it. So, we are decolonizing [ourselves] because we are basically doing something that the government doesn't want. We are actively showing them this is what we are going to do and don't care if they like it or not. We are the original people of this land and we don't need [the government] to decide who we are. (personal communication, October 2016)

Belardes describes a direct action that exceeds the "asking for permission" entailed in seeking recognition from the federal government. He believes the treaty operates as an expression of sovereignty for both Native nations. In addition, Belardes sees a correlation between the Acjachemen people and Native Hawaiians, as both

communities are fighting to protect the land and its resources, and both are actively working against a government that has dissimilar values. He states:

There is a whole ocean between us, but we are fighting the same battles and we are fighting to protect Mother Earth. Although we are two worlds apart, we are still going through the same struggles and both fighting, as our ancestors would have too. We are two governments fighting against the government that is supposed to be ruling over us. (personal communication, October 2016)

Belardes believes that relations between the two groups as ocean people existed prior to the treaty and that the treaty is a recent expression of this ongoing relationship.

When I asked another Acjachemen tribal member and Native studies scholar, Charles Sepulveda, what the treaty meant for them, he stated, "The treaty, as an act of resistance, is based on the love of ourselves as survivors that have continued responsibility to place. The treaty is a symbol of enduring sovereignty and the ability of an unrecognized nation to continue as international actors" (personal communication, April 2015). Sepulveda refers to the treaty as an act of resistance that is based on love—a love that is centered in having a continued genealogical responsibility to their place and to their people.

Additionally, Sepulveda believes that the treaty is an example of the continued relationships between distinct Native nations who enter into one another's territory:

The treaty is an example of what the tribe is doing, or has done, that can allow us to see concrete things that we can do to work with other

people. We can't exist without having a relationship with other people. Having the Hawaiians recognize us as living people is an example of how other communities of color should interact with us. People don't have to be settlers, they can be guests. The Hawaiians acted as guests. Their actions can help provide hope. We can't control what other people do, but this is an example of how Indigenous peoples should enter into each other's lands and territories. (personal communication, April 2015)

Sepulveda describes a kuleana praxis that acknowledges the Native genealogical caretakers of the land where they reside by those who are representing their own Native nations and therefore expressing a sovereign embodiment. He recognizes that his tribe cannot exist without relations with others. He believes that engaging in an Indigenous protocol of acknowledgment can be a model for the way others can conduct themselves outside of their homelands. The degree to which people engage in this protocol distinguishes them as either settlers or as guests. This does not undo the native/settler binary; rather, it adds the layer of guests as determined by the Native group itself.

For the Juaneño, the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Recognition with Ka Lāhui Hawai'i provides a form of Indigenous recognition, whereas federal recognition has been continuously denied. The treaty and its corresponding relationship also offer the potential of allies and new cooperatives for the maintenance of culture and sacred sites. This is especially significant in southern California, given the revisionist history of the mission period that romanticizes a Spanish past and writes of the Juaneño and other Native communities as extinct.

Weaving Aho

As more people move to southern California, it is vital to center Native life and build relationships among Indigenous communities that directly honor the people of the land. This includes Native Hawaiians living in California and in the broader diaspora. Trans-Indigenous recognitions, as exemplified by treaty making, demonstrate intentions that surpass a sole community's survival and create a larger shared community of Indigenous survivance in California and Hawai'i. Therefore, alongside other Native Hawaiian scholars, I argue that we should not only embody a praxis of kuleana, but also acknowledge the Native Hawaiian values of ea, pono, and lāhui that are central for Hawaiian studies and for a healthy Hawaiian nation—including those in the diaspora.

Elaborating on the Native Hawaiian value of ea, for instance, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua states that ea represents

a political independence and is often translated as “sovereignty.” It also carries the meanings “life,” “breath,” and “emergence,” among other things. A shared characteristic in each of these translations is that ea is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation. (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2016, p. 9)

In other words, Native Hawaiians living in the diaspora are a part of the call to actively work toward ea. This work can begin with an acknowledgment of land and Indigenous hosts, which is a direct part of Native Hawaiian culture and protocol. Native Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli-Meyer discusses the significance of protocol for Native Hawaiians and states, “Given the nature



of protocol, or the rituals for how one enters the ocean and forest, or even our neighbor's yard, is it any wonder that Hawaiians have something to say about intention?" (Meyer, 2003, p. 53). Indigenous protocols are a direct expression of intention. Protocols are reminders of the way Indigenous people believe they should and want to live in the world. Moreover, diasporic Native Hawaiians need to understand our role and function while outside of the homeland, and this would require recognition of the genealogical caretakers of the land wherever they reside. This recognition is a direct expression of *ea*. Grounding actions within this understanding empowers Native Hawaiians in the diaspora to see that their actions toward *ea* constitute a sovereign embodiment. Thus, engaging in a praxis of *kuleana* that acknowledges responsibilities to land held by other Native communities is a recognition of our interdependence and is one of the many expressions of *ea*.

Along with protocol and the interdependence acknowledged through its demonstration, self-defining our groups and the rights to do so is also a direct expression of *ea*. As Native Hawaiian teacher and community activist 'Īmai Winchester explains:

Ea, I think, is the full realization that our purpose here is greater than owning material wealth, that our purpose needs to be aligned with *aloha*, with *pono*, with *mālama 'āina*, with finding some sort of balance in our interactions between ourselves and nature, between ourselves and one another. . . . The push toward sovereignty and independence is as much about interdependence and the realization of it. The emphasis that we place on individual success is going to start to become overshadowed by the need for interdependent cooperation (as cited in Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2016, p. 11).

In this way, Winchester articulates *ea* as interdependence with land and as cooperation between people. Instead of pursuing access to individual rights, Native Hawaiians in the diaspora need to engage in a form of interdependence, which is crucial to *ea*. With this understanding, we can actively work against the logics of individual rights, which are the backbone of settler individualism. Failing to do so, we advance the logics and structures of Native erasure and fail to engage in protocol and praxis that are integral to the maintenance of Native Hawaiian culture and the betterment of the *lāhui*.

Trans-Indigenous recognitions, including the treaty making between Ka Lāhui Hawai'i and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, demonstrate how we can align our *aho*, or cords, together to have greater ropes of resistance (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2016, p. 6). As Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith stated:

What is more important than what alternatives indigenous peoples offer the world is what alternatives indigenous people offer each other. To be able to share, to have something worth sharing, gives dignity to the giver. To accept a gift and to reciprocate gives dignity to the receiver. To create something new through that process of sharing is to recreate the old, to reconnect relationships and to recreate our humanness. (Smith, 1999, p. 105)

Trans-Indigenous recognitions provide the process that allows us to honor our ancestors by working with another community in our shared sense of responsibility to ensure our survival not only as an individual group, but also as a larger community that wants to ensure life for the next generations. Although these relationships are not new²⁷ or without conflict, Native Hawaiian scholar David Chang notes that, "These acts of identifying

likeness serve as important reminders to us that we are engaged in a very old conversation when we talk about the notion of global indigeneity” (Chang, 2016, p. 248). Therefore, the continuance of this work reaffirms who we are as Indigenous people and provides better clarification to the question posed by Osorio at the beginning of this article, asking, “Who the hell are we?” (as cited in Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2016, p. 6).

From Mauna Kea to Oak Flats, Shasta River, and Standing Rock, Indigenous people continue to form trans-Indigenous recognitions for their collective survivance and in resistance to settler states. These recognitions embody acts of Indigenous refusal and resurgence. Additionally, these actions reaffirm individual self-determining Native communities while building larger trans-Indigenous communities and can provide models for decolonization. First Nations scholar Leanne Simpson reminds us that although these examples of Indigenous resurgence may last only for short periods of time, they can give us “a glimpse of a decolonized contemporary reality; it is a mirroring of what we can become” (Simpson, 2011, p. 98). Native Hawaiians and the Acjachemen involved in the treaty collaborated to build collective strategies for survivance. These relationships exemplify Indigenous self-governance and inherent responsibilities to land that may never be acknowledged by colonial structures of federal recognition. For Native Hawaiians, this praxis can reaffirm the core values that reinforce the life and land of the lāhui.

Responding to Goodyear-Ka’ōpua’s call to add to the growing body of work that comprises Native Hawaiian studies, I humbly offer my own reflections as a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi who is living and working in the diaspora. As Goodyear-Ka’ōpua notes, “Like our ‘āina we are a dynamic and changing people, and thus Hawaiian studies

practitioners continue to explore what it means to be ‘Ōiwi because the answers are never complete. This tension—between powerfully asserting who we are against forces that work toward our extinction and holding open space to acknowledge that who we are is not a closed question—animates Hawaiian studies scholarship” (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2016, p. 6).

Thus, for Hawaiians in the diaspora, the concern with maintaining ourselves as Kanaka ‘Ōiwi is entwined with the political responsibility of maintaining a cultural grounding that is intimately tied to our survivance. The treaty between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians not only demonstrates the importance of continuing self-determining practices outside of Hawai‘i, but also provides a model for diasporic Hawaiians to reaffirm ourselves by recognizing our Indigenous hosts. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Recognition between the Acjachemen and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i is just one example, and there are many others waiting to be documented or (re)told. As settler colonialism continues to displace Natives from their homelands, this is also an active call for diasporic Indigenous people to recognize their local Native host(s). This recognition is one way to honor kūpuna knowledge and directly disrupt logics and systems that are meant to continually erase Indigenous people.²⁸ Honoring this responsibility is to engage in acts of sovereign embodiment. Reminding us of this responsibility, Carolyn Kualī‘i, one of the main architects of the treaty, says, “All Hawaiians should be mindful of where they are. All have a kuleana to be respectful, especially those who are visitors to somewhere else” (personal communication, March 2015). For Kanaka ‘Ōiwi this involves a larger conception of identity that recognizes that since we are made up of our kūpuna, our ancestors, our indigeneity is always embodied, wherever we go.



REFERENCES

- Chang, D. A. (2016). *The world and all the things upon it: Native Hawaiian geographies of exploration*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Coffman C. (2011). *The Juaneño-Acjachema: Exploring identity and the reproduction of culture*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing.
- Deloria, V., Jr. (1985). *Behind the trail of broken treaties: An Indian declaration of independence*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Dudley, M. K., & Agard, K. K. (1993). *A call for Hawaiian sovereignty*. Waipahu, HI: Nā Kāne o ka Malo Press.
- Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, N. (2016). Reproducing the ropes of resistance: Hawaiian studies methodologies. In K.-A. R. K. N. Oliveira & E. K. Wright (Eds.), *Kanaka 'Ōiwi methodologies: Mo'olelo and metaphor* (pp. 1–29). Honolulu, HI: Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, University of Hawai'i Press.
- Government of Ka Lāhui Hawai'i. (1994). *Ka Lāhui Hawai'i platform on the four arenas of sovereignty*. Hilo, Hawai'i: Author. Used with the permission and written consent of Mililani Trask.
- Johnston-Dodds, K. (2002). *Early California laws and policies related to California Indians: Prepared at the request of Senator John L. Burton, president pro tempore*. Sacramento, CA: California Research Bureau, California State Library. Retrieved from http://tuleyome.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Early-California-Laws_Johnston-Dodds.pdf
- Ka Lāhui Hawai'i Constitution. (1994). *Ho'okupu a Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, the Ka Lāhui master plan*. Hilo, HI: Author. Used with the permission and written consent of Mililani Trask.
- Lepule, T., & Kwoh, S. (2014). *A community of contrasts: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the United States of America, 2014*. Los Angeles, CA: Empowering Pacific Islander Communities.
- Margolin, M. (1992). Hawaiian connections. *News from Native California*, 6(3), 33.
- Meyer, M. A. *Ho'oulu: Our time of becoming*. Honolulu, HI: 'Ai Pōhaku Press.
- Miranda, D. A. (2013). *Bad Indians: A tribal memoir*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books.

- Office of Hawaiian Affairs (2013). Native Hawaiian population by region in the United States: 1990, 2000, 2010. [table 1.19]. *Native Hawaiian Data Book*. Honolulu, HI: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ohadatabook.com/TO1-19-13.pdf>
- Pacheco, A. M. K. (2009). Past, present, and politics: A look at the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. *Intersections*, 10(1), 341–387. Retrieved from https://depts.washington.edu/chid/intersections_Winter_2009/Amanda_Mae_Kahealani_Pacheco_The_Hawaiian_Sovereignty_Movement.pdf
- Sepulveda, C. (2018). Our sacred waters: Theorizing *kuuyam* as a decolonial possibility. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 7(1), 40–58.
- Simpson, L. B. (2011). *Dancing on our turtle's back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence*. Winnipeg, Canada: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London, England: Zed Books.
- Trask, H. (2000a). Settlers of color and “immigrant” hegemony: “Locals” in Hawai‘i. *Amerasia Journal*, 26(2), 1–24.
- Trask, H. (2000b). The case for Hawaiian sovereignty and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. *Policy Sciences*, 33(3), 375–385.
- US Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs (2011). Final determination against acknowledgment of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/as-ia/ofa/petition/o84B_juajbb_CA/o84b_fd.pdf
- Wong-Wilson, N. N. (2005). A conversation with Mililani Trask. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 17(1), 142–156. Retrieved from <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/13839/1/v17n1-142-156-dialogue.pdf>





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kēhaulani Vaughn is an assistant professor of education, culture, and society and the Pacific Island Studies Initiative at the University of Utah. Vaughn received her doctorate in ethnic studies from the University of California–Riverside and graduate degrees in Asian American studies and education from UCLA, with a graduate concentration in American Indian studies. Her research explores trans-Indigenous recognitions between Native Hawaiians living in California and federally unrecognized California Indian tribes. In addition to her research, she is deeply invested in community engagement and is a founding board member of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC) and the Saturday Tongan Education Program (STEP) at the Claremont Colleges.

NOTES

1. Acjachemen can be spelled multiple ways, including Acjachemem. I choose to use Acjachemen because it was the spelling used in the treaty.
2. Kualī'i built numerous relationships in California Indian Country. In my interview with her, she described her work to connect Native Hawaiians and California Indian Country as part of her kuleana. Although she acknowledges that she is not the first or only one to do so, she knows that her work has built lasting relationships.
3. Ka Lāhui Hawai'i signed several treaties with other Indigenous nations. These nations include but are not limited to the Confederation of the Tlingit Nation of Canada, the Kwakiutl Band, and the Black Hills Sioux.
4. The term "host" is used throughout this article to identify the Native people of a specific place. The term "guests" refers to all other people besides the Indigenous people of the area. My interviewees utilized these terms, and I honor their nomenclature.
5. Indian, Native, and Indigenous are used interchangeably throughout this article.
6. 'Āina means land, but also means that which feeds. This feeding can be both physical and spiritual nourishment.
7. Native Hawaiian kūpuna have been traveling for generations. Like other Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians view the oceans as highways connecting islands to one another. Some

consider Turtle Island (i.e., North America) part of the history of travel between Indigenous communities. However, Native Hawaiians and other Indigenous communities are disproportionately being pushed out of their homelands due to settler colonialism and are unable to return due to various modalities of Native erasure.

8. Ea has complex meanings in the Hawaiian language, as will be highlighted later in this article. Here it is used to refer to sovereignty and self-determination.
9. Native studies, from my perspective, is an inclusive field that includes Native American studies, Hawaiian studies, etc.
10. One origin story, which they have in common with the nearby Luiseño people, discusses a time when there were several periods of only darkness and light until figures came into being. I choose not to publish the Acjachemen creation story to honor the fact that it is sacred.
11. Importantly, Junípero Serra was canonized by the Catholic Church in September 2015 despite numerous protests by many Indigenous communities, with the most notable objections coming from California Indian tribes. The Mission of San Juan Capistrano was abandoned by the Franciscans due to an Indian attack at the Mission in San Diego. However, in 1776 they re-established the mission and, in 1778, rebuilt it where it is currently located.
12. The current fourth-grade history curriculum in California has a section on the mission period. Most fourth-graders visit a nearby mission and are usually assigned to construct and build a replica of that mission. The history taught of this period is usually one of California Indians “becoming” civilized through the aid of Franciscan monks and the missions. Seldom is there any discussion of the negative effects on California Indians.
13. These tribes include the Chumash of Malibu, the Tongva of Los Angeles, and the San Luis Rey Luiseños.
14. San Juan Capistrano is the location of Mission San Juan Capistrano, the tribal office, and the Blas Aguilar Adobe Museum and Acjachemen Cultural Center. Thus, San Juan Capistrano continues to function as the cultural, political, and spiritual gathering place for the Acjachemen Nation, with annual events such as Swallows Day, the Swallows Day Parade, and Mission Days.
15. Some of the tribal members I interviewed discussed the factions that were produced via the process of federal recognition by the Juaneño bands that applied in the 1990s–2000s.



16. This can be seen through the Juaneño members' opposition to a toll road being built directly through a historic village and sacred site area. They also continue to engage in culture and ceremony.
17. During this time, there were eight thousand Native Hawaiian citizens of Ka Lāhui Hawai'i out of a membership of over twenty-three thousand. Non-natives could join Ka Lāhui Hawai'i and were encouraged to participate in debates and conventions, but they could not vote or hold office because the central goal was to achieve self-determination for Native Hawaiians.
18. The unicameral structure of governance moves away from a one-person, one-vote model and allows for each of the islands to have political leadership and representation with an equal number of votes, regardless of population size.
19. Native Americans often reference North America as Turtle Island, a name stemming from an Ojibwe creation story of the continent. Thus, naming the diasporic Native Hawaiian caucus as Moku Honu refers to and recognizes the Native people of Turtle Island as much as it invokes Native Hawaiian protocols for place, community, and reciprocity.
20. Despite Ka Lāhui Hawai'i's eventual adoption of a process for representation and voting for Native Hawaiian citizens residing in the diaspora, this does not equate to a full incorporation of diasporic Hawaiians. Those in the diaspora had to advocate for this, and I discourage a romanticized view of this inclusion.
21. Martin Margolin is the founder and longtime executive director of Heyday Books.
22. The article describes the Tongva of Los Angeles and the nearby Acjachemen of Orange County.
23. This ceremony included the drinking of Native Hawaiian 'awa and traditional song and dance next to the ocean, which was described by several participants as spiritual. The drinking of 'awa marks the ceremonial nature of the occasion and is usually done with accompanying protocol. 'Awa is a ceremonial drink found throughout the Pacific. Now consumed for social consumption, it was previously restricted to ceremonial occasions.
24. In individual interviews with L. Frank Manriquez and Carolyn Kualii, both discussed seeing the whale on the beach and its significance.
25. Angela Mooney-D'Arcy is a Native legal scholar heavily involved in protecting cultural sites. She currently teaches at the University of California–Riverside in the Ethnic Studies department.

26. Wyatt Belardes is a Juaneño youth leader and grandson of the late David Belardes, who was tribal chief at the time of the treaty signing with Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i.
27. Native Hawaiian scholar David Chang notes that there were various encounters and relations between Indians and Hawaiians starting from the early eighteenth century.
28. Since we have an increasing number of Native Hawaiians living in the diaspora, we also have an increasing number of people being buried outside of the homeland. Kupuna knowledge includes honoring and respecting iwi kūpuna—ancestral remains. Honoring and respecting iwi kūpuna who are planted/buried outside of the homeland requires building relationships with the genealogical caretakers of the land.

