

# I ULU NŌ KA LĀLĀ I KE KUMU: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CHILD-REARING TRADITIONS RECALLED BY NATIVE HAWAIIAN ELDERS

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How does one raise a healthy Hawaiian? Parents are eager to learn how best to guide their children through these challenging times, that children may carry the values and traditions of their 'ohana into the uncharted future. We conducted a descriptive study consisting of in-depth individual interviews of twenty-one kūpuna (elders) who reside on O'ahu, documenting how they recalled growing up in Hawai'i. Their recollections and reflections identify key processes that contribute to child resilience and family cohesiveness, yielding important insights for parents, as well as for service providers, program planners, and policymakers concerned with the well-being of Kanaka 'Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) children. Our findings suggest that interventions targeting indigenous populations will be more relevant if they are grounded in an understanding of historical trauma related to colonization and more effective if they preserve traditional ways of knowing and being.

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## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The systemic and unequal distribution of social, economic, and environmental resources necessary for well-being leads to inequitable states of health between populations. Elimination of health status inequities among minority populations has been declared a national priority. Kānaka ‘Ōiwi suffer significant health disparities, and as health status in childhood sets the stage for health status throughout the life span, disparities among Kanaka ‘Ōiwi children are particularly salient.

The census category “Native Hawaiians” refers to descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Hawaiian Archipelago prior to Western contact in 1778. In 2010 those who identified as Native Hawaiian, alone or in combination with another race, comprised 21 percent of the state population (State of Hawai‘i, 2012). Compared with other ethnic groups in the state of Hawai‘i, Kānaka ‘Ōiwi experience the highest crude birth, illegitimacy, and birth defect rates and among the highest relative risk of teen pregnancy, absent prenatal care, fetal demise, preterm delivery, and infant mortality (State of Hawai‘i Department of Health, 1990).<sup>1</sup> During pregnancy, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi women report the highest rates of depression (Hayes, Shor, & Fuddy, 2010) and of intimate partner violence (Shor, Hayes, Roberson, & Fuddy, 2010), are 1.5 times more likely to drink alcohol, and are 1.8 times more likely to smoke tobacco than non-Hawaiians (Liu & Alameda, 2011).

The 108,569 Kanaka ‘Ōiwi children of Hawai‘i (US Census Bureau, 2014) are especially vulnerable. They suffer excess rates of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infections (Erdem et al., 2010), asthma, obesity, depression, anxiety, conduct disorder, tobacco smoking, and substance abuse (Daus, Bormet, & Trieu, 2006). The greater prevalence of behavioral disorders and mental illness is “associated with...high rates of school failure and...unstable employment...leading to...dysfunction and disadvantage throughout their life span” (Carlton et al., 2011, p. 161). Their disproportionate representation in the Child Welfare Service caseload presents substantial challenges to the state. Kānaka ‘Ōiwi comprise 23 percent of the state population under eighteen years of age but account for 28 percent of children living in poverty, 37 percent of children without health insurance (US Census Bureau, 2014), 39 percent of homeless children, 41 percent of confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect, 52 percent of children placed in foster homes (State of Hawai‘i Department of Human Services, 2006), and 67 percent of children in Hawai‘i youth correctional facilities (Alu Like, Inc., 1998). Among Hawai‘i’s youth ages ten to fourteen, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi make up only 27 percent of the demographic, but account for 50 percent of completed suicides (Yuen et al., 1996).

Existing health promotion and disease prevention programs have not achieved sustained improvements in health status, because, we argue, they fail to address the toll of cultural loss. The term “historical trauma” was first coined with reference to the intergenerational and ongoing effects of colonization among Native Americans (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011). Similarly, in the century after contact with the West, Kānaka ‘Ōiwi suffered population collapse from introduced diseases, alienation from ancestral homelands that formed the basis of economic and social life, political overthrow, and suppression of religion, culture, and language. On an individual level, the response to historical trauma is grief, anger, and anxiety expressed in unhealthy diets, inadequate exercise, risky behaviors, and substance abuse. At the community level, it is experienced in the excess burden of losses to chronic illness, incarceration, overdoses, accidents, homicides, and suicides (Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004). In a focus group study conducted by the Consuelo Foundation in 2011, kūpuna across the state of Hawai‘i identified cultural losses as priority concerns for the well-being of their children (Plummer, 2012).

As cultural loss is a social determinant of health, cultural reclamation is a means to reduce health disparities. “Culture is the learned, shared and transmitted values, beliefs, norms and life ways of a particular group that guides thinking, decisions and actions in patterned ways, often intergenerationally” (Leininger & McFarland as cited in Carlton et al., 2011, p. 164). Child-rearing is a core cultural task whereby new members are socialized in shared beliefs and behaviors. It is, in addition, a robust determinant of health and social outcomes. Goal-oriented, proactive parenting is associated with improved developmental progress, social competence, emotional well-being, moral internalization, and academic achievement (Gomby, 2005; Buri, Murphy, Richtsmeier, & Komar, 1992; Baumrind, 1967). Conversely, the groundbreaking Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study demonstrated a significant and graded association between the number of stressors experienced in childhood (such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or an impaired or absent parent) and the prevalence of adverse outcomes in later life (such as autoimmune disease, ischemic heart disease, liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer). Participants with high ACE scores tended to possess many of the risk factors associated with poor health, including obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, early initiation of sexual activity, and high-risk sexual behaviors (Felitti et al., 1998). In a National Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System administered by the State of Hawai‘i Department of Health, while 57.8 percent of all adults reported at least one ACE, Native Hawaiian adults had the

highest prevalence (74.9 percent) of ACEs (Ye & Reyes-Salvail, 2014). Scholarly literature across the disciplines suggests that our society must support family cohesiveness and parental competency, especially for vulnerable children, to alter the trajectory of health across the life span (Shah, Sobotka, Chen, & Msall, 2015).

Parenting education can increase understanding of child development and reduce the incidence of childhood injuries (Magar, Dabova-Missova, & Gjerdingen, 2006). Yet much of what is taught to parents may not be relevant for the 48 percent of our nation's children who belong to ethnic minorities (US Census Bureau, 2014). Educational efforts are "biased toward a mainstream individualistically oriented audience and cannot be heard by indigenous peoples, who have a very different worldview" (Dodgson, Oneha, & DeCambra, 2014, p. 17). Minority parents endorse the lack of familiarity with the clinician's values as a barrier to health care (Dumont-Mathieu, Bernstein, Dworkin, & Pachter, 2006). President George W. Bush's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health reported significant barriers to access to mental health care for ethnic minorities, including mistrust and fear, experiences of racism and discrimination, different cultural ideas about illness and health, and differences in help-seeking behaviors, coping styles, social stigma, and communication patterns.

The mental health system...has neglected to incorporate respect or understanding of the histories, traditions, beliefs, languages and value systems of culturally diverse groups. (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003, p. 49)

Terry Cross, an enrolled member of the Seneca tribe and executive director of the Indian Child Welfare System, stated, "At best mainstream mental health services are often ineffective with Native American clients, and at worst they are a vehicle for Western colonization" (Hodge, Limb, & Cross, 2009, p. 211). It stands to reason that if more providers were to be ma'a (accustomed) to Hawaiian values and traditions, and if health promotion and disease prevention strategies targeting Kanaka 'Ōiwi families were to be trauma-informed, culturally based, and community-driven, they would be more relevant for parents and more beneficial for their children (Mokuau, 2002; Akeo et al., 2008).

What little is known of Hawaiian child-rearing comes from the nineteenth-century writings of John Papa ʻĪʻi and Davida Malo, seminal descriptions of the Polynesian family system gathered from 1937 to 1955 (Pukui, 1942; Handy & Pukui, 1972), and field studies conducted in Hawaiian homestead communities from 1950 to 1970 (Forster, 1960; Gallimore & Howard, 1968). They describe customs that differ broadly from Euro-American conventions. The multigenerational extended family system was the central organizing force in the Hawaiian community. Child-rearing was characterized by an indulgent infancy, made possible by the diffusion of responsibilities among multiple caregivers; by early expectations of independence for preschool-aged children, made possible by the availability of sibling childcare and peer group socialization; and by the assumption of adult roles in adolescence, including pregnancy and parenting (Howard, 1974; Gallimore & Howard, 1968).

To this day the ʻohana (extended family) is a cultural asset, within which elders represent a vital and valued resource. The ʻōlelo noʻeau (traditional saying) “I ulu nō ka lālā i ke kumu” (“The branches grow forth from the trunk”) means that without our kūpuna, we would not be here (Pukui, 1983, p. 137). As Pualani Kanakaʻole Kanahale writes, “The primary source for all Hawaiian knowledge...is the kūpuna, the ancestors and keepers of Native Hawaiian intellect from time immemorial” (Kanahale, 2011, p. xiv). Parents look to grandparents as sources of child-rearing information and caregiver support (Gotay et al., 2000). Therefore, this study turns to kūpuna. Their moʻolelo (histories) may help us to describe child-rearing traditions that are uniquely Hawaiian and to identify cultural strengths that may form the framework for family-strengthening programs.

### *Methods*

This qualitative study sought to describe child-rearing traditions recalled by Kanaka ʻŌiwi kūpuna and to identify core cultural values and best practices in parenting.

Our methodology was guided by principles of cultural competency, incorporating respect and “understanding of the histories, traditions, beliefs, languages and value systems of culturally diverse groups” (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003, p. 49). It was approved by the Institutional Review Boards of the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa and of the Waiʻanae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. Our concerns for the well-being of children and our desire to identify cultural traditions that promote optimal child development were shared in individual meetings and focused group discussions with key informants. These

individuals were Kānaka ‘Ōiwi; some of them had informal leadership roles in the community, while others were members of formal community center advisory groups. Key informants collaborated in developing a schedule of interview questions that would be informative, valid, and culturally appropriate. Open-ended questions explored how kūpuna recalled growing up in Hawai‘i and their reflections on how to raise a healthy Hawaiian child. The semistructured format allowed the interviewer to follow the lead of the participant beyond responses to prepared questions:

1. How were you named?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. How were you raised?
4. What do children need to thrive?
5. What do you consider harmful ways of raising children?
6. What is important for us to preserve as things change?

### *Sample*

Inclusion criteria for kūpuna to participate in the study were Hawaiian ethnicity (self-identified) and age sixty-five years or older. Participants also had to be cognitively and physically able to sit for an interview for at least one hour. The community center advisory groups expressed an interest in cataloging “best” and not necessarily representative practices; therefore, participants were strategically selected. This methodology was not only culturally congruent but also followed the driving logic of qualitative research. As the subject of investigation was complex, nuanced, situated, and contextual, and as our purpose was to obtain data that would enhance understanding and generate ideas, random selection would not have been appropriate (Mason, 2002).

Key informants were critical to recruitment; they nominated participants for the study and, in some cases, provided outreach and meeting space for interviews. Nine individuals were identified in this manner. An additional convenience sample was recruited consisting of nine Kanaka ‘Ōiwi kūpuna with leadership roles in the community. In three cases, participants recruited others in the manner of snowball sampling.

### *Data Collection*

Face-to-face interviews with kūpuna were conducted by the first author, a Kanaka ʻŌiwi community physician. Interviews were audiorecorded and transcribed verbatim.

### *Data Analysis*

Interview transcripts were stripped of identifying information and assigned alphanumeric codes. Different answers to similar questions were compared in a continuous, iterative process, during which excerpts were organized into broad thematic categories by the principal author. Recruitment of kūpuna continued to the point of saturation, which was reached when content analysis failed to supply new data and the gain from conducting additional interviews was deemed negligible. Findings were summarized for and reviewed by the community center advisory groups and presented at six community meetings, where public comments could be incorporated into the analysis. At the time of publication, three participants were deceased. The paper was circulated among the surviving participants, some of whom agreed to be identified.

## RESULTS

A total of eighteen interviews were completed with twenty-one kūpuna over twelve months in 2010–11. Their ages ranged from sixty-five to ninety years, with a mean age of seventy-two. Five major conceptual categories related to child-rearing traditions emerged from analysis of the transcripts: (1) Kuleana (responsibility, role, right): the significance of inoa (name) and moʻokūʻauhau (genealogy), (2) ʻĀina (land): being piko (connected) to place, (3) Kūpuna: the embodiment of aloha, (4) Mākua (parents and older relatives): laying a foundation of values, and (5) Cultural legacy. These categories are described below and are illustrated with verbatim quotes (in italics) from the interviews of kūpuna. Where appropriate, other contemporary Kanaka ʻŌiwi voices that expand on these categories are included and referenced.

*Category 1. Kuleana: The Significance of Inoa and Mo'okū'auhau*

Inoa and mo'okū'auhau confer kuleana and shape destiny. Participants related a variety of naming practices that have been described in the literature (Handy & Pukui, 1972). A number of participants had been given inoa that reflected their specific multiethnic heritage or that expressed their faith. A few had names that commemorated historical events in their family:

*It's a story...It has to do with the war previous to Kamehameha... [My ancestor] was a family member of the chiefs of Ka'ū, so anyway they got into a misunderstanding, you know...Before you knew it, the uncles and nephews were against each other... War eventually escalated...took them from the Big Island, to Maui, went to the O'ahu island, started from Waikiki...over into Nu'uaniu, got thrown over the Pali. But my ancestor...went into hiding...because if you lost a war they completely annihilated your entire family bloodline...And in those ensuing years...he built a canoe, launched it from Kāne'ōhe, and paddled to Kaua'i, ended up in Kilauea, married a young maiden and had a son and he named [him] for the war...Kā means to paddle...Nene in Hawaiian means to wander about...'Ole means to forever fade away...So he completely dropped his real family name and took on [X]...And that's how that name came about.*

Hawaiian language is poetic, symbolic, and rich in natural imagery, with veiled references to persons, places, and events. A name may therefore have many layers of meaning. One kupuna shared only the literal translation of her name: “*It's my Hawaiian name...the favorite flower of Mount 'Ena'ena that is within you and with the eyes of heaven.*” The kaona (hidden meaning) may be a matter only for the family. In *Voices of Wisdom*, John Keola Lake explained that while his name, Keolamaka'āinākalahuioakalaninokamehamehaekolu, is translated as “the life of the common people, a nation of chiefs, during the reign of Kamehameha III,” metaphorically it charged him to “revitalize and preserve the life of the people of Hawai'i—teaching the values that have been lost that everybody should share” (as cited in Harden, 1999, p. 142). Some participants related how the deeper meaning of their Hawaiian names influenced their self-esteem:



*I don't know why my mom or my dad gave me this Hawaiian name "Kanani." Literally, it's the beauty, you know, that connotation. I talked to my eldest son about my name, and he said, "Mom, I want you to look in the dictionary: 'Ka-na-ni.' You call me back. You tell me what it is." I read it and I said, "To bring forth children of splendor." I said, "Awesome!"*

Others recounted the influence of their names on their life courses:

*I feel the name that was given to me means that I am the person that...will hold up everything for the family. And my brothers all depended on me, too. I was the one that always got the family together...And most of the Hawaiian names that are given to children, my grandma always say, "Whatever name is given to you, that's what you going to be. You going to react to that name that was given to you."*

Others were named after family friends, strengthening the safety net of social support for the child and reinforcing interfamilial ties within the community. Others were granted inoa kupuna, names passed down from grandparent to grandchild for generations. The namesake would take on some of the mana (life force, spiritual energy) and social capital of that ancestor and in return would assume the kuleana of honoring that person's memory. Elizabeth Kawohionalani Ellis Jenkins shared how name sharing helped to illuminate her destiny:

*My mother told me from the very beginning it was my grandmother's name and it was also a name in the family...She told me...it meant that I was going to be favored in the heavens. Well, that sounded good. I didn't think too much about it, frankly. But that part about my name has become a very important piece in my life now. When...changes began to happen for me...I kept asking my mother, "Tell me about my name."...And she'd tell me the same thing. But before she passed on...I said to her, "You know, I've been asking you about my name...I really need to know what it means." And so...she explained that it had a*

*significance...I had a responsibility because of my name. So I said, "But you know, what you just described...That's what I do! That's who I am!" And she said, "I know." And I said, "But wouldn't it have been easier for me...if you had told me that a long time ago? It would've made my path, this journey, easier... Why didn't you?"...And she said, "Because you were not yet ready."...It reveals to me how the old folks thought.*

While a given name might define the individual's kuleana in the 'ohana, the family name might indicate the 'ohana's kuleana in the community. One participant explained that the family name

*could also be interpreted as... 'a spreading of the light,' and because we're all teachers, we like to think it means 'the dissemination of knowledge.' That's the way we have taken it in our family, because...by actual count in the last three generations, there are more than 600 years of teaching, coaching, and counseling by us.*

Ishmael Worth Stagner II used these principles in working with at-risk youth:

*One of the first things I do...when I meet a young person and they have a Hawaiian name...I [will] say, 'Oh, my goodness! You know, that's a famous name. Do you know how you got that name? Do you know what the family story is about that name?' And sometimes the kids look at me [and] go, 'No. I think it just means this.' And I say, "No, no, it's much more than that. It's a shortened version of a much longer name that stood for when this family did...this important thing at this point in the history of the islands." And they go, "Oh really?" And I go, "Yeah! So, you know, what are you going to do as far as that name is concerned now?...I'm telling you now because you have that responsibility to your name."*

This kuleana means that through one's actions, an individual might bring honor or heap shame upon his or her ancestors:

*You cannot misbehave because you're going to bring disgrace to the family; these are the generations of your ancestors who you're going to disgrace by your behavior.*

Another participant disclosed that the family name had been changed because of misbehavior that was associated with it:

*His name...when he first went to school was [X]. And because he...and his brother were so rascal in school, they decided to change their name to [Y].*

A full understanding of one's kuleana necessitates knowing one's mo'okū'auhau. As Mrs. Jenkins taught, *"These are my ancestors. Who are yours? You have the responsibility to know who they are and what your kuleana is all about."* Kānaka 'Ōiwi understand that there is energy that flows from one generation to the next; that choices made in this lifetime reflect back upon one's ancestors and reverberate into the future with one's descendants. Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele declares, *"All that I need to know of this world is in my ancestors, and they, my ancestors are in me"* (Kanahele, 2011, p. xii).

### *Category 2. 'Āina: Being Piko to Place*

Responses to questions about place of birth underscore the core value of aloha 'āina. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs describes the sense of place as a "foundational aspect" of Kanaka 'Ōiwi identity (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2015). Indeed, participants spoke eloquently about a connection that is emotional, spiritual, and genomic to one hānau, the place where they were born and raised, and kulāiwi, the place in which the bones of their ancestors are buried (Charlot, 1983).

*I grew up in the moku of O'ahu and the moku of 'Ewa and the ahupua'a of Pu'u'uloa in the 'ili of Ke'ahi...My grandmother never left this area. She was born here, raised here, stayed until*

*she passed away, never left. But she loved it, you know. And people ask me, "Where is she buried?" I say, "None of your business," 'cause, you know...as long as...nobody goes near it, I'm not saying a word. So far, so good.*

John Charlot noted, "The special sense of place is a pervasive element at every level of Hawaiian culture. Place names, for instance, are not arbitrary, but as significant and connected to their referents as personal names and conferred with equal solemnity" (Charlot, 1983, pp. 56–57).

*Where the hospital is on the left-hand side...actually, that's Honouliuli. A lot of people don't know that, and they have different areas that people call, like Waipahu, that never came until the plantation manager named it Waipahu. It was Waikele.*

The Kanaka ʻŌiwi sense of identity and well-being is inextricably linked to place. One kupuna called it being "piko" to a place. Another advised:

*Teach your children to feel the beach, not just to play at the beach, so that...when they have hard times, they can go to their one hānau and feel the place.*

In her ethnographic study of the Hawaiian sense of place, Mary Oneha described this as a sense of "rootedness" that was experienced as pu'uhonua, a locus of "safety, security, comfort and refuge":

Like kūpuna say, when things are not going through, 'au'au kai, go take a bath in the ocean. Release all the pilikia—all the things that may be problems for our household. So I know when something is not right, when my children are not listening or things are happening and there is chaos, violence, or they're angry. I say, let's go swimming. (Airleen Lucero as cited in Oneha, 2001, p. 306)

Just as rootedness to ‘āina is life-giving, being uprooted from ‘āina may be linked to the poor health status of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (Oneha, 2001).

*Nature needs to be preserved because our relationship with nature...really kind of makes us who we are. So if we lose some of the things that are important in nature in Hawai‘i, we will lose the things which make us important...Tremendously important is the natural environment.*

The relationship to place involves a kuleana that is expressed in the related value of mālama ‘āina. As the land (‘āina) produces food (‘ai) with which to feed (hānai) humankind, so must humankind reciprocate with land stewardship and resource conservation. This kuleana was codified in the kapu system of “ritual sanctions” through which “land was not blighted, water was not fouled,” and in return, “the gods gave freely of the fruits of the land and the produce of the sea” (Bushnell, 1993, p. 13). In her series of essays, Emma Kapūnohu‘ulaokalani Kauhi explained, “Because the land has given us its blessing, it’s up to us to take care of it properly” (Kauhi, 1996, p. 103). Kānaka ‘Ōiwi experienced the land as a living, breathing being, Papa (Earth Mother). They recognized kinship with “every plant and animal and type of stone, naming almost every kind of wind and rain cloud in the air and wave pattern in the sea” (Bushnell, 1993, p. 13). Haunani Kay Trask has declared that our universe is a cosmology of familial relations. The land is our mother and we are her children.

Relations with the ‘āina, as with the ‘ohana, are characterized by reciprocity and respect and are driven by the need for lōkahi (balance and harmony). Many of our participants gathered fish from the ocean and lā‘au (plants) from the mountains. Respect was shown by taking only what was necessary to survive.

The sea was a provider of food, we were told. And it would continue to provide as long as you weren’t greedy and wasteful. That meant you never took more than you and your family could eat. It also meant catching only fish that were fully grown. Anything that was less than that you put back and let swim away. Another thing you never did was to catch crabs or lobsters with eggs. That was absolutely forbidden...

You didn't kill anything that you didn't eat. I remember spearing a lole—a sea cucumber—and unfortunately, neither I nor anybody else in the family ate lole.

“Why did you spear it?” My father asked.

I only shrugged.

“You eat this kind of stuff?” He asked.

“No,” I answered.

My father removed the lole from my spear, and he made me watch him as he carefully cleaned it. When he was through he turned to me and asked, “How would you like to eat it—raw, fried or boiled?”

I remember his saying that the ocean “wasn't a toilet” and it “wasn't a garbage tin.” Those were his words. That meant that we weren't to spit in it, blow our noses in it, urinate in it or throw rubbish in it. That was my father and his ways with the sea—the kai. His respect for it. (Titcomb, 1993)

Participants were appalled by overfishing:

*This area was known as House of the Seaweed, it used to come up to my knees...Now, lucky you find any. Lots of people, instead of just picking the top, they pull the whole thing out. We never went get plenty; we just go get what you need...and that's it.*

The sense of rootedness is expressed in the cultural practice of 'ai pono: adhering to a balanced and proper diet in terms of quality, quantity, and environmental impact. This topic came up readily and repeatedly in interviews, despite there having been no questions pertaining to infant feeding or family nutrition. Said one participant, “We had a good diet, very nourishing. Poi was the staple...Dried 'ōpelu was a treat.” Many spoke of the importance of eating wholesome traditional foods that sustained them and of doing so in a manner that was sustainable: never gathering more than one could consume; never eating to excess; certainly never, ever clamoring for more:

*Tūtū would give me, you know, dry fish, poi, not plenty, only so much...Then Tūtū would go out get some more...I know my tūtū papa and tūtū mama, they never gave me food where you eat and eat and eat. You eat only so much, whatever they give, and that was sufficient...’cause when you overeat, you get sick.*

### *Category 3. Kūpuna: The Embodiment of Aloha*

A survey in one Hawaiian homestead community revealed that 31 percent of its elderly were actively engaged as primary caregivers for their grandchildren (Dillard, Higuchi, & Kaluna, 2008). Among the twenty-one participants interviewed for this study, four were orphaned and raised by grandparents; a fifth was given to her grandparents in hānai (fostering, adoption). Most of the participants spoke of unconditional love as the basis of the relationship between grandparent and grandchild. *“The oldsters had so much love and warmth for the little kids; they would take any child.”* Children were much desired, accounting for larger family sizes; participants had up to twelve siblings. Some spoke of a child as being a sacred gift:

*The concept [is] of the Hawaiian child being the kamalei, the gift of heaven, the lei that is given to you. The baby puts their arms around your neck, and that’s your lei...A lei is a gift. A lei is something that you take responsibility for and not just simply possession of.*

Interactions within ‘ohana were characterized by intimacy. Household members ate from the same bowl, slept on the same mat, and worked and played together. *“We always ate together, Hawaiian style, bowl of poi in the middle of the table.”* In the interview Mrs. Jenkins asked, *“Did you eat out of the same poi bowl? Many of my generation did. I rather suspect your generation never did.”* Memories of family meals were especially vivid. Many participants described sitting around large tables together:

*My father’s question to us is, “So how was your day in school? So what did you learn in school? What did you do differently in school?” He was interested in what our day was like. And it would start with me and would go down the line. All eight of us.*

Many slept with their grandparents:

*My grandparents...lived in a grass shack. We had two: one where we slept, nice and clean with the moena. The other one was open where we sat down and we ate...And after we were done, it was time to go to bed. Then, when I lay down...I'd hear my tūtū mama and tūtū papa talking about the day's activities, and Tūtū Mama would talk...about me and the kolohe things we did, you know...and I'd laugh until it was time for me to go to sleep.*

Children were an ever-present feature of the adult world. They were not sheltered, and they participated, even if peripherally, in virtually every aspect of adult life, including childbirth:

*[My mother] delivered, all her children were born at home. When she was ready, she would send somebody, and [my father] would...tell them, "Put the hot water on," so he can clean the scissors..."Fix her bed, put clean linens on...Give your mother a bath, clean her up. I'm coming home."...Think of all the things we used to have to run around and do! Ahhh.*

To an extent, they participated in death as well:

*And us children...if [our mothers] went to church, we sat outside. If they had women's meeting, we played out in the yard. If they went to dress the dead, we stayed outside. So wherever our mothers went, we went. So they were always involved in our lives.*

Some of our participants expressed concern that intimacy is often lacking in families today:

*The world is so busy that they don't even have time to spend with our children. "Hurry up! Hurry up! Get your things ready!" And then they're dragging the things...They don't have time to*



*pay attention to their children. They don't have time to spend with them, just a few minutes in the evening, "How are you? What did you do today?" You know, that kind of thing...How are they going to know who they are if as a mother or as a father you don't talk to them, you don't share with them...What do you want them to become?*

Kūpuna stressed that parents should be involved in the lives of their children:

*Always spend time with your children...together as a family. We kanikapila, dance, sing. Make food. Eat, eat, eat. Go down the beach. Have picnics. Go fishing. We always have fun...I like to see parents with their children. I think that is more important than anything else, because it starts from the house, just like the tree [from] the root, and the kids are the branches.*

Just as the practice of mālama 'āina is a manifestation of aloha 'āina, so the practice of mālama (nurturing, caregiving) is an expression of aloha. Our participants were taught, even as young children, to look after their younger siblings. Mrs. Jenkins recalled that *"from the beginning, I was responsible heavily for my brother, [not] the kind of responsibility that I was being punished, but rather that this is your pleasure."* Kūpuna described sibling care:

*We had raised our children that the oldest one take care the second, the second take care the third and go down to the baby. Grandma takes care of the baby...They know what to do.*

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*My mom had ten children altogether...So that meant I had to get up every morning and...make ten cups of tea with one teabag. Go down the line and made tea for each one...Never had a glass of milk when we were young...I would make lunches...I would have to make twenty pieces of toast, [two] for each of the kids, and then one piece of bologna or one piece of luncheon meat is all we could, you know, [afford]...and then we would sit on the porch and from the oldest going down...they would pass it...down the line.*

Mary Kawena Pukui wrote that the word “piko” (navel, umbilicus) was used to characterize the closeness of a relationship: “A person said, ‘So-and-so is my piko,’ meaning that he is very closely related to him” (Pukui, 1942, p. 367). One participant said: *“Our piko is the love that we have for one another...That’s how I raised up my children: love one another, no matter what.”*

Caregiving was so intrinsically rewarding that it extended beyond the household into the extended family:

*Besides raising us, we had cousins that we also had stay with us... over their high school years...Lots that [my dad] took from off the streets around our neighborhood...children that my mother brought home from the hospital to raise. Our house was always filled with children. Our house was never empty...one bathroom with 20-something people in the house...and because I was the baby, somebody’s combing your hair; somebody’s checking your clothes. All my sisters or my cousins: “Ah, come here. Let me put on your shoes for you.”...It was amazing how wonderful it was. I look back at that, I miss those things.*

It also extended into the greater community:

*My mom and dad were Pied Pipers to lost people. At night, there were four of us for a long time, and then they adopted my brother during the war, and then three years after that, my mom had my baby sister at 42...And so we used to joke, ‘cause we’d go to bed, there’d be four of us. In the morning sometimes when we woke up, there’s six, there’s eight...But you know, that was the way we grew up.*

Relationships within the ‘ohana are based on reciprocity, described as mutual caring and mutual sharing. Seneca elder Terry Cross offered this vivid depiction of reciprocity:

I give my cousin a ride to the store, and, while at the store, my cousin buys some items for our grandmother. Our grandmother is home watching my brother's children who are planning to wash my car when I return home. No one person is paying back another, and yet they support and help cycle within the family. (Cross, 1997)

Caregiving was reciprocated when elders became feeble with age. Mrs. Jenkins relates:

*I asked [my son], "Would you like to come to Honolulu and take care of Tūtū?" He said, "Oh, I'd love it!"...He came and he stayed with her the whole time. The stories they tell are just priceless. She was not able to bathe herself; he did. He carried her to the bathroom. He carried her to her bed. And at night, he would curl up next to her, and they would talk. So Tūtū said to me, "I used to do that for him, and he's doing it for me."*

Similarly, in a qualitative study of the needs of kūpuna, conducted by Hā Kūpuna, the National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders, one participant stated:

*As Hawaiians, we brought up to care for one another. Living in the states, you old, we put you in a home. Not in Hawai'i... Here, I take care of Mom. We are taught that as children. (Browne et al., 2014, p. 15)*

On a community level, reciprocal interaction was a way to provide for the family:

*My dad, he was, I call him a procurer. He said, "You wanna learn how to fix cars?" He don't know how to fix cars, but he knew people that could teach us, and he would bring them over the house and...they were his friends. And, well, they'd teach us... And my father, him and my father guys would drink and play cribbage. And then he'd say, "What kind equipment you need?"*

*“We need one acetylene torch,” and “Fine,” he said...“I’ll get it in a week.”...He always wanted fish for us, so he bought a boat for one of his friends who was a fisherman and he tell him, “The boat is for you. When my wife wants this kind fish, you bring ’em.”...My dad was the type of guy who would look around and say, “Okay, this is what my family need. Doesn’t necessarily mean I gotta provide it. But I help other people.”*

The Kanaka ‘Ōiwi worldview is relational. One doesn’t exist in isolation but in relation to others. “[It] boils down to, how do you survive? You don’t survive alone. No. You survive as ‘ohana.” Emma Veary depicted this eloquently:

In the Hawai‘i of my childhood, this feeling bonded the entire community. The whole village was your family; their sorrows became yours and yours, theirs. We felt we were all related and could not help loving one another. As a child, I called our neighbors “Uncle” or “Tūtū” or “Auntie,” a practice still observed by Hawaiian families today. We called it a calabash relationship, a word derived from the tradition we had of always sharing a great big calabash of poi that everybody dipped into, strangers and all. Eating from the same bowl, the same calabash—that is aloha. (Veary, 1989, p. 23)

#### *Category 4. Mākua: Laying a Foundation of Values*

The Polynesian extended family system formed a child-rearing infrastructure that ensured networks of parents and peers, many eyes and many hands, to provide affection, supervision, and instruction for children. As Joan Metge observed among the Maori,

Children are thought of as belonging not only to their parents but to the wider circle of kin who exercise rights and responsibilities that Pakehas see as belonging to the

parents alone: rights to scold and chastise, praise and reward, responsibilities to help in difficulties and to provide refuge and encouragement. (Metge, 2004, p. 146)

Attachment relationships are emotional bonds between people that serve a biological function. They promote growth, immune function, and emotional regulation in the child, and they also serve the well-being of the family and community. In traditional Hawaiian society, the attachment between child and parent was collectively experienced, and members of the parents' generation were known collectively as mākua.

*When I was a youngster, any older person, whether they were related to me or not, was Auntie or Uncle...because I was younger. Now at this point in my life, I'm Uncle. When I go into the family courts and I have to meet with the judges...quite often it's by title, Officer this, Judge that, and I'm known as Doctor. But as soon as I meet with the families, the kids and this kind of stuff, then I'm Uncle. And that cuts through the ice...I'm now Uncle, which means now we're part of a family, we're part of an 'ohana, and...I'm going to do everything to help you, but by the same token, you have to bring something to the table also. Why? Because we're 'ohana, we're family, I'm Uncle. (Ishmael W. Stagner II)*

The special role of mākua was to ensure the survival and success of the children by providing food and shelter, imparting essential knowledge and competencies, and promoting moral and spiritual development. One kupuna stated, *"They laid the foundation of what we should do, why we do it, who we do it with."*

Parents were, foremost, providers. In Hawaiian culture, a man earned status on the basis of his generosity, how much he could give to others, rather than how much he could accumulate for himself:

*We had a large extended family, cousins that lived in the same town, and friends and my father would distribute it to the family...I picking all this taro, you know, and I'm getting*

*bit by crayfish...I'm pulling up this 80-pound bags...and my back is sore...So he would say, "This is about feeding our family, not about making money." And when I got older, then I understood what he did because my relatives never had much food. I mean they struggled. So this was all important food items that supplemented. And then they gave what they could to our immediate family...My uncle guys would give us fish.*

Mākua worked long and hard to put food on their table and a roof over their heads. Many, if not most, of our participants were poor, in terms of socioeconomic status, though none considered themselves deprived. All expressed admiration and gratitude with respect to their parents' work ethic. *"Even if was meager, there was always food on the table. Dad always made sure there was food on the table."* Another commented: *"We had food, yeah. We were all dressed comfortably, and we also had a place to sleep."*

*I know my grandfather and my grandmother raised us, okay, but they always had one person in charge, and that was my auntie...She the one who took care of all of us. If she didn't take care of us, we would all be put in orphanage, you know... But she kept all her sisters' kids and watched them and raised them, made sure they ate...She worked as a taxi driver to make money for us... We listened to Auntie.... What she says goes...no matter what she tells me...because it was her hard work that kept us together.*

Mākua were industrious and, by their example, taught the value of pa'ahana (hard work). Children learned this value in chores that contributed to the well-being of the household in significant ways:

*Chores are very important. They learn how to take care of themselves by doing chores. Every child had a chore to do. We had chickens, we had a garden, we had to pull weeds in the taro patch, [we] pulled...cooked and cleaned the taro, and did the pounding of the poi. That was hard work, but...after we got*

*through working there, then we went swimming in the water pool...and that was our fun time.*

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*You had to get up like 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. You ate your breakfast, and then, as soon as the crack of dawn, you were working in the taro patches. By about 8:00 or 9:00, it started getting hot, but by that time, you were through.*

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*My sisters-in-law are very fortunate...because my brothers can take care of their own children: change their diapers, feed them, bathe them, and get them ready for bed. Besides cleaning, they wash clothes, cook, because we were taught that by my mom.*

Many of our participants even accompanied their parents and grandparents to work, learning adult roles and skills and making a significant contribution to household income:

*Before I went to elementary school, [my grandfather]...was the park keeper, so he would take me to work with him...and I'd help him clean up the park...and when we were done, he'd take me fishing. He taught me how to squid, how to spear fish, and all of that.*

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*I remember nine, ten years old, I had to go sell paper...I had a corner that I had to stand and sell paper. My other three brothers were selling theirs. They had different corners...I always had them come by and check me, "How you doing?" Okay. "How much did you sell?" Well, they would get rid of all their paper, and when they're done, they would come and help me sell them. Then the money we collect, first thing we do is turn it over to Dad. We had no allowance. It was going because of the household. Dad needed to take care of what we needed to do in the house. So the value of working I was taught when I was young.*

In doing chores, children were encouraged to become self-reliant so that they would not be a burden to others:

*The whole week we spend doing our daily chores at home...We were taught to wash clothes, iron, clean house...If my mother wasn't feeling well, we can cook...You had your children, you carried it on the same way...My children knew how to do everything in the home...When my wife was sick, we knew how to do. I knew how to wash my kids' clothes; I can send them to school. I didn't have to need nobody...We can help each other.*

Independence and interdependence may seem at odds with one another; however, the goal of Hawaiian upbringing is to produce self-reliant individuals with skills to ensure the survival and success of the group:

*My father had a great influence on me. He would speak to me in the language, and he would tell me...“You take care your family. And in order to take care your family, you take care yourself first.” And “You gotta work as a group, but you gotta stand alone.” It sounds like a dichotomy, but it's not. In other words, you gotta excel if you want to pull your family along...or else you're a burden on somebody...He was teaching me how to be a man: responsibility.*

Kanaka Ōiwi pedagogy was experiential, rather than Socratic. One kupuna recalled how she learned to play music:

*“That's the way it was. All the instruments I play...if I know they going to play music...I just sat, watched. When they leave, they put it down, and that was very Hawaiian, put it down...the child will pick it up. And I'd be playing.”*



More than one participant described a style of learning expressed in a well-known ‘ōlelo no‘eau: “Nānā ka maka; ho‘olohe ka pepeiao; pa‘a ka waha” (“Observe with the eyes; listen with the ears; shut the mouth”) (Pukui, 1983, p. 248). “*What I share with you, you ho‘olohe, listen! Hāmau, be quiet!*” Kanaka ‘Ōiwi children were discouraged from asking questions and developed into astute and active observers. “*First thing you do is...you better pay attention, and rather than ask, ‘What can I do?’*”

By the time I was six years old, I knew better than to ask my father any questions. It was always better, and safer, to let him do the talking. He’d tell you what he had in mind. Like “bring the net” or “get my spear.” And it might not be more definite than that. And the fact that we owned more than a hundred nets—all kinds of nets—and several spears, each of which was made and designed for certain fish, certain beaches, certain tides, and what not didn’t make a difference. You still didn’t ask him which net—or spear—he wanted. That was a question. And you didn’t ask questions. What you did was to try and figure out which net—or spear—he had in mind. You knew there were nets for sandy beaches; nets for rock bottoms; nets for clear, saltwater; nets for muddy waters. There were moi nets; weke nets; kala nets; and nets for various other fishes. So you figured it out. You knew where you were; you knew the kind of fish that usually ran there; and you knew what kind of net you needed to catch that particular fish at that particular beach. You wouldn’t, for example, fetch a net that was made to catch weke at Mā‘ili Beach when you were loading up a boat in the Pearl City Canal. The water was muddy there. There weren’t any saltwater fish there. So you pulled out the 650-foot net that was dyed brown and was the right net for mullet, lai and barracuda. That was common sense. That’s what you used when your father told you to go get the net. (Titcomb, 1993)

By observing adults, children were equipped to handle the rigors and risks of the real world:

*...which for us was the ocean and the mountains. And it was a very unforgiving world. If you make mistake, you drown. Or if you walking up Waimea Canyon looking for goats and you no pay attention, you fall down, you die...There's consequences when you don't pay attention, you know, when you don't listen to the elders. They not gonna drill it into you. They going tell you one time, and you better pick it up. "Don't, this time of the year, don't go over there." "What?" They not going tell you again.*

Many teachings were given as mo'olelo (stories), within which there were layer upon layer of kaona to be discovered at different stages of life. Mo'olelo were never explained; kūpuna knew that the child would take from the telling what was needed when he or she was ready for it:

*From when I was the littlest, I listened to everything. No subject was taboo. They would say, "Never mind, you'll find out when you're older." They didn't try to hide things. If it was not for children's ears...it was soon forgotten.*

Children learned to attend to nonverbal nuance and to listen to what was not being said:

*My father was a man of few words...He would look at us, and he would [gestures: tapping the temple]. And we understood what he said: "Use your head! Behave yourself!" And it amazes me that we understood it. Today, you do this to one kid [gestures: tapping the temple with the index finger], they going, "What that? What you said?"*

Discipline varied. Some, as above, were taught by means of a gesture or a glance: "My mother had a look that could just fry your egg." One kupuna described her

grandparents as being soft-spoken people who used nothing more than gentle remonstrations:

*“Don’t talk loud. ‘A’ole.” In Hawaiian, she’s telling me, “We don’t do that to you, so you don’t talk loud.”...They never screamed at me...My tūtū papa would come put his arms around me and then talk to me, you know, and then, “E hele ana ‘oe i ka wa’a” [“Let’s go for a canoe ride”].*

In other households, discipline was corporal. A child could get pulled by the ear for not listening, flicked on the lips for speaking sassily, or whacked across the legs with a pūlumi nī‘au (coconut rib broom) for misbehavior. Punishment was immediate, consistent, and followed by an explanation; it was, after all, about teaching. The phenomenon of physical abuse was felt by most to be an aberration, not culturally based.

By some, corporal punishment was preferred to verbal reprimand, because words have an emotional residue that may be corrosive. *“Sometimes I hear parents telling kids, ‘Oh, you stupid kid.’ It bothers me. My parents never told us that.”* The ‘ōlelo no‘eau “Aia ka mana i loko o ka hua‘ōlelo. Ke alo o ke ola, ke alo o ka make” is translated: “There is power within the word. The countenance of life, the countenance of death” (John Keola Lake as cited in Harden, 1999, p. 139). Thus the old folks took care not to humiliate, call names, demean, or nag. *“You can have them listen to you without yelling, putting them down, but by encouraging, being positive... making sure that what you say has worth to it.”*

An experiential learning style relies on modeling. Mākua must, above all, be good role models. *“Parents need to model. They were the best examples.”* Relationships between members of the ‘ohana and the community were based on hō‘ihi (mutual respect). One kupuna advised:

*You got to be an example to it...We learned respect because my father always talked properly to my mother, to my next-door neighbor...If you’re exposed to it, it’s easier for you to learn respect. We always paid respect to my mother by telling her thank you for a delicious meal, the food was ‘ono. That was how we learned respect.*

Special consideration was due one's elders:

*It was such a big thing in our day to respect our [elders]. They always ate first. Now we're saying, "Oh, the children should go first."*

Participants commented on the lack of mutual respect between parents and children today, saying:

*[Children] need to have good and strong parents. Not parents that will argue and allow the children to argue and nag and cry and stomp their feet and slam the door. That's what parents do today, a lot of them. They act just like the child.*

In contrast, one kupuna stated, *"We knew who was the boss. Not me, the child, my parents. And they laid the law."* Our participants lived with *"rules, not rights."* Just as kapu represented an investment in the 'āina, rules represented an investment in children. *"We had certain rules, and you never questioned it."*

Mākua modeled hana kūpono (proper conduct) in their daily protocols. Kānaka 'Ōiwi were mindful of mana in all things. Through oli (chant) and pule (prayer), ancestors and 'aumākua (family gods, deified ancestors, guardian spirits) were honored; tasks were elevated from the mundane to the sacred. Whether they practiced traditional beliefs or attended church, our participants felt that children needed to have a spiritual life. Many kūpona straddled both worlds:

*So, you know, there were things that they wanted me to do...they taught me how to oli, when to oli, and we do oli every morning... We took a bath and pule before we had our dinner. And after we were done, we would sit down and have scriptures.*

An important component of godliness (ho'omana) was cleanliness (ma'ema'e):

*Another thing is that my mom was an excellent housekeeper. Just excellent. My mom was always cleaning. I mean clean, clean, clean, clean, clean. Like 24/7. It was clean. But our house was so immaculate.*

They understood the life-preserving function of hygiene:

*They were very fussy. When the grandchildren came, they never kissed them on the mouth, always on the top of the baby's head. When asked, "Why?" "Well, our mouths are dirty."...They knew in their own way...how to avoid illness.*

Participants understood that it was important to have clean hands when you prepared or shared food or when you chanted or prayed. Children were taught to bathe carefully and were often inspected from top to bottom to ensure that they had complied:

*One of the things that I still remember is that my tūtū mama wanted me to be neat and clean...If I took a bath, they always look everything, check see everything's clean. Check my nails... We never had emery board or anything. She had...a thin stone... and always, always, always told me: "A'ole kāpulu! Make sure down by the wāwae all the way up clean." "All right, Tūtū." And I gotta show the feet...under the knees.*

This fastidiousness was pervasive and could be observed in how food was prepared:

*My mother was an excellent cook...I miss her cooking. I mean, there are some foods I will not eat because it wasn't made by my mother, and I knew the care she put into it. Like for instance, raw fish, I like akule. There was never a bone in it...not a single bone. My mother was just particular about stuff like that. If we ate octopus...she would never allow us to eat the ink sac. That was not for us to eat...My mother's brother only ate raw fish if she made it. She was good at it. My mother comes from a family whose grandfather was a priest in the Hawaiian religion. He raised her. That's why she is the way she is.*

It could also be observed in how lei were made:

*As I got to be three or four years old...I have to work feather lei. Now, it's not something that you work overnight. These take years to make, you know. I only go one [row] across...because I was young. And Tūtū was already older. (Eh, she don't know, she cannot see.) "Oh, pau, Tūtū." I give to her. She'd take it, she'd feel. "Auwē, nō ho'i ē. Oh, take it off!"...I'd say, "Tūtū, it's all right." She said, "No, anytime you do anything, you do it right the first time."...And sure enough, I still have [those lei]. I use them up at Kamehameha School. So I know that what my tūtū said, it's right.*

Parents encouraged their children to strive for po'okela (excellence), for it was in achieving individual mastery that every member of the 'ohana could contribute in a meaningful way to the welfare of the group:

*And you don't have to go to college. I keep telling people. You can go to a trade school. You can go into food and beverage. There are so many other skilled jobs, so if you going to operate a crane, be the best at it. If you're going to be a truck driver, be the best at it. But at least provide for the family you're going to eventually raise.*

Mākua imparted the values that encouraged children to become self-reliant individuals who would work skillfully and collaboratively to ensure the success and survival of the group, live respectfully and harmoniously with everyone and everything, honor past generations, and prepare for future generations:

*The Hawaiian values that are espoused—there's a standard list. Pono is on there. Lōkahi is on there. Aloha is on there... The list is not wrong for what's on it, but for what is not on it. A more realistic list [includes]: How did they get here? Koa, courage. 'Ike, knowledge. 'A'a, daring. Ho'okupu, innovation. How did they relate to each other? Oratory. Protocol. How did they live? Pa'ahana, hard work... Why is ho'okūkū, competition,*

*or lanakila, winning, not on the list? In Makahiki, they're so competitive, they might kill each other...You want to be Hawaiian? Po'okela, excel! We must preserve for our people values that arm them to be successful in the future. Aloha is not on the top of my list. Other survival values are.*

### *Category 5. Cultural Legacy*

Kūpuna reported that they or their parents had been punished for speaking their native language, practicing dance, or observing protocols. Kauhi wrote:

*During school hours, I was punished for speaking Hawaiian in the schoolyard during recess times. Before school was finished, the teacher reminded the class, "When you go home, don't speak Hawaiian, speak English only." (Kauhi, 1996, p. 93)*

Accordingly, their parents chose not to transmit their culture. One participant recalled:

*My father was not one to share a lot of his Hawaiian knowledge. When we asked, he always said it wasn't our business, "Just leave it alone." My parents spoke fluent Hawaiian, but we were taught that we had to speak English.*

Kūpuna mourned the loss of language as the loss of a way of life. Veary recalled that her parents'

*daily conversations mingled poetry and metaphors in beautiful imagery...This use of the language vanished long ago. Hawaiians today speak the missionary language, a literal type of Hawaiian. The riddle is gone. This is tragic, for when you lose the language, you lose your identity. (Veary, 1989, pp. 25–26)*

Many Kānaka ʻŌiwi internalized negative messages about being Hawaiian. “A lot of them still *hilahila*. They don’t know who they are. They still think like I did, you know, *Hawaiians stupid, lazy, good for nothing.*” As a result of this, many of the participants had made conscious decisions to reconnect with their culture and to be actively involved in cultural activities in their communities:

*I was ashamed to be Hawaiian. We were put down...told, “Oh, you Kānaka are so stupid, lazy, good for nothing.”...And it does something to you. Of course, when...I learned my culture...I’ve come to know how excellent our people were...All of a sudden, the light comes on, and it changes your whole life...I’m a changed woman...I’m so proud to be a Hawaiian.*

Participants were motivated to perpetuate cultural practices such as those having to do with the disposition of the piko (umbilical cord) and ʻiewe (placenta, after-birth), the actual remnants of the intrauterine connection between mother and child, symbolizing ties between the child and the ʻohana and between the child and the one hānau:

*There are kukui trees on Ulupō heiau in Kailua...special ones... And since I have grandsons, I buried the ʻiewe with Kū fish: ulua, pāpio. I have a new grandson, and this next full moon that’s coming up, we’re going down to Ulupō heiau, and we’re going to bury his...afterbirth there.*

Some participants described how the ʻiewe was buried at the entrance to the home, often under a particular plant. As the plant took root, so too would the child:

*[My mother] buried...the afterbirth...It’s just like a dead child... They would *namunamu*, talk about it, give it a name, you know, or they believe it should have a name, because what they gonna call this spirit when it goes in the other world?*

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*With my family, what they do is they bury [the piko], yeah, wrap it up in the lā'ī and then...the niu, and put it in there and bury it, yeah. And Tūtū would say: "This will help to grow...It's going to spread out, and you have to understand that you don't just sit, you are going to spread out. Whatever you have to share with people, share, because it will help not only you and your friends but children that will be coming, your children." And I laugh at her, 'cause I was young...not knowing that when I get older, it will affect my children, and it will affect their children, and this goes on, you know.*

Kūpuna spoke of a responsibility to their ancestors in observing traditions and passing these on for generations to come:

*We want to preserve our language. That's important. Our culture...Whatever you've learned that is good, pass it on to the next person, share with them, because it will help in the future. When you're gone, wherever you are, you're gonna look down and say, "Ah, I remember, I helped you say that, I taught them that."...'Cause when I do, I say, "Well, Tūtū, wherever you are, I hope that what I did, you'll feel good about what I did."*

Similarly, participants in Hā Kūpuna described this as a kuleana: "Kūpuna pass down culture, religion, values, in the right way to the next generation" (Browne et al., 2014, p. 13). Many agreed to share their cultural knowledge in the interviews as a sort of community service and personal legacy. Dr. Stagner "shared [his] knowledge with [me] as seeds to plant, grow, cultivate and share." Mrs. Jenkins asked rhetorically:

*If we haven't prepared them for our leaving, then what?  
Then what?*

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A major limitation of the study is that, while community members drove the development of study instruments and the selection of study participants, they were not involved in data analysis. The organization of interview excerpts into five thematic categories represents the voice of the principal author and introduces systemic bias.

There was selection bias inherent in limiting participation to residents of O‘ahu. Differences between communities in terms of shared experiences, environmental pressures, and resources may be expected to result in geographic differences in goals and traditions. The knowledge, attitudes, and practices of kūpuna on O‘ahu are not generalizable across the state. Even on O‘ahu, participants who had had a rural upbringing were more likely to speak Hawaiian and to report experience with cultural practices such as *lā‘au lapa‘au* (herbal medicine) and *ku‘i ‘ai* (pounding poi) when compared with their urban counterparts. The yield might have been richer had our net been cast across all the Hawaiian Islands.

Self-identification of ethnicity introduces systemic error. Attitudes toward ethnic identification have changed over time. At present there are economic benefits and social pressures that favor identification as Native Hawaiian. In the period following World War II, however, stigma led many Kānaka ‘Ōiwi to label themselves “Cosmopolitan.” The net effect of these opposing forces is uncertain.

As the result of immigration and intermarriage, Kānaka ‘Ōiwi are a diverse population; 72 percent in the 2010 census indicated that they were of mixed ethnicity (State of Hawai‘i, 2012). While investigators have endeavored to measure the degree of identification with indigenous culture versus the degree of assimilation to the colonial culture, assessing the relative impact of ethnicity upon child-rearing in such a population is fraught with difficulties; participants may not be able to tease apart the influences of other ethnic groups and identify goals and practices that are endemically “Hawaiian.”

Likewise, this study is not able to isolate the effect of the participant’s ethnicity from that of the ethnicities of non-Hawaiian parents, the extended family, or the social network. What may be said with certainty is that the impact of ethnicity is not simplistically proportionate to genetic makeup. Therefore, we intentionally omitted questions about the blood quantum of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (or of any other ethnicity), which has historically been a foreign and divisive construct.

Culture is merely one of many influences upon human belief and behavior. Questions about employment status, household income, and the level of educational attainment are viewed as culturally inappropriate; thus, we are not able to explore the independent impact of these factors relative to that of Hawaiian culture upon child-rearing values and traditions.

Given the retrospective nature of the study, in which elders were asked to relate remote events, recall bias was expected. Participants may have tended to cast past events in a rosy light. They may have been reluctant to describe cultural traditions that are at variance with mainstream practices, especially those that might be judged negatively. They may have wished to avoid recalling and retelling painful memories.

Despite these limitations, there is value in adding to the body of knowledge of Hawaiian child-rearing practices, which produced a robust race of people and supported a stable and thriving civilization prior to contact with the West. Since that time, Kānaka ʻŌiwi have had to strike a balance between enculturation, the extent to which one is “rooted” in indigenous culture, and acculturation, the extent to which colonial cultures are adopted. Child-rearing is a dynamic process. In elucidating the goals and strategies of their kūpuna, this study may encourage mākuā to explore their own values and to examine their own practices. Families may take stock of myriad influences on their parenting—such as colonization, immigration, and intermarriage—and determine how best to integrate them in a way that forges strong foundations for their children. When child-rearing becomes a more self-conscious and value-driven process for parents, health outcomes for children are more favorable.

## DISCUSSION

The five thematic categories that emerged from kupuna interviews represent relational aspects of Kanaka 'Ōiwi identity: 'ohana, 'āina, and culture. They speak to the concept of interrelatedness, which is at the heart of Kanaka 'Ōiwi ways of knowing and being in the world (McGregor et al., 2003; Oneha, 2001). Connectedness threads through the metaphor of the three piko (portals) described by Mary Kawena Pukui. The piko po'o (fontanel, soft spot of skull) represents connections to the past; the piko waena (navel) symbolizes connections in the present; and the piko ma'i (genitalia) signifies connections to future generations (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1976). In this discussion, we use this three-piko model of interrelatedness to enhance understanding of child-rearing traditions recalled by kūpuna and to generate ideas for interventions that may be relevant in promoting child resilience, family cohesiveness, community engagement, and cultural preservation.

### *Piko Po'o: Strengthening Identity through Connections with the Past*

Through the fontanel an individual's 'uhane (spirit) communicates with those of ancestors and 'aumākua. Name, genealogy, and place of birth are foundational aspects of Kanaka 'Ōiwi identity that exemplify linkages to the past. Participants described how inoa is important in understanding one's purpose in life, how mo'okū'auhau is important in understanding one's kuleana in the community, and how 'āina is key to understanding one's relationship to the natural environment. As Mrs. Jenkins said, "*These things whisper to us who we are.*"

Naming traditions and mele inoa (name poems) are fundamental to family-strengthening programs. In the process of choosing a name, parents-to-be may be asked to reflect on their core values and on their vision for the child. In the children's book *Kohala Kuamo'o*, the author's grandfather explains:

A name is more treasured than a woven mat, a man's malo, or even a chief's 'ahu'ula made of the finest feathers.... Your name carries our family mo'olelo, our stories, our most valuable possessions.... We keep the stories alive so we can live worthy of our great ancestors' respect. (Kawai'ae'a, 2010, p. 26)

Composing a mele inoa is a cultural tradition that encourages parents to return to these values and this vision. The mele takes shape over the life of the child, beginning in pregnancy and evolving with the child. It relates the derivation of the inoa: by what process was it given, and what does it signify? Edith McKinzie admonished, “People need to chant why they name their children; a mele inoa is like giving instructions—why they’re carrying a certain ancestral name, for instance” (as cited in Harden, 1999, p. 151). The mele inoa is a way to welcome a baby into the family, introducing him or her to mother and father and to grandmothers and grandfathers. It may reference ancestors and ‘aumākua. It “places” the child in his or her homeland, identifying the winds and rains and the mountain and shore that will become landmarks in the child’s life and memory.

In family therapy, parents may be prompted to return to this mele: “What does it mean to have a child with this kuleana?” For example, we often hear of children diagnosed with inattention and hyperactivity. Suppose the child carries the name “Koa.” Parents might be asked to reflect upon the desirable qualities of a warrior and how they might waken those qualities in their child. “The warrior may be required to use lethal force. How can your child’s energy be channeled into building strength, stamina, and skill? A warrior is called upon to be daring, but not reckless. How can your child’s impulsivity be tempered with judgment, so that the risks he takes are measured? A warrior must work as one with his brothers in arms, and be willing to lay down his life to protect his comrades and guard his country. How will you model for your child loyalty, selfless service, and personal courage?” When the parent accepts the kuleana in the inoa, the outcomes for the child become more favorable. Taupōuri Tangarō, son-in-law of Pualani Kanaka‘ole Kanahale, asserts that it is the responsibility of parents to teach the significance of the name, “for children will eventually walk away from their most sacred inheritance if meaning is not established in terms they can relate to and sustain” (as cited in Kanahale, 2011, p. x).

Likewise, in youth programs it is important to ask: “What is your name? How was this name given to you? What does it mean to you? How does this relate to your family and your community? How will you weave this mana‘o [thought, meaning] into every aspect of your life?” In this way, every child may “arrive at a place where they can say, I’m valuable and I have something worthwhile to contribute to my community” (Burgess, 2013, p. 16).

Our participants taught that the inoa tells the child who you want him or her to become. This is an affront to Western individualism and its preoccupation with self-actualization and self-expression. It may be off-putting for certain readers, but it needs to be understood in its cultural context: Kānaka ʻŌiwi define the self in relation to ʻohana, to kaiāulu (community), to ʻāina, and to akua (God, Source, Creator).

Relatedness is underscored in moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau, cultural activities that may be incorporated into family-strengthening programs to build cohesion and connectedness. The recitation of moʻokūʻauhau is no mere exercise. It anchors Kānaka ʻŌiwi to the past. Veary stated:

There was power in this ancient genealogical chant, as if the entire past of my family, of the entire Hawaiian race, were called into the room...united by a common thread that reached back to the very beginnings of Hawaiʻi. (Veary, 1989, p. 19)

Tangarō entreats Kānaka ʻŌiwi to mobilize the past in order to define the future, saying, “Look to your pedigree...for doing so allows the ancestral memories embodied in our children to walk, live, work and sleep among us” (as cited in Kanahale, 2011, p. x). In a prenatal intervention piloted in Waiʻanae Coast Comprehensive Community Health Center and Waimānalo Health Center, genealogy mapping was introduced to pregnant women as a tool to gain understanding of familial patterns of diet and disease or of stress and coping. When participants became aware of these patterns, they saw themselves as agents of change in their families and became motivated to make behavioral changes to address perceived threats to their children’s health (Oneha et al., 2016).

Composing a moʻolelo affords parents the opportunity to frame the family history in a way that unites their children behind a shared kuleana. Were their ancestors guardians of a significant site, masters of a special craft, or keepers of sacred knowledge? The children’s book *Kohala Kuamoʻo* is a powerful example of kuleana expressed in this moʻolelo of the Kawaiʻaeʻa ʻohana.

Kānaka ʻŌiwi are connected to ʻāina, thus interventions must be place based. Information about the ʻāina is encoded in wahi inoa (place names) and recorded

in oral traditions such as mele and oli and in literary sources such as books and newspapers (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2015). Parents may be directed to these sources to learn the landmarks and lore of their community: the names of their ahupua‘a and ‘ili (ancient land divisions), their makani (wind) and ua (rain), and their kuahiwi (mountain), kahawai (stream) and kahakai (shore), together with accounts of archaeological sites and historical events. Families may be taught how to create oli and pule that convey this information from one generation to the next.

Kānaka ‘Ōiwi reaffirm their sense of place when they mālama ‘āina. Thus, when families spend time in their lo‘i kalo (taro patches) and loko i‘a (fishponds), and when communities organize activities that restore and maintain natural resources, such as clearing streams and cleaning beaches, they forge strong pilina (relationships, ties) between their children and the ‘āina.

Families may learn how to cultivate kalo (taro) and how to make papa and pōhaku ku‘i ‘ai, the board and stone implements for poi pounding. Kalo, the principal nutrient source in precontact Hawai‘i and favored food for contemporary Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, has a spiritual significance and genealogical relationship. According to creation mythology, two sons were born of the union between Ho‘ohōkūkalani (Creator of the Stars in Heaven) and Wākea (Sky Father); both were named Hāloa. The firstborn, malformed, was buried in the earth, giving rise to kalo, while the second son became the first human and progenitor of all Kānaka ‘Ōiwi. The full name of the elder brother, Hāloanakalaukapalili, “Trembling leaf on a long stalk,” describes the taro leaf, and on a deeper level is a metaphor for the human placenta and umbilical cord. Thus, kalo is the ‘iewe that has provided sustenance for Kānaka ‘Ōiwi from time immemorial.

I’ve learned about kalo, and its spiritual relationship to Wākea and Papa. I appreciate the healing and nutritional value of kalo. There is a degree of reverence when I consume kalo, due to its spiritual significance. (Lyle Kaloi as cited in Oneha, 2001, p. 305)

Inviting Hāloa as an honored elder to the table and sharing poi from the calabash are akin to the act of taking communion, symbolizing that there are more ways than one to feed a child: nutritionally certainly, but also emotionally, spiritually, and culturally, engaging all the interrelated dimensions of wellness in the

indigenous worldview. Poi, pounded by the parents, must be promoted as the first complementary food after breast milk. These activities represent opportunities for parents to transmit cultural knowledge, reinforce connections to ‘āina, and displace the obesogenic Western diet with nutrient-dense native foods.

Revitalizing traditional customs, ceremonies, and celebrations, such as the disposal of piko and ‘iewe, figuratively roots the new member of the family to his or her one hānau. Prenatal programs should inform participants of traditional burial practices and of their legal right to recovery of the placenta. The particular plant under which the ‘iewe is buried might reflect core values. For example, kukui, used to make candles for illumination, signifies knowledge and wisdom. The ‘ulu (breadfruit) may be chosen to help a child grow and flourish and to ensure a lifetime of plenty. Koa, valued in the making of canoes, connotes strength, as in a warrior. The plant might have a special significance to a family; it might represent a kino lau (form of ancestral spirits), or it might reflect family kuleana. As the plant grows, it becomes a living symbol of the child’s spirit, thriving with care or withering with neglect. In practicing these traditions, parents may be asked to consider how they might root their children to their ‘ohana and their one hānau.

Being “piko” to a place is an essential part of recreating kaiāulu, and community building is an important component of family-strengthening interventions, as it addresses past disruption of social networks and alienation from ancestral lands. In cases where that connection has been severed—for example, as the result of displacement, urban migration, fragmentation of families, or social dysfunction—new connections need to be forged. One kupuna said:

*How you find that today in urban settings?... We talk a lot about genealogy and how you need to know where you’re from, and a lot of families don’t know... I met some people from Aotearoa... automobile workers that had come into urban Wellington, and they knew nothing of their genealogy... They knew the general concepts of their history, but their family, their iwi, what canoe did they come from? They didn’t know that... and knowing they didn’t know, they said,... “Well, our canoe starts here then.”... So they developed their own marae... their own stories... their sense of place... and sense of community... You build enclaves... where people know each other and maybe can connect with each other... take care of those that need to be taken care of.*



*Piko Waena: Strengthening Family through Core Values*

The umbilicus evokes the ‘iwe through which one was connected to one’s mother, and it represents the extended, multigenerational family system. The concept of ‘ohana is expansive and includes members past, present, and future. Interventions that welcome fathers, grandparents, and extended family members who are involved in caregiving, such as calabash aunties and hānai uncles, domestic partners, and stepparents, weave a safety net for parents and children.

Participation in child-rearing by other kin...not only in support of and in the absence of the parents, but also in opposition to them...helps greatly to ease the strains and diminish the damage that can occur when parent and child differ radically in temperament, where the parents and/or the marital relation are under stress, or where re-marriage follows death or marital breakdown. (Metge, 2004, p. 146)

Elders, in particular, need to be included in order to center interventions within the Kanaka ‘Ōiwi frame of reference. The ‘ōlelo no‘eau “I ulu nō ka lālā i ke kumu” implies that the reach of the branches depends upon the trunk. Kūpuna were strongly identified both as sources of ‘ike (wisdom, knowledge), and of aloha or unconditional love, as one participant took pains to define: “*Not the tourist aloha. Aloha for your children. Aloha for your grandchildren...through thick and thin, hang in there and forgive.*” Ancestors and ‘aumākua are always present, offering guidance and passing judgment, and must also be invited into our midst. Finally, we dedicate our efforts to those yet unborn, signifying that the choices we make today influence the health of generations to come.

As the center of the na‘au (gut), the seat of knowledge, wisdom, and emotions, the piko is associated with core values that form the foundation of family life. They include how we aloha and mālama, how we provide for and alaka‘i (guide) children. Values must form the underpinning of family-strengthening programs. Values education theory maintains that when values are reinforced in multiple settings, such as home, school, and treatment, youth are more likely to express values in prosocial behaviors. For example, the Queen’s Medical Center Family Treatment Center, which provides inpatient mental health services for adolescents, developed a cultural integration program using core values as the springboard for group discussion and individual therapy (Carlton et al., 2011).

The observance of protocol, such as pule and oli, was an essential way in which families expressed the core value of ho‘omana or spirituality.

Today traditional Hawaiian religion is neither organized nor institutionalized like many world religions, and what is left of its temples and places of worship are only the foundation walls and house sites. Yet what remains of Hawaiian religion can have great meaning and importance... *ho‘omana* was to be found in almost all aspects of Hawaiian culture and life. (Chun, 2011, p. 167)

Protocol is relational, calling upon connections to ‘āina, ‘ohana, and akua to provide protection, guidance and support. The practice of pule and oli connects Kānaka ‘Ōiwi to the voices of the past, ensures transmission of culture into the future, and needs to be a part of every family-strengthening program in the present.

#### *Piko Ma‘i: Cultural Preservation for Future Generations*

The piko ma‘i is the metaphorical portal to future generations. Puni Freitas Jackson and Sharon Ka‘iulani Odom, in their *Ka Lāhui o ka Pō: Birthing a Nation* workshop on traditional childbearing, describe the process of birth as a sacred passage in which the mother reaches through the womb to pull the next generation forward into the present. The well-being of those future generations is the impetus for this qualitative study, which seeks to eliminate health disparities experienced by Kanaka ‘Ōiwi children by means of Hawaiian cultural strengths. The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 recognized that the loss of Native American children through disparate rates of morbidity and mortality and through disproportionate foster placement and youth incarceration resulted in the loss of culture, for children carry our culture into the future. The remedy for historical trauma and cultural loss is the perpetuation of indigenous language, values, insights, and traditions in child-rearing. It is not sufficient to adopt Hawaiian words in program titles or to insert Hawaiian values in mission statements. Family-strengthening services must be rebuilt from ‘ike Kanaka ‘Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian epistemology). Interventions must be grounded in cultural values and must seek to restore traditional practices. Moreover, “appropriate program evaluation should include measures of knowledge, attitude, behavior and skills change to determine effectiveness in a culturally relative manner” (Carlton et al., 2011, p. 176).

Participants in our study expressed particular regret over the loss of language, a critical component of culture. “Mānaleo,” the term for a native speaker, conveys the image of the child being fed pre-masticated food and signifies nourishment of the indigenous soul. In ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language), each hua ‘ōlelo (word or phrase) has multiple layers of meaning. The kaona may lie in the fragments of a word, in the sound or inflection with which it is spoken, in references to persons or events, or in analogy, imagery, or metaphor. The language of our ancestors must be reclaimed for “the access it gives learners to insightful ways of thinking and acting and to a treasury of stories, poems and proverbs that are grounded in this land with its unique flora and fauna and landscapes” (Metge, 2010, p. 35).

As these themes are based on core values that resonate with other indigenous peoples (Tagalik, 2010; Brokenleg & Brant James, 2013), family-strengthening interventions that build upon traditional perspectives and practices may be modified for other Pacific Island populations to further our understanding of how revitalization of indigenous child-rearing may reduce child health disparities.

Moving forward, there is considerable evidence linking health disparities to inequalities in social determinants (Reading & Wien, 2009), yet little is known about the complex pathways through which these determinants account for health outcomes. There is a need for qualitative research that is grounded in a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi worldview and that will identify the catalytic components that transform cognitive engagement into behavioral change. To successfully secure funding for program development and implementation, we also need quantitative measures of the outcomes of culturally centered, trauma-informed health promotion strategies.

Regarding the “statistical Hawaiian” described in the opening pages:

*Bottom of the list in every category that you want to be at the top of, top of the list in every category you want to be at the bottom of, this is not what it means to be Hawaiian.*

*On Cook’s voyage...you had your five-foot-four-inch, filthy, unbathed, English sailor with bad teeth and scurvy, and you look at these Hawaiians who are over six feet tall...unblemished, healthy, not even tooth decay...*

*I believe that in order to change the behavior of our people...we have to redefine what Hawaiian is...What image does that raise*

*in you right now?...That he's successful, he's educated, and he's healthy? With a close-knit, well-raised family, who is confident and speaks well?...*

*[The] prototype for me is a young male, physically fit, powerfully built, slender, got his genealogy tattooed on his leg or his arm...Or the javelin thrower...and before he gets up...[he's] calling down the gods..."Come down, stand with me"...He's chanting his genealogy at least going back 76 generations...Because he's not throwing alone. (This is gonna take some time.) Okay, what's he doing now with his javelin?...Before he throws, he awakens the javelin, just as carvers awaken the adze before they carve the canoe...And you know his javelin's name is Leleikalewalani, flies up to the highest heights...*

*We have to first make sure that we...resurrect these sorts of things.*

If we are to ho'oulu lāhui (grow the nation), we must restore core values and best practices of Kanaka 'Ōiwi upbringing.

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## NOTE

1 The term “illegitimacy” is a construct with no parallel in Hawaiian culture and reflects a Western bias. Similarly, taking into consideration the stability and prosperity that characterized Hawaiian society prior to Western contact, the population collapse that took place in the century following, and the disproportionate rates of fetal loss and infant mortality in the present, the high rates of crude birth and of teen pregnancy may be viewed by Kānaka ʻŌiwi as encouraging evidence of hoʻomau ko kākou lāhui (perpetuation of the race) and not necessarily as adverse health outcomes. Nevertheless, there is a large body of research linking these maternal and child health indicators to lower socioeconomic status, higher levels of stress, and adverse health and social outcomes.