Native Hawaiians and Psychology: The Cultural and Historical Context of Indigenous Ways of Knowing

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This article reviews psychological research on Native Hawaiians conducted in the 19th through the 21st centuries. The rationale is to provide a historical orientation to this indigenous group, to increase awareness of the complexities of research about Native Hawaiians, and to draw attention to emerging issues, practices, and challenges of psychological research emphasizing indigenous health and well-being. This article lays a historical foundation for future research with a renewed emphasis on indigenous knowledge and its holistic view of psychology in relationship to the land, spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, language, and community.

Keywords: Native, Hawaiian, indigenous, epistemology, decolonization

Historical events have shaped Native Hawaiian peoples’ survival and identity over the course of the past two centuries. The colonial domination of Native Hawaiians that began with the arrival of the Westerners has affected the design, delivery, and treatment of health services for Native Hawaiians, as well as the psychological research conducted on this population. The most recent four decades have encompassed a resurgence of Native Hawaiians’ reclamation of their traditional cultures and practices, and restoration of their indigenous identity. During this same period, educational opportunities for Native Hawaiians with an emphasis on language emersion, culture-based teaching in K through 12 education, program evaluations, and academic assessments have resulted in an increase in Native Hawaiians conducting psychological research that has challenged the conclusions of prior studies by offering indigenous perspectives and interpretations. The resulting revisions and rewriting of Native Hawaiian history and culture, and resurgence of the native language have had a salutogenic impact on this ethnic group. Native Hawaiian psychologists and scholars from other disciplines (e.g., education, cultural studies, anthropology, history, archeology, and social work) play a critical role in the correction of past misrepresentations in Hawaiian history, cultural preservation, and cultivation of indigenous knowledge and research. These developments have also exposed the profession to serious gaps in psychological research on Native Hawaiians that demand attention if this line of scientific inquiry is to enlighten the profession and apply knowledge to enhance the well-being of the Hawaiian people.

Given the limited awareness and knowledge about this ethnic group among the psychology profession, a brief profile of Native Hawaiians in the United States, in terms of age, gender, and socioeconomic status would be appropriate (McCubbin, Ishikawa, & McCubbin, 2008; Pacific American Foundation, 2004). According to the U.S. Census in 2000 there are 401,168 Native Hawaiians who live in the United States which is an increase of over 90,000 people since 1990 (estimate: 310,747 Native Hawaiians U.S. Census, 2000). Approximately 60% of Native Hawaiians live in the State of Hawai‘i, and approximately 40% in the continental United States. Among the Native Hawaiians, 49.9% are male and 50.1% are female which is similar to the national population distribution (49.1% male and 50.9% female; U.S. Census, 2000). Native Hawaiians on average are significantly younger in comparison to the national age distribution (25.6 years old compared to 35.3 years old, respectively) with slightly over 40% of Native Hawaiians being 19 years or younger (as compared with the national rate at 28.6%). Native Hawaiian families are more likely to be considered poor (12%) compared to the national rate (9.2%). In terms of unemployment, Hawaiians are more likely to be unemployed, with a rate of 5.7% for unemployed women (national rate: 3.3%) and a 7.0% rate for unemployed men (national rate: 4.0%). Hawaiians are more likely to live with families, have a higher number of people living in the household despite having smaller houses and are more likely to rent rather than own their home (Pacific American Foundation, 2004) when compared to the national average. Hawaiians are more likely to graduate from high school (85%) as compared with the national rate of all high school graduates (80.4%). While these results are promising, the data also show that Native Hawaiians are almost half as likely to receive a bachelor’s degree (4.6%), as compared with the national rate (8.9%).

Challenges to Defining Native Hawaiians

As an ethnocultural group, Native Hawaiians have not received much attention in psychological studies of racial and ethnic minorities. The dominant reason for this phenomenon is the historical orientation of social scientists to subsume Native Hawaiians under the broader racial category of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Until the 2000 Census, this categorization masked differences within the subgroups of these ethnicities. This same strategy, observed in multiple U.S. government studies and demographic
publications, persisted until the 2000 Census. This “collapsing” of racial groups has resulted in the conspicuous absence of meaningful and accurate data on Native Hawaiians including: (a) population demographic patterns and trends; (b) specific health needs and resources; (c) critical social and historical forces that shape health and illness; and (d) the poverty, discrimination, and abuse of these populations and of other indigenous groups (Srinivasan & Guillerme, 2000). Also, by combining Native Hawaiians with Asian Americans, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students have acquired only a limited understanding about the best practice strategies for improving the educational profile and development of Native Hawaiians.

The shifting classification systems used to place Native Hawaiians in a social context have added to the challenge of social and behavioral scientists’ efforts to understand and explain the variability within ethnic groups. Native Hawaiians have also been categorized as Pacific Islanders, Polynesians, Oceanic People, and the classic Asian-Pacific Islanders. As the psychology of race and culture has evolved, Native Hawaiians have been marginalized or left out of the Federal and State funding strategies for promoting psychological research on at-risk populations, and particularly indigenous groups as the Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives. The ethnic classification challenge is exacerbated by contextualized definitions of Hawaiians. The classification “Hawaiian” has been used loosely to describe all citizens and residents of the Hawaiian Islands (e.g., Japanese, Puerto Rican, Chinese, and Filipinos) who were born on the islands or were long term residents of the islands. There is confusion about a geographical identity referred to as “local” as opposed to Hawaiians as indigenous/native people of the Hawaiian Islands. For the purposes of this article, Pacific Islanders will be referred to as a race and Native Hawaiians as an ethnic group within this racial category.

Two important population trends need to be clarified when describing the Native Hawaiian people as a separate entity for psychological inquiry. First, the Native Hawaiian population, due to its colonial history, faced a rapid decline in population similar to that of American Indians in the 19th and 20th centuries. This dramatic decline in the population of Native Hawaiians is often referred to as cultural genocide or “holocaust” (Stannard, 1989). Population reports from the time period of the first Western contact in 1778 to 1876 indicate that over 90% of the Native Hawaiian population died within the first 100 years after Western contact. In contrast, the 2000 U.S. Census accounted for over 400,000 Native Hawaiians living in the United States, with projections of this number increasing to almost 1 million by 2050 (Malone, 2005). However paradoxically, the number of pure-blooded Hawaiians (those of 100% Hawaiian blood quantum) in the 21st century has been estimated at less than 5,000 currently and projected that by 2050, there will be no more “pure” Native Hawaiians left (Noyes, 2003).

The second population trend among Native Hawaiians is the extensive interracial partnerships and marriages, which have resulted in the majority of Native Hawaiians being multiethnic or multiracial. Estimates range from 66% (from the U.S. Census, 2000) to 98% to 99% of Native Hawaiians (Noyes, 2003; Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 1998) as being multiethnic. In psychological research, it is common to see classifications of Native Hawaiians separated by those who are “full blooded” Hawaiians and those who are multiethnic or multiracial as “part-Hawaiian.” Researchers often report Native Hawaiian samples as either a combination of Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians or separated (e.g., Kanazawa, White, & Hampson, 2007; Nishimura, Goebert, Ramisetti-Mikler, & Caetano, 2005). For the purposes of this review, the term Native Hawaiians will refer to both Hawaiians with 100% Hawaiian ancestry and those who are considered part-Hawaiian.

Definition of Native Hawaiians

The 1959 Statehood Admissions Act of Hawai‘i defines a Native Hawaiian person as “any individual who is a descendant of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now constitutes the State of Hawaii” (Statehood Admissions Act of Hawai‘i, 1959). The term “Hawaiian” is not necessarily the preferred Native Hawaiian term within this ethnic group; rather the proper term in the Hawaiian language is “Kanaka Maoli,” which translates as “true” or “real” person (Blaisdell, 1989; for a more thorough review about Hawaiian identity and the varying definitions of Native Hawaiian, see McCubbin & Dang, in press).

A Brief Overview of Indigenous Psychology

Indigenous psychology is the scientific study of human behavior that is native, unique, not transported from other regions, and designed by the people for the people (in this case the indigenous or Native people). It involves the systematic examination of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and values a population may have about themselves. Theories, concepts, and methods are developed to correspond with psychological phenomena (Kim & Berry, 1993). This specific domain of psychology explicitly encompasses the content and context of research and is a vital part of scientific inquiry because existing psychological theories are not universal, but represent the psychology and cultural traditions of Europe and North America. Indigenous psychology as it relates to Native Hawaiians emphasizes the examination of psychological phenomena in ecological, historical, and cultural contexts, and involves multiple perspectives and methods to create a comprehensive and integrated picture of the population. The scientific process acknowledges that the Native Hawaiians have complex and sophisticated understandings of themselves and part of a collective whole. It is a formidable challenge to translate their worldview into analytical knowledge, a process which characterizes the Western/European approach to psychology. Although descriptive analysis may be the starting point of indigenous research, its ultimate goal is to discover cultural patterns through indigenous epistemology that can be theoretically and empirically verified. Of importance, indigenous psychology embraces the cultural and anthropological sciences’ tradition of incorporating meaning and context into the research (Kim, Yang, & Huang, 2006).

A Worldview of Native Hawaiians: An Indigenous Perspective

Understanding the traditional Kanaka Maoli psyche requires an understanding of a worldview of human nature that is different from Western theories and assumptions about human nature and behavior. It is especially different from those Western theories
about the structure and dynamics of personality that consider the individual psyche to be the source of human behavior (Marsella, Oliveira, Plummer, & Crabbe, 1995).

The Native Hawaiian concept of self is grounded in social relationships (Handy & Pukui, 1972) and tied to the view that the individual, society, and nature are inseparable and key to psychological health. Such relational and emotional bonds are expected to support and protect each member (Iio, 1985) which in turn can promote psychological well-being. However, if these same relational bonds are out of balance and are harmful to the individual, community, or nature, this can result in maladaptive behaviors or psychopathology. This relational harmony or balance is referred to as lokahi.

Lokahi (which means accord or unity according to Pukui & Elbert, 1986) is a concept that can be visualized as a triangle formed by aina (nature), kanaka (humankind), and akua (gods). Native Hawaiian health requires lokahi, or a sense of harmony, which can consist of the following elements: mind, body, spirit, and land. From a Native Hawaiian perspective, mental health is viewed holistically encompassing body, mind, and spirit, and is embedded in family, land, and the spiritual world (Judd, 1998; Marsella et al., 1995).

The concept of land or aina (translated can also refer to earth or nature; Kanahele, 1986; Pukui & Elbert, 1986; Rezentes, 1996) within a Native Hawaiian worldview is fundamentally different from a Western definition of land as a location or geographic place that can be owned, sold, or bargained with as a commodity. According to Kanahele (1986) and Rezentes (1996), aina has three dimensions: physical, psychological, and spiritual. The environment embodies physical aina, marking both ancestral homelands and the substance required to nourish the body. Psychological aina is related to mental health, particularly in regard to positive and negative thinking. Spiritual aina speaks to daily relationships between Native Hawaiians and the spiritual world. Traditionally, the spiritual world has been—and continues to be—a source of great guidance and strength for Native Hawaiian people. Casken (2001) points out the need for Native Hawaiians to protect the land and the ocean, as these aspects of aina are essential to the health of the Kanaka Maoli.

Mana refers to the energy of life that is found in all things, animate and inanimate. Mana also refers to divine or spiritual power (Kanahele, 1986; Rezentes, 1996) and evokes respect for one’s gods. Mana emanating from ecological elements or nature has the power to calm, energize, heal, and relax (Onhea, 2001). It is the mana that binds and connects person, family, land, and the spirit world.

Mana is reflected in the felt or experienced connection between the psyche and the many life forms around it (i.e., gods, nature, family) thus creating a sense of relationship—perhaps even obligation—to act or to behave in such a way that the mana is increased, enhanced, and sustained and brought into harmony or lokahi. It is our speculation that mana, lokahi, and the various expressions or manifestations of life for the Native Hawaiians, including their gods, nature, family, and way of life form a psychic unity that creates an inherent and/or implicit epistemology (i.e., way of knowing), praxiology (i.e., ways of acting), and ontology (i.e., view of human nature) that offers a model of causality, morality, and cosmology for the Native Hawaiian. External controls for this including social controls, rules, axioms, and moral codes (e.g., taboos) add to the generational transmission and perpetuation of this cultural construction of reality.

This generational transmission and perpetuation of cultural construction is found in the ‘ohana, meaning family or kin group (Kanahele, 1986; Pukui & Elbert, 1986; Rezentes, 1996). ‘Ohana can consist of extended family members, as well as informal relationships, such as friends and family members of friends. Central to this concept of family is the emphasis on harmony and balance among all the key components of family life: nature, the spiritual life, community, culture, and interpersonal relationships (McCubbin, L. & McCubbin, H., 2005). Thus, ‘ohana can be considered an extended and complex arrangement of roles and relationships that include all of the following:

- Ke Akua (God),
- Aumakua (Family guardian gods),
- Kupuna (Family elders),
- Makua (Parents),
- Opio (Children),
- Moopuna (Grandchildren),

and Hanai children (those offspring of other families incorporated into another family to be raised and cared for).

With an understanding of these Hawaiian concepts, an example of the Native Hawaiian psyche is presented (see Figure 1). As Figure 1 indicates, the person is located within a series of interdependent and interactive forces that extend from the family (ohana) to nature (ainu) and to the gods and spirits (akua). The force holding these elements together in a unified manner is mana. This is the optimum relationship for health and well-being. What is special about this conception of the human psyche is that it is based on an embeddedness or contextual model of personhood that is more consistent with contemporary views in psychology advo-

![Figure 1. Traditional Native Hawaiian Conception of Psyche: Person, Family, Nature, and Spiritual World. Mana = Life Energy; Lokahi = Harmony.](image-url)
Native Hawaiians in a Historical Context

In order to understand the psychology of Native Hawaiians it is important to have the cultural context as described earlier and the historical context. The history of Native Hawaiians can be viewed in two segments: (a) precolonization (prior to Western contact; see Table 1) and (b) postcolonization (after Western contact; see Table 2). Based on archeological evidence, the exploration and settlement of Polynesian populations on the islands of Hawaii occurred sometime between 200 to 600 AD (Graves & Addison, 1995). By the 18th century, the Hawaiian cultural traditions were well established with a population estimated from 400,000 (Schmitt, 1968) to 875,000 (Stannard, 1989).

Hawai’i was governed by a system under the control the ali’i (chiefs) class and thus was viewed as in a state of flux (Handy & Pukui, 1972). The major source for understanding the Native Hawaiian culture prior to Western contact is the work by Handy and Pukui (1972) on the Polynesian family system. Two fundamental units of social organization existed, the ‘ohana (family) and the ‘aina (land). The ‘aina or land was divided into the ahupua’a, or “pie-shaped” segments of the island consisting of running from the mountains to the ocean. The two main food sources for Native Hawaiians, the ocean with fishing and the land with agriculture, were therefore available in each ahupua’a.

The ahupua’a was the domain of the ali’i (the high chiefs). No one chief ruled all of the Hawaiian Islands. However the Native Hawaiians had a hierarchy of social classes with the chiefs on the top of the order, followed by commoners and slaves, with each status having its own duties and roles in society. The chiefs were responsible for the welfare of their people living on the ahupua’a. An elaborate system of kapu or taboo was created to maintain harmony and balance with nature while also providing subsistence for its people. This was considered the cornerstone that supported the ancient Hawaiian culture (Lind, 1934).

The religion consisted of four major gods, Ku (god of war and chiefs), Kane (creator of man), Lono (god of agriculture), and Kanaloa (god of the ocean) and also additional lesser but powerful gods and spirits including aumakua or spiritual ancestors (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972a). Within this worldview, humankind, the Kanaka Maoli, had the duty to protect all other species. Thus the core of the Hawaiian culture was built on two belief structures: (a) the Ihi Kapu or the consecrated law that enabled the Hawaiian people to live in harmony with one another, with nature and the spiritual realm; and (b) the Haikala which is the psycho-spiritual process of untangling oneself (involving the mihikala protocol of repentance of error) and healing which allows a person to “elevate their earthly presence to a place where their divining self can express itself in this material world, allowing its influence to bring about conditions of health and prosperity for all (Cook, Witty, & Tarallo-Jensen, 2003, p. 3).” Even in the isolation of 2,000 miles of ocean surrounding the Hawaiians islands, the Hawaiians were able to achieve cultural stability and self-sufficiency prior to Western contact in 1778.

During Captain James Cook’s journeys of the Pacific Islands, which took him from Tahiti to other islands, he arrived on January 18, 1778 at Hawai’i, signifying Native Hawaiians’ first contact with Western culture. Captain Cook and his crew cultivated many stereotypes about the Native Hawaiian people; for example they were characterized as friendly and hospitable with a propensity...
toward thievery (Lind, 1934) and also were “dreadful, mercenary, artful villains” (Meares, 1788–1789).

Additional contacts with the Western world included the first missionaries who arrived on March 20, 1820, from New England in order to spread Christianity and to further destroy Native Hawaiian cultural traditions. Missionary families soon joined with Caucasian businessmen in taking ownership of land, politics, and the economy. Hawaiian language use and cultural practices were discouraged as pagan and primitive.

Because there were so few Native Hawaiian men (i.e., estimates of less than 3000) during this period, the Legislature approved the hiring of foreign laborers from China, Japan, and Portugal to work in the growing sugar and pineapple industries. Floods of workers from these countries came to Hawai‘i. They were followed by workers from Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In combination with the Caucasians (from America and Europe), these populations soon outnumbered the Native Hawaiian people, who were rapidly dying from disease and who were intermarrying.

One of the lowest points in the population decline of the Native Hawaiian people was reached in 1876 when only 53,900 Native Hawaiian people were reported to be living in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. King David Kalakaua states of his people: “One day their words will be heard no more forever.”

On January 16, 1893, the U.S. Minister to Hawai‘i, John Stevens, with a group of American businessmen and the help of the U.S. Navy, invaded the sovereign Hawaiian nation without permission or approval of the U.S. government. On January 17, 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani, the last queen, and the Hawaiian monarchy, were overthrown by a group of American businessmen. This tragic event was called the Onipaa by Native Hawaiians.

President Cleveland investigated the overthrow of the monarchy, declared it an “act of war,” and called for restoration of the Hawaiian monarchy. The provisional government declared itself as the Republic of Hawai‘i.

The annexationists put down a Native Hawaiian rebellion to restore Queen Lili‘uokalani and tried and convicted her for treason on January 7, 1895. She was sentenced to 5 years in jail (she actually served 21 months).

On July 7, Hawai‘i became a territory of the United States without a single Native Hawaiian vote. The United States annexed the former Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

Table 1
Chronological History of Native Hawaiians (Kanaka Maoli) 1 CE to 1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 A.D.</td>
<td>The first Native Hawaiian people arrived in the Hawaiian Islands from the Marquesas, Tahiti, or the Society Islands sailing double-hulled canoes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1–1400</td>
<td>Migration between Polynesia and the Hawaiian Islands continued and the Islands grew in population. Settlement occurred across all major islands (i.e., Hawaii [Owhyhee], Maui [Mowee], Molokai [Morotoi], Lanai [Renai], Oahu [Wooahoo], and Kauai [Atotii]). Different kingdoms led by various chiefs or royal families (ali‘i) were established across the islands. Land was cultivated and hierarchical societies were established. Around 1400, travel between Polynesia and Hawai‘i ceased.</td>
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<td>1778</td>
<td>Captain James Cook arrived in the Hawaiian Islands with two ships: HMS Resolute and HMS Discovery. This was the first contact between the Native Hawaiians and Europeans. Captain Cook named the Hawaiian Islands the “Sandwich Islands.” Population estimates at the time of Captain Cook’s arrival varied from 300,000 to 800,000.</td>
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<td>1778–1878</td>
<td>Many Native Hawaiians became ill and died from diseases spread by Captain Cook’s men (e.g., tuberculosis, measles, smallpox, syphilis). Within 100 years from Cook’s arrival, it is estimated that less than 10% of the Native Hawaiians remained.</td>
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<td>1779</td>
<td>Captain Cook was killed by the Native Hawaiians in a battle at Kealakekua Bay on the Island of Hawai‘i.</td>
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<td>1810</td>
<td>All the Hawaiian Islands were united for the first time under the leadership of Kamehameha I. Prior to this time, different islands were separate kingdoms. A Hawaiian monarchy was established.</td>
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<td>1819</td>
<td>First whaling ships arrived in Kealakekua, Hawai‘i, signaling the beginning of a thriving whaling industry and the further demise of the Native Hawaiian people.</td>
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<td>First American missionaries arrived in Hawai‘i to spread Christianity and to further destroy Native Hawaiian cultural traditions. Missionary families soon joined with Caucasian businessmen in taking ownership of land, politics, and the economy.</td>
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international policies and treaties that established Hawai‘i as a nation. The Hawaiians have never relinquished their status as a sovereign nation (Sai, 2008). However, while Native Hawaiians began to find a balance between Western notions of leadership and government and maintaining their own indigenous culture, values, and knowledge, Westerners continued to hold a firm perception of these Natives as inferior savages in need of Western salvation.

Adams (1934) wrote how transient sailors and white exploiters broke down the native order and subsequently made claims of native incompetence, thus establishing the need for foreign governments to set up control of these people and their lands. The Native Hawaiian monarchy at times was forced to submit to unjust demands “backed up by foreign warships ...” (p. 157) and that the character of these demands were never to come to the attention of the civilized world” (Adams, 1934). In addition, the stereotype of Native Hawaiians as lazy was derived from the planters who regarded these indigenous people as being indolent and in need of constant supervision. Brown (1847 as cited in Lind, 1934) described Native Hawaiian laborers as deceptive and thus required constant supervision.

These observations, writings, and beliefs about Native Hawaiians influenced how these indigenous people of Hawai‘i viewed themselves. These perspectives influenced the psyche of the Na-
tive Hawaiian people, particularly as their society and culture began to succumb to Western ideology. In Rufus Anderson’s *The Hawaiian Islands* (1865) a Native Hawaiian stated, “We, the ancient men of Kamehameha’s time were once idolaters, murderers . . . were once buried in darkness, sunk to the lowest depths of ignorance, roaming the fields and woods, like wild beasts . . . plunging into the darkness of hell. Now we are clothed like civilized beings” (p. 166). The stereotype of the savage was therefore imprinted on the psyche and soul of the Native Hawaiian people and contributed to Hawaiian leaders to express little hope for the future.

King Kalakaua, the last king of the Hawaiian people (see Figure 3), wrote in 1888:

> . . . the natives are steadily decreasing in numbers and gradually losing hold upon the fair land of their fathers. Within a century they have dwindled . . . to landless, hopeless victims to the greed and vices of civilization. They are slowly sinking under the restraints and burdens of their surroundings, and will in time succumb to social and political conditions foreign to their natures . . . until finally their voices will be heard no more forever” (Kalakaua, 1888, p. 64–65 as cited in Nordyke, 1989, p. 27).

By 1876, only 53,900 Native Hawaiian people were reported living in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

On January 16, 1893, the U.S. Minister to Hawai‘i, John Stevens, with a group of American businessmen and the help of the U.S. Navy invaded the sovereign Hawaiian nation without the permission or approval of the U.S. Government. On January 17, 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani (see Figure 4), the last queen, and the Hawaiian monarchy were overthrown by a group of American businessmen. President Cleveland investigated the overthrow of the monarchy, declared it an “act of war” and called for restoration of the Hawaiian monarchy (Osborne, 1998). However, Cleveland’s words went unheeded and the Provisional government declared itself as the Republic of Hawai‘i in 1894 (Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). On July 7, 1898, Hawai‘i became a territory of the United States without a single vote from the Native Hawaiians. As a testimony of her struggle to save the Native Hawaiian Kingdom and her strength and resilience drawn from her heritage and spirituality, Queen Lili‘uokalani wrote to her adopted daughter:

> I could not turn back the time for political change but there is still time to save our heritage. You must remember never to cease to act because you fear you may fail. The way to lose any earthly kingdom is to be inflexible, intolerant and prejudicial. Another way is to be too flexible, tolerant of too many wrongs and without judgment at all. It is a razor’s edge, it is the width of a blade of pili grass (Lili‘uokalani, 1917).

Lili‘uokalani (1917) described the struggle of Native Hawaiians as finding the delicate balance between navigating the Western world and its notions while also reaffirming the roots of the Hawaiian culture. It is this struggle not only for the Hawaiian psyche, but also for the Hawaiian people and its community as a whole, that has been dealt with over multiple generations. As the colonization in the 19th century resulted in negative views of Native Hawaiians, significant events in the 20th century (see Table 2) helped shape the movement for Native Hawaiians to again navigate and chart their own path toward the reemergence and reclaiming of their indigenous ways of knowing, being, and living.

In an attempt to make amends for the illegal overthrow Congress passed the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1921 which set aside 200,000 acres of the land to be used to establish homelands for Native Hawaiians with 50% or more Hawaiian blood (Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, 2005; Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001; Spoehr et al., 1998). The beginning of the 20th century is also the beginning of the remodeling and stabilizing character of the Hawaiian (Lind, 1934). With the development of secret societies and lodges a growing sense of pride and respect for oneself as a Hawaiian emerged. Local and international entities recognized and appreciated Native Hawaiians’ contributions in their traditional music, folklore, dance, and chants which provided a more positive view of the Hawaiian people. A part-Hawaiian dean of a church articulated this newfound pride and development of a strong Hawaiian psyche:

> . . . the Hawaiian, no matter how dark or poor he may be, must have a conscientious pride and faith and belief in his ability . . . he must possess a well-calculated faith . . . No race that despises itself . . . can stand secure on the onward march of the world’s forces. And no individual that belittles or hates his race can ever be a respectable and vital Ingredient in the life of that race” (p. 243–244, Lind, 1934).

In 1959, Hawai‘i became the 50th state with the federal government returning the ceded lands (i.e., the lands that were once property of the Hawaiian monarchy, which is approximately 1.8 million acres) to the state. One purpose for the use of the ceded lands was to enhance the quality of life among Native Hawaiian people. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs was created in 1978 to manage this share of the ceded land revenues (Bolante, 2003) with the mission to protect Native Hawaiian rights and the environmental resources in order to perpetuate the culture and promote the health of this indigenous group (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2003).

Significant events occurred in the 1970s which created opportunities for the resurgence of the Hawaiian culture. This revival of the Hawaiian culture is commonly referred to as the Hawaiian Renaissance. This rebirth resulted in a renewed interest in traditional language, music (*mele*), dance (*hula*), arts and crafts (H. McCubbin & L. McCubbin, 1997). On May 1st, 1976 the *Hokule‘a*, a Polynesian voyaging canoe, made its maiden voyage to Tahiti, which proved the exploration and voyaging skills of the Polynesian people. This journey and its subsequent voyages provided a sense of deep cultural pride for Native Hawaiians and “the *Hokule‘a* emerged as a cultural icon credited with helping spark a general cultural renaissance among the Hawaiians” (Finney, 2004, p. 299). Another significant event was the occupation of Kaho‘olawe (an island off the coast of Maui) in 1976 by a group of nine people, including Native Hawaiians and an American Indian to protest the U.S. Navy’s bombing of the island (Blacksford, 2004). This historical event was followed by many other occupations and protests against the U.S. military and the need for restoration of this island. This movement for the restoration of Kaho‘olawe became an important issue for Native Hawaiians and also served as a catalyst for the Renaissance (Blacksford, 2004).

In 1993, the history of oppression of the Hawaiian people and the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was formally recognized by the United States and the State of Hawai‘i. President Clinton signed Public Law 103–150 which acknowledged the 100th year commemoration of the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and a formal
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1900–1930</td>
<td>Arrival of Asian immigrants, especially Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese plantation workers, continued. Queen Lili‘uokalani established an organization dedicated to the welfare of orphaned and destitute children in the state of Hawaii, with preference given to Native Hawaiian children; this became the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center. Hawaii Homes Commission Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in an effort to rehabilitate Native Hawaiians and restore the population.</td>
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<td>1940s</td>
<td>U.S. military began to use Kaho‘olawe, an island off the coast of Maui, as a bombing range.</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. Hawaii became a major location for American military operations for the Pacific War. The landscape and cultural life of Hawaii was permanently altered.</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>President D. Eisenhower transferred Kaholawe to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy.</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Hawaii became the 50th U.S. State.</td>
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<td>1964–1974</td>
<td>During the Vietnam War era, American military once again used Hawaii as a major base for military campaign. A resurgence of activism has arisen among Native Hawaiian people, including numerous civil protests, and cries for Native Hawaiian sovereignty and nationhood. Many schools have been opened to teach Hawaiian languages. Native Hawaiian activists are calling for the preservation of Native Hawaiian culture and are pushing for various kinds of national and international recognition of Hawaiian people. The restoration of Kaho‘o‘olawe becomes an important issue for Native Hawaiians and serves as a catalyst for Native Hawaiian renaissance.</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>Mary Pukui, a revered Native Hawaiian (Respected elder), published Nana I Ke Kumu (Look to the Source) in collaboration with E. Haertig and C. Lee. This work (Volume 1 and 2) discusses traditional Native Hawaiian wisdom, values, beliefs using Mary Pukui’s rich store of personal memories. The U.S. Congress included Native Hawaiians in American Indian/Alaskan Native legislation; the first grantee from the Administration for Native Americans was Alu Like, Inc. Attempts were made by Dean Windsor Cutting to allow nontraditional students to enroll in medical school as “guests” to increase the number of underrepresented minorities, including Native Hawaiians. Herb Kane, Ben Finney, and Tommy Holmes founded the Pacific Voyaging Society. The Hokule‘a, a Polynesian voyaging canoe, was launched and became a symbol of Native Hawaiian pride and navigational skills. The vessel sailed to Marquesas and Tahiti islands using traditional navigation methods, repeating historic voyages. Alan Howard, a University of Hawaii professor in anthropology, with long experience among Pacific Island cultures, published Ain’t No Big Thing: Coping Strategies in a Hawaiian-American Community. Honolulu, HI: East-West Center Press. Alu Like, Inc., a nonprofit organization, was established to assist Native Hawaiians towards social and economic self-sufficiency. Nine people, known as the Kaho‘o‘olawe Nine, occupy Kaholawe to protest the bombing of the island. The Bishop Estate, an educational, cultural, and financial trust created at the turn of the century as the legacy of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, emerged as a major social force in Hawaii through its ownership of leased land. Its mission is to promote educational development of students of native Hawaiian ancestry. Benjamin Young, M.D., a psychiatrist of Hawaiian-Chinese ancestry published a chapter entitled “The Hawaiians” in J. McDermott, et al. (Eds.) People and Culture of Hawaii. Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii. A consent decree was signed with the members of the Protect Kaho‘o‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) with a memorandum of understanding requiring the U.S. Navy to begin soil conservation, revegetation, and goat eradication of the island. Gene Kassebaum, a sociology professor at UH published Crime and Justice Related to Native Hawaiians in the State of Hawaii. (Alu Like, Honolulu, Hawaii), which documented disproportionate numbers of Native Hawaiians in penal system and sentencing offenses. Andrew White, a psychiatrist, and Marilyn Landis, a sociologist, published The Mental Health of Native Hawaiians. Honolulu, HI: Alu Like, Inc. White is a psychiatrist who works in the Native Hawaiian communities on Leeward Oahu. U. S. Congress produces the Native Hawaiians Study Commission Report—21-month study of the culture, needs, and concerns of Native Hawaiians. E Ola Mau Native Hawaiian Health Needs Study Report (E Ola Mau) published by Alu Like, Inc. which identified the physical, mental, spiritual, and dental health needs of Native Hawaiians. Victoria Shook published Ho‘oponopono. Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii. The Hawaiian Studies Program at University of Hawaii was languishing. The only faculty member was a .50 non-tenured track elderly Hawaiian, Abraham Pi‘ianai‘a. At the same time, Haunani Kay Trask, a female Hawaiian activist was petitioning for tenure and promotion in the American Studies Program where she was an assistant professor. However, internal conflicts in the American Studies Program emerged regarding her petition. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (OVPPAA) mediated the conflicts that emerged in effort to resolve differences. A decision was reached to assign Professor Haunani Kay Trask and her 1.00 FTE to the Hawaiian Studies Program. Professor Trask thus became the first full-time tenured member of the Hawaiian Studies Faculty. The University of Hawaii initiated a report on the status of Native Hawaiians and higher education needs. This report, entitled KA‘U was prepared by Native Hawaiians, including some of the most prominent members of the UH system faculty (e.g., Isabel Abbot, Kekuni Blaisdell, Larry Kimura, Haunani Kay Trask, Abe Pi‘ianai‘a) and talented graduate students who assume future leadership roles (e.g., Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, Davianna MacGregor). The KA‘U Report calls for the development of Native Hawaiian Studies Center with four tenured faculty positions and funds to support teaching, research, and outreach activities. It was the birth of the now famous Native Hawaiian Studies Center that became part of the new School for Hawaiian Asian and Pacific Studies (SHAPS). The E Ola Mau Report on Native Hawaiian health status was submitted to the U. S. Congress by Alu Like, a Native Hawaiian research and training organization. The report documented the serious medical, psychological, and dental problems of the Native Hawaiian people. Federally funded programs were designed and implemented to address the problems. For the first time, a person of Native Hawaiian ancestry, John A. Waihee, was elected governor of the State of Hawaii. He served for two 4-year terms. The Native Hawaiian Studies program was initiated at the University of Hawaii with tenured faculty positions. There was an increase of Native Hawaiian students attending the University of Hawaii.</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Britt Robillard and Anthony J. Marsella published <em>Contemporary Issues in Mental Health Research in the Pacific Islands</em> (Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii). This volume contains several chapters on Native Hawaiian mental health including a chapter on the cultural accommodation of mental health services for Native Hawaiians by Nicholas Higginbotham.</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The U.S. Congress passed the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (PL 100–597), Section 2(3)—42 USC 11701; the purpose was to raise the health status of the Native Hawaiians. Papa Ola Lokahi was formed with representatives from 25 public agencies and private organizations; this was the first effort to establish an infrastructure to address Native Hawaiian health issues.</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Papa Ola Lokahi’s Native Hawaiian Health Master Plan was created to develop appropriate and culturally acceptable health care programs and delivery for Native Hawaiians. The population of State of Hawai‘i exceeded 1,100,000 people distributed across the islands: Ethnocultural minorities make of more than 75% of the State’s population: Caucasian (262,604), Japanese (222,014), Part-Hawaiian (196,367), Other Mixed Race (190,789), Filipino (123,642), Chinese (51,293), African-American (16,180), Korean (11,597), Pure-Hawaiian (8,711), Samoans (3,235), and Puerto Ricans (3,140). These population figures are inaccurate for 1996. Rapid influxes of legal immigrants into Hawai‘i (e.g., Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese populations) and illegal immigrants by other groups (e.g., Chinese, Mexican) within the last decade resulted in sizeable increases in the population of these groups and proportionate reductions in the population distribution of other groups. The Native Hawaiian Mental Health Research Development Project (NHMMRDP) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was established with the goal to conduct interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, mental health-related research for Asian and Pacific Islanders. The U.S. Government returned the Island of Kaho‘olawe to the State of Hawaii, along with a congressional appropriation exceeding $400 million for its restoration, following decades of military use/abuse including constant practice bombing operations. Sizeable Federal Government grants and entitlement funds for health, education, economic, and social demonstration projects became available to the Hawaiian people and the State of Hawai‘i. Sovereignty movement grew in strength and determination. The Office of Hawaii Affairs managed an election procedure to determine Native Hawaiian interest in various forms of self-government. The Office of Hawaiian Health declared a serious health crisis for the indigenous people of Hawai‘i. The Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program was established in order to train Native Hawaiians to become health professionals in Hawai‘i, including clinical psychologists. The Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE) at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) was established. The first graduate course in Native Hawaiian Culture and Behavior was taught in University of Hawaii Psychology Department by A.J. Marsella, Kamanao Crabbe, and Patrick Uchigakuchi. Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa published <em>Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Shall We Live in Harmony</em>. Honolulu, Hawaii: Bishop Museum Press. The volume documents abuses of Native Hawaiian culture and exploitation of Native Hawaiian people and served as a rallying point for emerging Hawaiian activism. Legislation amended and reauthorized the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (Public Law 102–396). Haunani Kay Trask, the first tenured professor of the Hawaiian Studies Center, published <em>From a Native Daughter: Colonialism &amp; Sovereignty in Hawaii</em>. Monroe, MA: Common Courage Press. The volume documents historical violations and abuses of Native Hawaiians and their culture and calls for a sovereign Hawaii under Native Hawaiian rule. Congress passed a resolution and President Clinton signed Public Law 103–150 which acknowledged the 100th year commemoration of the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and a formal apology to Native Hawaiians for the improper role of the United States military in support of the overthrow (Hawaii Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). William Rezentes published <em>Ka Lama Kukui: Hawaiian Psychology: An Introduction</em>. Honolulu, Hawaii. The first Native Hawaiian Health and Wellness Summit was held in September, as well as publication of the special issue <em>The Health of Native Hawaiians in the Pacific Health Dialog: Journal of Community Health and Clinical Medicine for the Pacific</em>. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, written by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, was published by Zed Books. Senator Daniel Akaka introduced a bill, the U.S. Senate Bill 344 called the Native Hawaiian Recognition Act which would allow for federal recognition of Native Hawaiian people as a distinct indigenous entity similar to the Native American tribal status. The creation of the Rural Hawaii Behavioral Health Program (RHHBP) was established, incorporating Native Hawaiian cultural values, beliefs, and practice in conjunction with primary care psychology. Hamilton McCubbins, a native Hawaiian, was named the first CEO and Chancellor of the Kamehameha Schools (formerly Bishop Estate), a multi-billion dollar trust was dedicated to the education of Native Hawaiians. The creation of the Rural Hawaii Behavioral Health Program (RHHBP) was established, incorporating Native Hawaiian cultural values, beliefs, and practice in conjunction with primary care psychology. Hamilton McCubbins, a native Hawaiian, was named the first CEO and Chancellor of the Kamehameha Schools (formerly Bishop Estate), a multi-billion dollar trust was dedicated to the education of Native Hawaiians.</td>
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apology to Native Hawaiians for the improper role of the United States military in support of the overthrow (Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). This historical event was a formal acknowledgment by the U.S. Government of the “illegal overthrow” of 1893 and represented a step forward toward reconciliation between the U.S. and the Native Hawaiian people (Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2001). This event infused a sense of optimism and renewed energy in the sovereignty movement. In 2000, Senator Daniel Akaka introduced a bill which would have allowed for federal recognition of Native Hawaiian people as a distinct indigenous entity similar to Native American tribal status. However this bill, U.S. Senate Bill 344, called the Native Hawaiian Recognition Act was defeated in 2006.

Native Hawaiians continue to struggle and face challenges in protecting their indigenous rights and ceded lands. Individuals and groups with legal representation have been leading a campaign against Native Hawaiian entitlements including challenging the funding of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Native Hawaiian Homelands, and educational programs for Native Hawaiian children on the premise that these programs are violating the U.S. Constitution due to its race-based criteria for the distribution of services and resources (see McCubbin & Dang, in press).

The revival of Hawaiian culture, language and practices and the increasing number of people in the United States identifying themselves as Native Hawaiians are indicators that this ethnic group is strong and thriving. The historical trends found in this overview of Hawaiian history, from the oppression and colonization of the 19th century to the rebirth and renewal of the Hawaiian culture in the 20th and 21st century, can be seen in the history of psychology and the research and methodologies used to study this indigenous population.

Trends in Psychology and Research on Native Hawaiians

Psychology applied to the study of Native Hawaiians was shaped and influenced by the colonial history of the Hawaiian people and the Islands. The postcolonial period after 1778 within the field of psychology can be characterized by three specific approaches: (a) the deficit approach (1800s to 1950s); (b) the cultural interaction approach (1960s to 1970s); and (c) the indigenous approach (1970s to present day).

The Deficit Approach

According to Ridley (1995) the deficit model views ethnic minorities as having predetermined deficiencies which are used to relegate minorities to an inferior status (Thomas & Sillen, 1972). This perspective, also referred to as scientific racism, encompasses research conducted under the guise of studying racial differences when in fact the studies were linked with White supremacist notions (Guthrie, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2003). This deficit approach has a long history in psychological research and has been used in researching Native Hawaiians. In reviewing the literature on Native Hawaiians in the late 1800s and the first half of the 20th century, multiple studies were conducted, solely ranking racial groups by their superiority and thus determining the inferiority of the Hawaiian race.

Samuel George Morton, a leader among American polygenists, conducted one of the first research studies based on a deficit model. Morton’s work ranked the mental capacity of different
races using the volume of the cranial cavity as his measure (Gould, 1996). This research was used to provide empirical evidence of the mental worth of human races, with the Caucasian group as having the highest mental worth, followed by Asians, then Polynesians (where Native Hawaiians were categorized), American Indians, and lastly African Americans (Morton, 1849 as cited in Gould, 1996). Morton failed to take into account gender, body type, nutrition, and various other confounding variables that would impact the volume of the cranial cavity. This was the beginning of 100 years of research comparing Native Hawaiians to other racial groups in the United States to demonstrate this indigenous group’s “inferiority.”

G. Stanley Hall, the founder of organized psychology as a science and profession and a national leader in education, wrote about Native Hawaiians in 1904 as part of his multivolume work on adolescence. He referred to the Hawaiians as similar to other tropical races and that Hawaiians did not suffer from ignorance but rather from “weakness of character, idleness and the vices it breeds” (Hall, 1904, p. 658). He described Hawaiians as behaviorally lacking control, morally inert and sluggish, and developmentally like “infants,” similar to Adam and Eve in Eden, people who had not encountered hardship. He articulated a process of strengthening the race and changing the natives’ mental abilities through interracial marriage. His characterization of Hawaiians was the predominant view of indigenous people in psychology and subsequently these stereotypes heavily influenced research methodology and interpretations of empirical findings.

Various studies conducted in the first half of the 19th century made racial comparisons on the following variables: IQ (intelligence) or TQ (test quotient; Livesay, 1942; Porteus, 1930), recall ability, (Louttit, 1931a, 1931b) and neurotic tendencies (Smith, 1938). Each of these studies included a subsample of Native Hawaiians. Porteus (1930) compared racial groups on “mentality” examining Chinese, Japanese, part-Hawaiian, Hawaiian, Portuguese, and Caucasian children from ages 9 through 14 years. When compared to Caucasians, Hawaiians scored lower on mental alertness. It was interesting that those children who were identified as part-Hawaiian with a mixture of White or Chinese scored higher on mental awareness than pure Hawaiians, yet still lower than Caucasians. Overall Portuguese, Hawaiians, and part-Hawaiians scored significantly below Asians and Caucasians on intelligence testing. Only the Japanese children scored higher on various intelligence activities when compared with Caucasian children. All other racial groups tended to score lower than the Caucasian group.

Each of these studies provided limited information on the methodology of the testing and little commentary on additional environmental factors that may have affected their findings. Livesay (1942) examined racial differences in scores on the American Council Psychological Exams among high school seniors in Hawaii. According to the researcher:

\[\ldots\] it is immaterial in this connection whether these tests really measure innate mental ability or reflect environmental differentials \ldots the manifest differences are real and must be allowed for in educational, vocational, and civil and social activities of a community” (p. 90).

Caucasian students scored higher than all the other groups including: Chinese, Hawaiian, part-Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Portuguese students. Caucasian-Hawaiian students were second and Asiatic-Hawaiian students were above Portuguese and Filipino students. All Hawaiians were considered a “hybrid” of two races and therefore no sole Hawaiian category was included. These hybrid rankings also yielded an own interesting racial hybrid hierarchy with Caucasian-Hawaiians before Asiatic-Hawaiians or Portuguese-Hawaiians. Research during this time was used to support the racial hierarchy of the society along with support for Hall’s conclusions that racial mixing would lead to increased mental ability. Louttit (1931a) examined racial comparisons of memory ability, specifically studying immediate recall of logical and nonsense material among 12-year-olds and university students in four racial groups: White, Japanese, Chinese, and Hawaiian. Whites only tested favorably (i.e., superior) to the other racial groups on 10 out of 24 comparisons. However the author concluded there were no real differences between the racial groups studied. In addition, Louttit (1931b) provided empirical evidence to support Hall’s assertion that racial mixing would increase the mental capacity of Native Hawaiians with mixed raced-Hawaiians scoring higher than pure-blooded Hawaiians on various intelligence tests. However racial bias, socialization, prejudice, and discrimination were not measured as possible reasons for these differences during this time period.

Smith (1938) examined racial group differences using scores on the Thurstone Neurotic Inventory. The study found that part-Hawaiians and Koreans scored significantly higher, and therefore were considered to be the most neurotic groups, as compared with Japanese, Chinese, Caucasian, and Portuguese groups. One explanation for the higher neurotic tendency of part-Hawaiians was due to the “difficulty of adjusting themselves to the problems of mixed ancestry” (p. 400). The investigator also pointed out that Cauca-
sians may have less neurotic tendencies due to their “greater prestige in the Islands” (p. 411). Upon further examination of the scores for Native Hawaiians, this group was found to show more self confidence and ease in social situations; however, they were the “most discontented group,” because they thought they were unlucky and deserved a better lot in life. Environmental factors, such as the overthrow of the monarchy or the cultural genocide of their people, were not mentioned. Considering the historical context, these findings could be interpreted as outcomes of the impact of colonization and oppression among Native Hawaiians. However this theme of neurosis among part-Hawaiians due to problems of mixed ancestry was seen in other psychological research. The problem of mixed ancestry was used to explain discontent or racial discrepancies when compared with their Caucasian counterparts. Stonequist (1937) in his book The Marginal Man included part-Hawaiians in his investigation of the marginalization of mixed-race men.

Adams (1934) wrote a chapter entitled The Unorthodox Race Doctrine of Hawaii where he presented the unique race relations found in the Hawaiians Islands where races at some level were treated as “equal” and how this was unorthodox from the standpoint of English-speaking White people. He pointed out the trend of White men, who had preconceived notions about race and privilege, had to change their behaviors to adjust to Hawai‘i’s ritual of race relations. White men had observed the racial equality traditions on the Islands such as calling every male of any race by the title of “Mister” in order to transition from being a malabini, a new person who was not sympathetic to the local race relations, to a kamaaina, a person who was a part of the society and followed the racial doctrines set in Hawai‘i. However Adams (1934) documented that although a “White man” may have observed these traditions, these behaviors were not linked to changes in racial ideology or beliefs about racial equality. For example a young White man from a southern state sang the following words “You may call ‘em Hawaiians, but they look like niggers to me” (p. 154) despite living in Hawai‘i, marrying a Native Hawaiian woman, and having part-Hawaiian children.

The negative stereotypes of Hawaiians also impacted educational psychology and research on Native Hawaiian children’s performance in schools. Pratt (1929), upon examination of school achievement among Japanese, Chinese, part-Hawaiian, and Hawaiian students (ages 12 through 15), found Hawaiians scoring the lowest on every section in the Stanford Achievement Advanced Examination. In her conclusions, Pratt explained that all teachers were familiar with the “typical Hawaiian ‘misoit’” and that Hawaiian students were “older, big, nice, pleasant and agreeable” yet “indolent” and “inefficient in schools” (Pratt, 1929, p. 667). She also stated that the educational system at the time was trying to force the Native Hawaiian into a model by which “he is, by native ability and by interests, completely unfitted” (p. 668). Pratt summarized that there were a large percentage of Native Hawaiians who were in fact “retarded.” Pratt alluded to contextual factors such as curriculum and teaching styles for these racial discrepancies, but referred to these as necessary to take care of the misfits in any racial group.

The Cultural Interaction Approach

The comparison of Hawaiians with other races in the early 1900s continued during the 1950s through the 1970s. During these two decades, there seemed to be a subtle shift from looking for evidence to support a racially inferior hypothesis toward investigations on Hawaiians while examining them within the context of their culture. During this time period, the conceptualization of culture ranged from a very broad construct to a rather narrow one, depending upon the researcher(s)’ definition. The second trend of psychological research on Native Hawaiians lies in the words “on” and “them.” The researchers were still “outsiders” observing Native Hawaiians as a separate and unique cultural phenomenon. A belief in the objectiveness of the scientific methodology used by Western researchers still persisted with limited awareness of these social scientists being potential prisoners of their own cultural conditioning (Ridley, 1995) as well as perpetuating forms of oppression. Despite studies using Native voices and Native stories, authorship and “discoveries” were still made by the Western researcher rather than including Native Hawaiian scholars. Very few Native Hawaiian scholars and researchers were acknowledged for their contributions within the psychology field during this time.

In their book Culture, Behavior and Education: A Study of Hawaiian Americans, Gallimore, Boggs, and Jordan (1974) viewed the behavior of Hawaiians as a product of a “coherent cultural system” rather than as a deficit or an innate pathology of these indigenous people. The researchers viewed the differences in educational outcomes, not as an indicator of deviance, but rather due to (a) the conflict between two cultures (majority culture and Hawaiian) and (b) the failure of researchers and teachers to interpret the students’ behavior in a culturally relevant context. The data were collected over a 5-year period in a rural Hawaiian community, with the researchers having a long-term involvement with the families and the communities, while also collecting data through standardized interviews and questionnaires. The researchers investigated the community, the family system, infants, school-age children, socialization processes, peer effects, and school experience, help-seeking behavior, and achievement-oriented behavior.

The authors drew several conclusions worthy of note: (a) achievement was defined by the culture in terms of contribution to the family and the needs of others; (b) school conflicts may have occurred due to cultural conflicts, such as Hawaiians’ emphasis on sharing as a group rather than the school’s focus on individual evaluation; (c) conflict or contrast of a youth’s important role as a contributor to the family to their “status as underachieving students in school” (p. 263); (d) differences in how the native youth dealt with conflict; and (e) the misinterpretation of Hawaiian children’s peer interactions in the classroom as negative rather than the children supporting one another as a group. The authors indicated the absurdity in referring to Hawaiians as unmotivated or lazy because the values, goals and definitions of achievement (i.e., group affiliation and interaction rather than individual achievement) differed depending on culture and therefore their behaviors needed to be viewed as motivated and successful based on their cultural context.

This work is a clear example of the second trend in research, the cultural interaction approach. Specifically research on Hawaiians shifted from a deficit approach toward a more constructive perspective interpreting Native Hawaiians’ behavior within their cultural context. The “outsiders” rather than the indigenous people themselves were still conducting the majority of psychological research on Native Hawaiians.
The Indigenous Approach

With the establishment of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the voyaging of the Hokule‘a in the 1970s, a new paradigm of research was on the horizon for the Native people of the Hawaiian Islands. The reclaiming of the Native culture, traditions, values, and practices during the Hawaiian renaissance influenced multiple professions including mental health providers and social scientists. Learning from the limitations and biases of past research on Native Hawaiians by others outside of the culture, Native Hawaiian professionals and scholars implemented programs, organizations, and research projects for Native Hawaiian people incorporating indigenous knowledge. The two-volume Nana I Ke Kumu, Look to the Source (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972a, 1972b), an indigenous resource and reference on Native Hawaiians’ ways of living, knowing and being, was published and set the stage for the third trend in psychological research on Native Hawaiians. The publication of this key work was an example of the merging of (a) the reclaiming of the Hawaiian culture and (b) the emergence of indigenous ways of knowing as a separate and valuable entity for scholarship.

A commitment toward indigenous scholarship was demonstrated through the establishment of the Hawaiian Studies Program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. This program provided an academic space where scholars from all over the Pacific could engage in the study and research of Native Hawaiian culture and the perpetuation of the Hawaiian language. Subsequently in the 1970s through the 1990s, with help from various private and governmental funding agencies, mental health agencies, and research institutions were also established specifically focusing on Native Hawaiian people and their well-being.

The Native Hawaiian Mental Health Research Development Project (NHHRDP) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, was established in 1990 with the goal to conduct interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and mental health-related research for Asian and Pacific Islanders. Another program at the University established a year later was the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. This program focused on multiple levels in its commitment to indigenous people and native knowledge including the education of Native Hawaiians into the field of medicine while also conducting research to address and reduce the health disparities found in this population. These programs clearly demonstrate the shift in Native Hawaiians reclaiming their identity and knowledge and utilizing these assets in the perpetuation of their people and culture.

Organizations established by the foresight and leadership of the Hawaiian monarchy which still exist today, also focus on the physical and psychological well-being of Native Hawaiians based on indigenous practices. One key organization is the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center (QLCC), which is committed to the development of healthy children, strong families, stable home environments, and caring communities for the welfare of children. The QLCC has been instrumental in providing cultural indigenous practices to strengthen ‘ohana. For example, QLCC has used family strengthening techniques including the Hawaiian process of ho‘oponopono, an indigenous family healing process.

In addition, various academic and nonprofit institutions have made significant contributions in developing and conducting culturally relevant and responsible psychological research for Native Hawaiians. These organizations have made a clear commitment to having research on Native Hawaiians conducted by “insiders” that is, fellow Native Hawaiians. This represents a significant shift from the past where an “outsider” who had limited knowledge of the culture usually conducted research on Native Hawaiians. This shift has empowered Native Hawaiians to conduct their own evaluations and research in psychology for their respective communities using their cultural perspective and standards.

In a collaborative effort, various community based agencies with the leadership of Lois-Ellen Datta came together and formed the Evaluation Hui (meaning club or organization in Hawaiian) with the purpose to discuss indigenous research and evaluation standards when working with Native Hawaiians. This group worked toward the development of Native Hawaiian guidelines for culturally responsible evaluation and research. The Hui highlights the challenges and issues researchers face in working with Native peoples and the need to respect the language, culture and relationships within the community when conducting research. The Evaluation Hui also expanded beyond the principles of professional organizations (such as the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association) to include indigenous standards of research. The team emphasized the need to rely on cultural elders, kapuna, for knowledge and to include Native Hawaiians as researchers in the investigative process. Similar to the holistic model, the team outlined the necessity of using a comprehensive framework in research including emotional, spiritual and relational factors.

Given the historical trauma the Native Hawaiian people have faced, one important factor in the research of Native Hawaiians is the need to consider participants’ and researchers’ cultural awareness and perpetuation of the culture as ideal outcomes and their effects on the psychological well-being of this indigenous population. It is this fundamental aspect, the indigenous ways of knowing and being, which may be critical and vital to Native Hawaiian mental health.

Starting in the 21st century, several institutions and organizations have been created to promote the well-being of Native Hawaiians based on indigenous practices and methodologies. Two examples of these types of activities occurred at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. First the Hawai‘inuikea School of Hawaiian Knowledge under the leadership of Native Hawaiian educator Dr. Maenette Benham was established in 2007 thus creating one of the largest schools of indigenous knowledge in the United States. In addition, the School of Social Work was renamed the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work after a prominent Native Hawaiian who dedicated his life to public service for the benefit of the Hawaiian people. Community organizations have also been established such as the I Ola Lului, a rural behavioral health program which focuses on the health care needs of rural populations in Hawaii including the integration of Native Hawaiian cultural practices in clinical practice, research and evaluation. This program and other community health organizations are focused on serving Native Hawaiians and were created by emerging Native Hawaiian scholars including Drs. Aukahi Austin, Jill Oliveira Gray, Kamana‘opono Crabbe, and Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula. Other emerging Native Hawaiian scholars are Drs. Hannah Preston-Pita, Hoku Hoe, Kaliko Change, Halona Tanner, and Kaniala Kekaulike.
These are just a few examples of multiple projects, organizations, and research that have emerged over the past 30 years, which are dedicated to the well-being and healing of Native Hawaiians by their own people through their own practices. This emergence of culturally congruent and relevant practices and research demonstrates a new trajectory for the mental, spiritual, and physical health of Native Hawaiians.

The Future of Psychology and Native Hawaiians

With these trends firmly in mind and presented as a chronology one could infer that utilizing indigenous epistemology is the wave of the future for psychological research among Native Hawaiians. Indigenous ways of knowing can be applied to theory, clinical practice, and research in the counseling and psychology field. There is little doubt that other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, psychiatry, education, and social work, have already found this indigenous focus promulgated by the writing and investigations of the Maori nation, as well as Native Hawaiians (Smith, 1999; Ah Nee-Benham, 1998). The widely referenced work of Smith (1999) entitled Indigenous Methodologies focused the mandate for theories, research methods, policies, and practices based on indigenous knowledge. Indigenous populations are unique in their worldview, their holistic perspective to life and well-being, and thus, their psychology. Furthermore, indigenous knowledge has already given rise to indigenous practices for physical healing, psychological health, conflict resolution, interpersonal problem-solving, family relationships, community building, spiritual healing, and general well-being. With the revival of the Hawaiian language and the translation of Hawaiian publications written in Hawaiian, new insights and knowledge continues to flow into the psychological literature, thus giving birth to theories and practices embedded in Hawaiian history and knowledge, thought to be lost to the dominance of colonialism. An enriching future lies ahead with the proliferation of indigenous psychology.

History and historical markers buttressed by Census data highlighted in this article offer new challenges and potential promises to the advancement of psychology in the study of the Hawaiian people. There are compelling data pointing to the multiethnic nature of the Hawaiian people. In spite of the passion underlying the renaissance movement to find meaning in the historical roots of this indigenous population, the parallel and ever emerging emphasis on multiethnic and multiracial Hawaiians to understand their development, identity, health, and well-being is equally apparent. Empirical evidence is emerging, starting with the 2000 Census and more recent studies of all ethnic groups in Hawaii, which point to the significant positive differences in the health, education, occupation, academic achievement, and income of multiethnic Hawaiians from those who identify themselves as solely Hawaiian (Hart & McCubbin, 2005).

These two directions of research are not mutually exclusive nor in competition with each other, for they do both have much to offer the psychology profession and advancing understanding of the Hawaiian population. Indigenous knowledge brings new insights and potential confirmatory evidence of the importance of past practices and beliefs to Native Hawaiians. Colonization was accompanied by a loss of culture, language, traditions, beliefs, values, esteem, vision, and well-being all in the name of westernization, which places a premium on assimilation and subordination of indigenous people. Yet, history affirms time and time again the gradual but definitive resurgence of cultures, identities, and beliefs buttressed by the realization that indigenous knowledge is vital to the future of peoples whose roots have long and rich histories. It is the demand for survival that resurgence and revitalization of the Hawaiian culture and its people have found their place in 21st century. How well these indigenous populations negotiate their way through the dominance of the Western culture is determined, in a large part, by an understanding and revitalization of indigenous knowledge and its application and integration into research and clinical practice. In this article, we offered a perspective of the evolution of psychology of the Hawaiian people underscored by a belief that history paired with indigenous knowledge could if not should play a salient role in guiding the profession’s contributions to the psychological health, well-being, and self determination of all indigenous peoples.

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