

Pondering Poi Dog:
The Importance of Place to the Racial Identification
of Multi-Racial Native Hawaiians

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ABSTRACT

Given the very large proportion of Hawaiians who are multiracial, our research examines what conditions lead to Native Hawaiian identification among mixed-race Hawaiians. We use the 1990 Census, which affords a unique look at racial identification because multiracial people were required to choose one race over another. Our findings support the argument that strong ties to Hawai'i -- the cultural and geographic home of the Hawaiian population, its history, and its culture -- are vital to the intergenerational transmission of Hawaiian identification in both continental and island multiracial families. Our results also suggest some general patterns in correlates of racial identification choices upon comparison of multiracial Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Asian Americans. Although manifested differently in each group, the findings indicate that racial identification depends heavily on parental and geographic ties to the cultural and ancestral lands.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently in the United States, most people assumed that individuals and groups have only one ethnicity, which is something that people carry with them to American shores and progressively lose. Even pluralist treatments of American society as a multicultural mix of different groups assume that individual people are defined by one ethnicity. This assumption masks the reality that people, and especially groups, tend to be racially and/or ethnically mixed.

Because of its importance as a social marker, however, there remains a push for everyone, even those with mixed heritage, to identify with only one race/ethnicity. The reasons behind the push range from concerns about preserving ethnic culture and heritage to mobilizing political solidarity around specific issues. Foremost among the latter are efforts to achieve greater equality of opportunity for people of color. Among Native Hawaiians,¹ for example, attention has been drawn to socioeconomic marginalization and rapidly diminishing numbers of full-blooded Native Hawaiians. Recent decades have witnessed the Hawaiian renaissance, a resurgence of Native Hawaiian culture, language, and pride among those with Hawaiian heritage. With these changes have come new motivations for part-Hawaiian people to identify as Native Hawaiian. Adding to the importance of these identification decisions are ongoing political efforts to gain federal recognition of Native Hawaiians as the indigenous people of the Hawaiian islands, to recapture land rights and revenues, and to establish a Native Hawaiian governance body.

¹ In this paper, we use ‘Native Hawaiian’ and ‘Hawaiian’ as synonyms for those people whose ancestral heritage includes the indigenous people of Hawai‘i.

In this paper, we explore patterns of identification as Native Hawaiian among mixed race part-Hawaiians using data from the 1990 Census. In these data, as in most prior surveys, all individuals were asked to list only one race.² The people we study – and, indeed, most Native Hawaiians – are of mixed racial heritage, and thus the 1990 race question does not allow them to report their racial heritage accurately. However, this type of survey question does allow us the opportunity to learn which race is preferred in the common situation of being asked to choose one race.

We focus on the fundamental role of place in the intergenerational transmission of Native Hawaiian identity. Given the unique history of Hawai‘i and of the Hawaiian people, we expect that racial identity choices of mixed-race part-Native Hawaiian people will have somewhat different patterns and correlates than the identities of mixed race part-American Indians and of mixed race part-Asian Americans. On the other hand, Hawaiians have been compared to these other minority groups in other ways (e.g., Fernandez 1996, Braun et al. 1997) and may share some similarities in their patterns.

THE MIXED-RACE POPULATION IN HAWAI‘I

More so than any other group in the United States, the question of ethnicity among Hawaiians inevitably raises issues about multiethnicity or multiraciality. The rich ethnic diversity of Hawaiians stems from a history of an isolated, indigenous society turned immigrant plantation society turned major U.S. military and tourist hub. From the day

² To simplify our writing, we write as if census answers are self-reported, but readers should keep in mind that responses may have been reported by someone other than the ‘respondent.’

Captain Cook first graced the shores of Hawai‘i in 1778, over 100 years of western contact decimated the Native Hawaiian population by an estimated 90 per cent. By 1893, at the time of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, Hawaiians numbered about 35,000 full-blooded and nearly 9,000 part-Hawaiians (Nordyke 1989).

As the number of Hawaiians continued to dwindle, the non-Hawaiian population flourished rapidly. A surge in White immigration to Hawai‘i occurred in the early 1880s and by 1910, White immigrants outnumbered Hawaiians. Throughout the mid-1800s and early 1900s, the whaling industry and sugar plantations also brought laborer migrants from China, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Japan, the Philippines, Korea and other countries. More recent immigrants added to the mix, including those from Micronesia, Polynesia, and South East Asia (Nordyke 1989, Fuchs 1961).

In today’s Hawai‘i, about one-fifth to one-quarter of the population is Hawaiian, less than 1 per cent of whom are full-blooded. A minority in their homeland, Hawaiians have taken on the characteristics shared by other racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. As a group, they experience high morbidity and mortality rates, poor educational outcomes, and a marginalized socioeconomic position in U.S. society (Barringer, Gardner, and Levin 1993; Blaisdell 1993; Braun et al. 1997; Mokuau, Browne, and Braun 1998; Humes and McKinnon 2000; Srinivasan and Guillermo 2000, Kanaiaupuni and Ishibashi 2003a).

Because such a high proportion of the Hawaiian population is of mixed heritage, the general practice of requiring single race identification has made it difficult to count the population accurately. The 2000 census, however, marked a dramatic turning point, stimulated in part by heightened awareness and publicity about the multiracial and

multiethnic mix in society. In 2000, Americans were allowed to mark as many races as necessary on their census forms; the enumerated part-Native Hawaiian population grew tremendously as a result (Grieco and Cassidy 2001). Whereas in 1990 there were some 238,000 Native Hawaiians, Census 2000 reports about 401,000. Of people who reported Native Hawaiian race, 35 per cent reported *solely* Native Hawaiian race in Census 2000. The other 65 per cent claimed an additional race (Kanaiaupuni and Melahn 2001). Multiple race reporting was much lower among other groups. For example, only 40 per cent of those who reported American Indian or Alaska Native race, and 14 per cent of people who reported Asian race, reported an additional race in Census 2000 (Grieco and Cassidy 2001). Our analyses focus on the Native Hawaiian population before this growth and allow us a baseline for interpreting the Census 2000 data.

Most Native Hawaiians live in Hawai‘i. Whereas in 1990 the census reported 12 per cent of the state population Native Hawaiian, in 2000, Native Hawaiians accounted for roughly 20 per cent of the state population. This proportion compares more favorably to censuses conducted prior to statehood in 1959 and to the 1960 U.S. Census, which continued to permit Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian race responses. It is also comparable to the 22.1 per cent Hawaiian recorded by the Hawai‘i Department of Health in 2000, which permits multiple race reporting (Kanaiaupuni and Melahn 2001).³

³ Qualitative data (e.g., Spickard and Fong 1995) also support the idea that the Native Hawaiian population was miscounted when single-race identification was required.

CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND PLACE AMONG NATIVE HAWAIIANS

Recent growth in the identified part-Hawaiian population is notable partly because of the great importance – both symbolic and practical – of place to racial identity. Like many Pacific cultures, the relationship between identity and geographic place encompasses living off the natural resources of the land, naming practices, and historical connections to places (Kanahele 1986, Metge 1967, Lindstrom 1999). For many Hawaiians, the earth is a living entity, conscious and communicating (Kanahele 1986). Some argue that connection to the land is a key factor distinguishing Hawaiian families from other U.S. families today (Kanaiaupuni 2003). Hence, the saying, “ka maui o ka ‘āina a he maui kānaka, the life of the land is the life of the people” (see Oneha 2001, and for similar arguments about American Indian groups, see Eschbach 1992).

Physically, a deep source of Hawaiian connectedness is in geographic ties to the land (Oneha 2001). Although fewer Hawaiians cultivate land today, the reciprocal relationship of caring for the land (mālama ‘āina) as it cares for the people remains much like a deep family bond (Kame‘eleihiwa 1992). In addition, there are the symbolic connections to ancestry, history and cultural values firmly embedded in individual and collective definitions of place. Kanahele writes, “in the Hawaiian mind, a sense of place was inseparably linked with self-identity and self-esteem” (1986: 181). Considerable scholarship also goes into documenting thousands of place names in Hawai‘i, to preserve the rich legendary and historical significance of places to Hawaiian

cultural identity (e.g., Pūku‘i, Elbert and Mo‘okini 1974). Thousands more remain unrecorded, possibly lost forever.

As with other Pacific Islander groups, being able to link back to one’s ancestral ties is an essential component of Hawaiian identity. In ancient Hawai‘i, genealogical chants identified the lines of trust and social connection in addition to telling family histories. Delivered orally, they spoke of human creation and ancestry, all tied to specific geographic locations. These traditions are still important to many in contemporary Hawai‘i; it remains fairly common practice to identify one’s lineage and where one was raised. Kame‘elehiwa (1992) also emphasizes the importance of ancestral names that ground Hawaiians to an honored past, as much as they pave the way to a wiser future.

The importance of place to Hawaiian identity is empowered not only by ancestral ties, but also by the collective memory of a shared history. Hawai‘i, the place, connects the Hawaiian diaspora through “social relations and a historical memory of cultural beginnings, meanings and practices, as well as crises, upheavals and unjust subjections as a dispossessed and (mis)recognized people” (Halualani 2002, p. xxvi). As with genealogical chants, the public remembering of the shared history of Hawaiians is a catalyst for strengthened identity.⁴ Spickard and Fong (1995, p. 1375) point out that:

⁴ Indeed, land and identity are interwoven in many Pacific independence movements found in Vanuatu, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Hawai‘i (Lindstrom 1999). Some Hawaiian activists define a sovereign nation to include those who are “nā keiki o ka ‘āina, children of the land” (Laenui interview, <http://www.opihi.com/sovereignty/intervw.txt>)

there is something incantatory about certain ethnic political speech. It is as invigorating to ethnicity when a Pacific Islander American politician recites the history of abuse that her people have suffered, as when an island spiritual leader chants a genealogy...It is true history, but it is more than that: it is the act of rhetorically, publicly remembering, and thus it serves to strengthen the ethnic bond.

These cultural practices illustrate how place serves as the key connection linking multiracial families and children to their Native Hawaiian heritage, despite the extensive and long-standing multicultural and multiethnic mixing in the state of Hawai'i. Recent studies suggest that these values extend to Hawaiians living outside of Hawai'i as well as those in Hawai'i (Oneha 2001, Halualani 2002). The implication of this legacy, we argue, is that the strength of symbolic and physical ties to Hawai'i – the cultural home – is vital to the perpetuation of Hawaiian racial identification among multiracial children.

PARENTAL INPUTS AND CHILDREN'S RACIAL IDENTITY

Given significant racial mixing among Hawaiians, we explore what conditions lead multiracial individuals to identify as Native Hawaiian. We examine this question from the perspective of parents of multiracial Hawaiian children.⁵ Evidence shows that

⁵ Although unique, this perspective is far from uncommon. A quick search on parents of multiracial children on www.google.com generated 25,600 links, including many personal accounts about parents and their mixed race children. Parents and racial identity revealed more than 10 times that number.

parents, family and peers play a major role in shaping identities (Peterson 1989). Research documents the clear link between family practices and identity development of children (Taylor and Oskay 1995, Root 1992, Stevenson 1995). Studies find that parents who strongly identify with and value their ethnicity desire the same for their children and strive to raise children who value their ethnic heritage (Bowman and Howard 1985, Stevenson, Reed, and Bodison 1996). In multiracial families, these dynamics play out over time, reflecting areas of conflict and negotiation (Root 1992). Nevertheless, research suggests that family inputs are the major contributors to ethnic-racial identity development among mixed-race children (Quintana 1999). Thus, the impact on children's racial identity begins at birth through various inputs, which, we argue, may be revealed in the early choices parents make about what race to call their children.

A few other studies have examined in similar fashion the choices parents make about the race of their multiracial children in the U.S. These include research on Asian Americans and American Indians who, like Hawaiians, experience high rates of intermarriage (Labov & Jacobs 1986; Parkman & Sawyer 1967). Such studies have shown that racial identification of first-generation multiracial⁶ Asian American and

⁶ Daniel (1996) makes the distinction between first-generation multiracials and those whose mixed-race background is multigenerational. Daniel considers a person 'first-generation' mixed race if his or her parents are socially-and self-designated to be of different races, no matter what racial mixtures the parents may actually be.

'Multigenerational' mixed race people have mixed background only in earlier generations.

American Indian children is in some sense ‘optional’ (Xie and Goyette 1997; Liebler 2001). Parents choose to identify roughly half of children in each group as Asian American or American Indian respectively, and about half are considered the race of their other parent. Apart from these studies, relatively little is known about the racial identity choices that parents make for their children.

Although multiracial families may share some common experiences, we argue that several factors distinguish racial identity processes of Hawaiians compared to Asian Americans and American Indians. Foremost, Hawaiians share a unique legacy as the indigenous people of Hawai‘i, a history of U.S. colonization, and recent statehood. The strength of both physical and symbolic ties to this cultural and geographic legacy stands at the forefront of Hawaiian identity processes. Asian Americans, by definition, are separated from their Asian homelands. And, though American Indian reservations are in some ways similar to the Hawaiian homesteads in the state of Hawai‘i, the processes leading to these land arrangements were quite distinct for the two groups.

In light of the identification options that mixed-race families face, our primary research questions are threefold: first, how often do parents of part-Hawaiian children identify strongly enough with their Hawaiian identity to report it as the sole race of their children? The research noted earlier suggests high cultural expectations for the transmission of Hawaiian identity to new generations through genealogy and other place-related practices. But, what happens when choices must be made? Do the high intermarriage rates of Native Hawaiians offer an opportunity to recruit more Hawaiians of mixed heritage (through births) or do they tend to result in decreasing returns to the population base because parents more often choose the non-Hawaiian identity for their

children?⁷ Second, how are patterns of racial identification related to characteristics of the child, his or her parents and household, and their geographic location? And third, what are the major similarities and differences in patterns of racial identification choices among multiracial Native Hawaiians, American Indian, and Asian American families?

DATA AND METHODS

To address these questions, we use the U.S. Census microdata: the 1990 Census 5 per cent public use microdata sample (PUMS). We select all never-married children⁸ 17 years old or younger who are living with a Native Hawaiian parent married to a non-Native Hawaiian parent.⁹ A child was not included in our analysis sample if his or her race (or a parent's race) was 'allocated' by the Census Bureau, if he or she was Hispanic but neither parent was Hispanic, if both parents were Hispanic but the child was not reported to be, or if he or she was reported to be a race other than that of one of

⁷ It is also important to understand how multiple race versus single race reporting affects these outcomes. Although we cannot examine the question with current data, our future research will analyze this question using 5% PUMS data from Census 2000.

⁸ Each child in the sample is the natural or adopted child of one of the parents, not the stepchild, foster child, or child-in-law.

⁹ We consider parents as 'Hawaiian' if they reported their race as Native Hawaiian (as opposed to only their ancestry, which is a separate question from race).

his or her parents.¹⁰ Overall, this sample of mixed-race part-Hawaiian children permits us to examine the correlates of racial identification among a group of people who must choose one race over the other.

Of the 2,052 children who fit our sample selection criteria, 56.5 per cent were reported as Hawaiian and 43.5 per cent were reported as the race of their non-Native Hawaiian parent. We examine the identification choices made for children in these families, focusing on characteristics of the child, the Native Hawaiian parent, the non-Native Hawaiian parent, the household, and the community or state in which the family resides. The primary variables of interest to us center on cultural connections to place and ancestral heritage. Other variables are included as controls in our logistic regression analyses predicting a mixed-race child's racial identification (by parents) as Native Hawaiian.

Child's Characteristics: We hypothesize that both current residence and birthplace in Hawai'i reinforce the strength of ties (see Cornell and Hartmann 1998) to the Hawaiian community and culture. Thus, we include a measure of the child's birthplace and an interaction term showing whether the child was both born in Hawai'i *and* lived there at the time of the 1990 Census. Although each of these variables is

¹⁰ Very few children were reported to be 'other race,' except for children who had an 'other race' parent. It would have been interesting to study these children, but because of their small numbers, we were forced to exclude them from our research.

¹² In addition to the census question on race, respondents were asked 'What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?'. Up to two fill-in-the-blank responses were coded.

labeled a child characteristic, we recognize that place of residence is also a choice made by parents, and rarely children.

Parents' Characteristics: Based on prior research, we hypothesize that strong parental ties to the Hawaiian race and culture will have the largest impact on racial identification choices made for children. We capture strong ties with two variables, Hawaiian birthplace and ancestry.¹² Reporting Hawaiian ancestry and Hawaiian race suggests strong racial identification of parents. Yet given high rates of intermarriage among Native Hawaiians, many parents report both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian ancestries (i.e., they report being of mixed-heritage), others report Hawaiian race and no Hawaiian ancestry, and still others report no Hawaiian race and only Hawaiian ancestry. We argue that these responses represent a progressively weakening continuum of parental ties to their own Hawaiian identity as shown below in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 about here]

On the other hand, the race of the non-Hawaiian parent is most often White. Because we expect that identification processes may vary by the race of the non-Hawaiian parent, we also include separate categories for Black, Filipino, Japanese, Other Asian or Pacific Islander (besides Filipino, Japanese or Hawaiian), American Indian, and 'other race' parents.

We include a measure of the birthplace of each parent (foreign-born, born in Hawai'i, or other) and householder status.¹³ We expect that parental birthplace in

¹³ The householder is the person listed first on the census form. The instructions indicate that this person should be the household member (or one of the members) in whose name the home is owned, is being bought, or is rented. If there is no such

Hawai‘i marks strong ties to the Hawaiian race and the cultural home. These spatial ties reinforce Hawaiian identification of children, regardless of current residence.

Household Characteristics: Additional markers of strong ties to Hawaiian race and culture include language use and the presence of an elder Hawaiian relative in the household. Language is categorized as: (1) only English is spoken, (2) Hawaiian language is spoken (in combination with any other languages), and (3) some non-English language is spoken but no Hawaiian is spoken. We expect stronger Hawaiian identification among families living with older ‘kūpuna’ or Hawaiian elders, who transmit oral history, tradition, and culture in families. Thus, we examine whether an older Native Hawaiian relative is present in the household. In these data, co-resident Hawaiian elders are almost always grandparents of the child.

Finally, we include measures indicating household structure and Hispanic origin of family members. We expect that extended family households may have greater access to relatives that carry on customs and practices shared by the Hawaiian ‘ohana, or family, thereby strengthening ties to Hawaiian culture and identification. Thus we group parents and children into single or multifamily households and refer to the latter group as ‘primary families’ if a parent is the householder, and ‘subfamilies’ if neither parent is the householder. We also examine the influence of Hispanic origin on

person, any adult household member can be reported as ‘person 1’ and is considered the householder (Bureau of the Census 1992)

¹⁵ If p is the proportion of people in that occupation who have a college degree, then the occupation’s occupational education score is $\ln(p/1-p)$. See Hauser and Warren (1997) for further explanation of the purpose of this transformation.

Hawaiian identity. To ease interpretation, we group family members' Hispanic origin into six categories: none, Hawaiian parent only, other parent only, Hawaiian parent and child, other parent and child, or all three are Hispanic.

Community Characteristics: About half of the children in our analysis live in Hawai'i. Because of the importance of physical ties to the cultural home, we examine differences between households in Hawai'i and on the U.S. continent. Mainland living may promote assimilation of Western lifestyles and ideologies, and less contact overall with Hawaiians and Hawaiian culture may reduce the likelihood to report Hawaiian race. On the other hand, we expect that the presence of other Hawaiians reinforces identity processes and permits greater access to customs, food, language, and traditions that may strengthen cultural pride. Our analysis includes a three-category measure indicating per cent Hawaiians in the state (less than 0.05 per cent, 0.05 percent to 2 percent, and the state of Hawai'i (over 12 per cent)). In 1990, Native Hawaiians comprised less than 2 per cent of the population in all states besides Hawai'i, and ranged from 0.05 percent to 2 per cent of the population in Alaska, California, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Control Variables: Other factors have been shown or hypothesized to be related to racial identification among mixed-race individuals. We control for these variables in our logistic regression analyses. At the child level, we control for the child's sex and age. For each parent, we include measures of: sex, householder status, educational attainment, occupational status¹⁵, and military service. At the household level, we control for per capita household income, number of children in the household who fit

our sample selection criteria¹⁶, and household structure. Finally, we include a simple measure of whether the family lives in a non-metropolitan area.

The remaining discussion examines statistics about our sample, pooled and by current residence (in Hawai‘i or elsewhere). After presenting descriptive statistics, we follow with a discussion of our multivariate logistic regression analyses predicting whether parents report the child’s race as Native Hawaiian. We then contrast our results to similar analyses of the racial identities of part-American Indian and part-Asian American children. We end by drawing several conclusions about the processes of racial identification among multi-racial children.

RESULTS

Overall, the data highlight the importance of personal connections to Hawai‘i and to other Native Hawaiian people in the racial identification of part-Hawaiian children. In both descriptive and multivariate analyses, these connections correlate highly with children’s identification as Native Hawaiian. Children in families with seemingly weak

¹⁶ Although we estimate clustered models to adjust for multiple children in the household, we also include a measure of the number of children who are in the household and in the sample to check that our conclusions are not affected by this technique. Within family clustering would lead to downwardly biased estimates of standard errors, but should not bias the coefficients. Using sibling models, Xie and Goyette (1997) established that differences in racial identification were greater between families than within families (among siblings).

ties to Hawaiian culture and place more often have the race of their non-Hawaiian parent, when required to report only one race.

Descriptive Results: The descriptive results in Table 1 show how patterns of racial identification as Native Hawaiian vary by the birthplace and current residence of each parent and of the child. Nearly one-third of the 1,084 Native Hawaiian parents in these data were born in Hawai‘i.¹⁷ In these families, children are often considered Native Hawaiian. A Native Hawaiian race is less likely to be reported with greater distance from Hawai‘i (parents were born elsewhere or current family resides elsewhere) and in states with relatively fewer Hawaiians. Interestingly, if the non-Hawaiian parent is foreign born, the child is more often considered Native Hawaiian (rather than the race of the foreign born parent), especially if the family lives in Hawai‘i.

[Table 1 about here]

In Table 2, the effects of other ties to Hawai‘i and the effects of ties to other race/ethnic groups are apparent. A parallel table describing control variables can be found in Appendix Table A. We present separate statistics for those children currently

¹⁷ Racial identity and surrounding racial identification decisions are affected by the cultural context of a place (Eschbach 1992). A part-Hawaiian parent living in Hawai‘i may thus be especially likely to racially identify as Hawaiian (and not as another race) while living there, and may potentially change this identification upon moving away from the islands. In other words, the relationship between place and identity is multidirectional.

living outside of Hawai‘i and those living in Hawai‘i to highlight the powerful interactive effect of place of residence.

The reported ancestries of the parents are significantly related to racial identification choices for children. As expected, whereas Hawaiian racial identification is less common among children whose Hawaiian parent reports non-Hawaiian ancestry, it is more frequently found among children of non-Hawaiian parents who report Hawaiian ancestry, compared to no Hawaiian ancestry.

The race and Hispanic origin of the non-Hawaiian parent are strongly related to the child’s racial identification in areas outside of Hawai‘i. In these areas, children are usually considered the non-Hawaiian parent’s race if that parent is White and/or if no one in the family group is Hispanic. In contrast, Hawaiian racial identification is relatively likely if this parent is Filipino, Japanese, ‘other race,’ or Hispanic. It is possible that these results are driven by phenotype – the darker hair and skin common to these other race/ethnic groups may make the child look stereotypically Native Hawaiian, thus enhancing outsiders’ perceptions that the child should be considered Hawaiian. It is possible, too, that there may be a preference within minorities for Hawaiian versus identification with other race/ethnic groups. This hypothesis cannot be tested well with these data.

Also, entirely English-speaking households on the continent less often report Native Hawaiian children, whereas Hawaiian is reported for over half of the children in continental families with one or more non-English, non-Hawaiian language speakers (e.g., Spanish, Filipino, Japanese). Because of small sample sizes, the positive effect of

living with a Hawaiian language speaker is not significant in specific areas but achieves significance in the total sample.

At the state level, it is clear that not everywhere on the continent is the same in terms of racial context for part-Hawaiian families. Rather, there is a continuum; higher chances of Hawaiian race appear in states with relatively many Hawaiians (the odds are twice as high in Nevada, Utah, or on the Pacific coast), compared to children living elsewhere on the continent with fewer Hawaiians.

[Table 2 about here]

Multivariate Results: We analyze these complex relationships with a multivariate model that examines our key predictor variables, net of other controls.

Culture and Place: The multivariate logistic regression results in Table 3 show the odds that a child in our sample is reported as Native Hawaiian, relative to the odds that the choice reflects his or her other parent's race. We find weaker Hawaiian identification among children without birth and/or residence ties to Hawai'i, as hypothesized. The odds of Hawaiian identification are twice as high among Hawai'i-born, compared to continental-born and residing, children. Yet, the highest odds of being considered Hawaiian appear among return migrant families, that is, children who were born outside of Hawai'i but who migrated 'home.' The experiences in these families raise children's odds of Hawaiian identification eight times, compared to part-Hawaiian children born on the continent who have not migrated to Hawai'i.

Highly important to the Hawaiian identification of multiracial children are the Hawaiian identity markers of the parent, including birthplace and reported ancestry. Reduced odds of Hawaiian identity emerge among children whose parents reported a

non-Hawaiian ancestry, which might indicate relatively weaker parental ties to Hawaiian identity. On the other hand, Hawaiian identification is dramatically higher among children with parents that have strong physical ties to the Hawaiian ancestral lands, indicated by birthplace. The separate analysis by geographic region shows that children with Hawai'i-born parents are three times as likely to be considered Native Hawaiian if they live in Hawai'i, and 1.8 times as likely if they live on the continent, compared to children with a continental-born Hawaiian parent.

Ethnic and racial markers of the non-Hawaiian parent are closely tied to choices made about children's identification as well. Notable positive effects of Hispanic origin on Hawaiian identification emerge for the few Hispanic families living in Hawai'i, and in families where the non-Hawaiian parent is, but the child is not, of Hispanic origin. Among continental families, the non-Hawaiian parent's Hawai'i birthplace raises the odds of Hawaiian identification of multiracial children dramatically. We speculate that having a non-Hawaiian parent born in Hawai'i may increase the family's overall strength of ties to the ancestral lands and preferences for Hawaiian identification; further research is necessary to better understand these results. Japanese/Hawaiian mixed couples living on the continent are more than six times as likely to consider their children Native Hawaiian, compared to children of White/Hawaiian mixed couples. However, for other ethnic groups besides Japanese, the race of non-Hawaiian parents is not significantly related to children's identity. Language use also is not significantly related to racial identification, once other factors are taken into account.

Extended family living is important to Hawaiian identification patterns, as we hypothesized. We find that children in subfamilies living with extended kin are two to

three times as likely to have Hawaiian race. And, as expected, Hawaiian identification increases in states containing larger Hawaiian populations. The lowest odds of identification as Native Hawaiian appear among children in states with fewer than .05 per cent Hawaiians, whereas the highest appear among children residing in Hawai'i.

One of the biggest surprises of these results is that Hawaiian language is not associated with greater chances of Hawaiian racial identification in the multivariate analysis, unlike the case for American Indian and Asian American identification. Presently, Hawaiian is an official language of the state of Hawai'i and the number of speakers has risen in recent decades through the work of immersion schools and other initiatives. The absence of language as an important predictor of identity, however, may attest to the great success of historical efforts to eradicate Hawaiian language and cultural customs. As a result, very few aside from the elders are native speakers of the language (Kame'eleihiwa 1990).¹⁸ We will reexamine this language effect using more recent data from the Census 2000 in future work.

[Table 3 about here]

Control Variables: Effects for our control variables are reported in Appendix Table B. In particular, Hawaiian identification is more common among female children living outside Hawai'i, as well as among children whose Native Hawaiian parents work in occupations where relatively few people have attended college or who are (were) in

¹⁸ Hawaiian language was legislatively banned from all schools from 1896 through the late 1970s, with lasting detrimental effects on the literacy and educational well-being of native Hawaiians (Benham & Heck 1998 -- also see Kanaiaupuni and Ishibashi 2003a for educational profile of today's Hawaiian children in Hawai'i).

military service. The latter, we believe, could be due to socialization experiences of Hawaiians in the military as well as key characteristics that reinforce Hawaiian identification, sometimes through self-identity and other times by external labeling imposed by others.

DISCUSSION

These analyses contribute to the growing research on racial identity processes of a rapidly growing component of the American population – multiracial individuals and families. Our main findings showed that where individuals have both Hawaiian and other racial ancestries, connections to the land of Hawai‘i – physical and symbolic – are key to Hawaiian racial identification. The deep cultural value that Hawaiians place on physical connections to the land, to family and ancestral ties, and the underpinning effects of colonization all heighten the role of place in Hawaiian racial identification processes in mixed-race households.

Our findings also suggest strong social significance attached to returning home to Hawai‘i for the construction of racial identity in multiracial families. Based on other sources of data, we speculate that the process of returning home is motivated mainly by strong political and familial bonds that also heighten Hawaiian identity (see Kanaiaupuni and Ishibashi 2003b). Hypothetically, other reasons may include the possibility that Hawaiians return home because they expect to encounter less discrimination in their homeland than on the continent. Ample data, however, document discriminatory experiences and substantial marginalization of Hawaiians and their children in the state of Hawai‘i (e.g., Kanaiaupuni and Ishibashi 2003a, Mayeda

and Chesney-Lind 2001), as well as considerable gains in well-being for those who leave to the continent (Kanaiaupuni and Ishibashi 2003b, Malone 2003a, 2003b). This evidence suggests that Hawaiian experiences with discrimination occur in daily interactions in the state of Hawai‘i as well as outside the state, and we suspect that the anticipation of less discrimination is not the primary force pulling more strongly identified Hawaiian families back to Hawai‘i. The question, however, is an empirical one and may be the subject of future research. We will continue to explore these and other directions with various data sources, including the Census 2000.

Although our analyses focus on the perspective of this one group with a unique historical experience in the United States, the results reflect more general processes that influence the choices made about racial identification in mixed race families. Table 4 summarizes our results compared to those generated by Xie and Goyette (1997) on part-Asian Americans and by Liebler (2001) on multiracial children of Native Americans. Several patterns emerge suggesting that parents’ ties to their respective ancestral heritage are key to the racial identification of multiracial children in all three groups. Reflecting the importance of context and group-specific experiences, however, different measures mark the strength of those ties for each group.

Specifically, we find greater chances of children’s Hawaiian identification in families whose ties are reinforced by geographic links. These include moving back to Hawai‘i, the parent or child being born in Hawai‘i , and when families reside in geographic areas containing relatively large numbers of Native Hawaiians. Thus, where children and parents have a strong connection to the Hawaiian islands, Native Hawaiian identification increases.

Similarly, parents with a strong American Indian identity also are more likely to choose American Indian race for their multiracial children. For example, American Indian identification is more common in families where the American Indian parent reports a tribal affiliation and/or reports American Indian ancestry, someone in the home speaks an American Indian language, the mother is American Indian, and/or in families living on or near a reservation (Liebler 2001).

Likewise, among Asian American children, Asian American race prevails especially among children born in Asia, with an Asian father, with a parent who speaks Chinese or Japanese language, and/or with relatively many Asians in the local community (Xie and Goyette 1997). Overall then, we see similar, but not identical, processes among other American minority groups suggesting that the precursors to intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity depend crucially on strong parental and geographic ties to the ancestral lands.

[Table 4 about here]

CONCLUSION

Together, these results contribute to a better understanding of the complex processes that lead to identification with and the perpetuation of race/ethnic minority groups. The underlying similarities in racial identification processes of different multiracial groups permit consideration of more theoretically useful patterns (such as the importance of personal connections to a cultural sanctuary) among specifically predictive factors (such as residence or birthplace in Hawai‘i). Our results suggest that, as the first major influence in children’s racial identity formation, parental inputs are critically tied to parents’ own cultural and familial experiences and identity processes.

Moreover, we found clear distinctions in the ways that parental inputs played out within different minority groups. These patterns indicate that research on the specific mechanisms that lead to racial identification patterns must attend to group-specific contexts of western contact and experience. As a whole, however, our findings testify to the importance of place and social connections to identification processes of Hawaiians and others of mixed racial background.

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Figure 1:

Hypothesized Continuum of Strength of Hawaiian Identity

	Hawaiian race	Non-Hawaiian race
Hawaiian ancestry	Strongest (1)	Weak (3)
No Hawaiian ancestry	Strong (2)	Weakest (4)