Eia Hawaiʻi, he Moku:[1] Exploring Native Hawaiian Migration Patterns Past to Present

December 2022

By
Ciera Pagud, M.P.H.
Shawn Kanaʻiaupuni, Ph.D.
Wendy Kekahio, M.A.

Kamehameha Schools
Strategy & Transformation Group

Summary

On the grand scale of time, the coming and goings of people to the Hawaiian Islands are relatively recent beginning with the first arrival of Native Hawaiians to this pae ʻāina.[2] It is easy to understand why the ocean voyagers came and stayed.

Not only was it an incredibly far journey, but a place of natural beauty and amazingly temperate climates. Today, Hawaiʻi is renowned throughout the world as a paradise destination for tourists; living on these islands is another story. Comprising some of the most remote islands in the world, Hawaiʻi is home to fragile ecosystems and finite resources. In fact, Hawaiʻi is known both as one of the most biodiverse places on earth and the "endangered species capital of the world" (Rare Plant Program, n.d.). The balance of our island people, ecosystems, development, conservation, and ways of living is urgently critical to restore if we hope to preserve a thriving Hawaiʻi for generations to come.

In addition, increasing costs of living and the growing wealth divide between the haves and have-nots make living in Hawaiʻi a challenge for many. Breaking a trend of consistent growth of our state's population over time, recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2018) estimated annual declines in Hawaiʻi's population of about 3,700 fewer individuals each year from 2016 to 2018.[3] In addition, birth rates outpaced death rates across both years, suggesting migration away from the state is the main cause of population decline (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). This negative net migration calls for research to better understand the patterns of movement and reasons for leaving Hawaiʻi.

---

[1] "Eia Hawaiʻi, he moku" are words from the navigator, Kamahualele, in the story of Tahitian chief, Moʻikeha, who travels across the ocean to Hawaiʻi with family, navigators, priests, and lookouts. Upon seeing the distant islands, Kamahualele begins the chant, "Eia Hawaiʻi, he moku, he kanaka" (Behold Hawaiʻi, an island, a man), signaling their arrival and describing the creation and genealogy of the islands (Fornander, 1916, pg. 20-21).

[2] Group of islands, archipelago

[3] There were an estimated 3,802 fewer individuals in Hawaiʻi between the years 2016 and 2017, and 3,712 fewer individuals between 2017 and 2018.

Recommended Citation:
Pagud, C., Kanaʻiaupuni, S., & Kekahio, W. (2022) *Eia Hawaiʻi, he Moku: Exploring Native Hawaiian Migration Patterns Past to Present*. Kamehameha Schools, Strategy and Transformation.

Acknowledgements:
Mahalo to our colleagues, Kristina Kornegay (Kamehameha Schools) and Summer Keliʻipio (Liliʻuokalani Trust), for their support and insights.

Correspondence:
Correspondence concerning this article may be sent to Ciera Pagud at cipagud@ksbe.edu

This Brief

This brief is part of a larger study to bridge data on migration patterns with stories of the choices of Native Hawaiian and other kamaʻāina[4] families of Hawaiʻi. This review serves a few major purposes. The first is to understand Native Hawaiian migration from a cultural perspective by exploring historical accounts of migration and the reasons why Native Hawaiians choose to leave and return to the islands. Second, broader research on migration theories is examined to understand the common reasons, factors, or circumstances for people choosing to move from, return to, or stay in a place and the relationships between movement and key life events. Finally, the last section summarizes the findings of existing research on Native Hawaiian migration experiences. In summary, our literature review reveals the choices of Native Hawaiian and local families facing the realities of economic survival in these islands. The results raise critical questions about the implications for Hawaiʻi's future and the ability of Hawaiʻi's indigenous people to thrive in their only homeland. Finding ways to navigate the delicate balance between the ability to lead a quality life and the rising cost of living is part of the state's responsibility. The information in this brief is intended to help inform decision-making, policies, plans, and partnerships that support local families and protect our fragile, once-thriving ecosystems.

Cultural and Historical Accounts of Native Hawaiian Migration

Traditionally, Native Hawaiians and other Polynesians migrated immense distances using the winds, sun, moon, stars, clouds and currents to navigate the oceans, pulling the islands out of the sea. Many Hawaiian moʻolelo[5] describe the movement of early native settlers who voyaged between Tahiti and Hawaiʻi, sometimes returning to their one hānau[6] and other times choosing to remain abroad. It is through these moʻolelo that Native Hawaiians are known as gifted navigators and travelers (Malo, 1903).

The contemporary decision to leave Hawaiʻi for most Native Hawaiians is not an easy one. A well-known Hawaiian proverb states, "e hoʻi hou i ka iwi kuamoʻo" emphasizing the connection Native Hawaiians have to their ʻohana[7] and ʻāina[8] (Pukui, 1983). Though the literal translation means to "return to the backbone," it can also mean "return to the homeland" or one's family after being away and describes the inherent connection of present-day Hawaiians to the values of ʻohana, past and present, and ʻāina (Pukui, 1983; Malone, 2004). For today's kānaka,[9] these values transcend multiple generations spanning back to the earliest Hawaiian ancestors.

Looking back, the earliest accounts of Native Hawaiian out-migration in the 1800s record nearly a dozen Hawaiian men living in Connecticut in 1809 (Kauanui, 2007). Henry ʻŌpūkahaʻia was an orphan who left Hawaiʻi after the death of his parents in search of a better life. He, along with five other men from the islands, were instrumental in the establishment of a foreign mission school in Connecticut. Though he passed before being able to return to Hawaiʻi, his involvement with the school resulted in multiple missions to Hawaiʻi with the hopes of spreading Christianity throughout the Kingdom (Lyons, 2004).

---

[4] Native-born, one born in a place, host
[5] Story, tale, myth, history, tradition, etc.
[6] Birthplace, homeland
[7] Family unit
[8] Land, earth
[9] Human being, man, person, individual

A unique fact about Hawaiʻi's history as the 50th state is in addition to being the only remote island state, it is also the only state in the U.S. that was once a royal kingdom. Upon unification of the islands as the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi by Kamehameha I in 1819 and the subsequent arrival of the missionaries and other foreigners in 1820, Hawaiʻi began to rapidly change socially, economically, and politically. The influx of missionaries and other immigrants to Hawaiʻi was a catalyst for economic growth in "sugar, pineapple, shipping, and related industries," as well as increased global political recognition (Kanaʻiaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 285). Following the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy on January 17, 1893, when a group of American businessmen and sugar planters forced Queen Liliʻuokalani to abdicate her throne, the Kingdom was dissolved and illegally annexed as a U.S. territory in 1898, and was made a state by 1959. Native Hawaiians became a minority in their own homeland primarily due to death from Western diseases and warfare. With these changes occurring, Native Hawaiians were documented to have left the islands for involvement with the fur trade; labor opportunities such as lumber, fishing, farming, gold mining, and whaling on the Pacific West Coast; involvement in wars; religious purposes (e.g., Mormons moving to Utah); and displacement during the Great Mahele[10] (Kauanui, 2007).

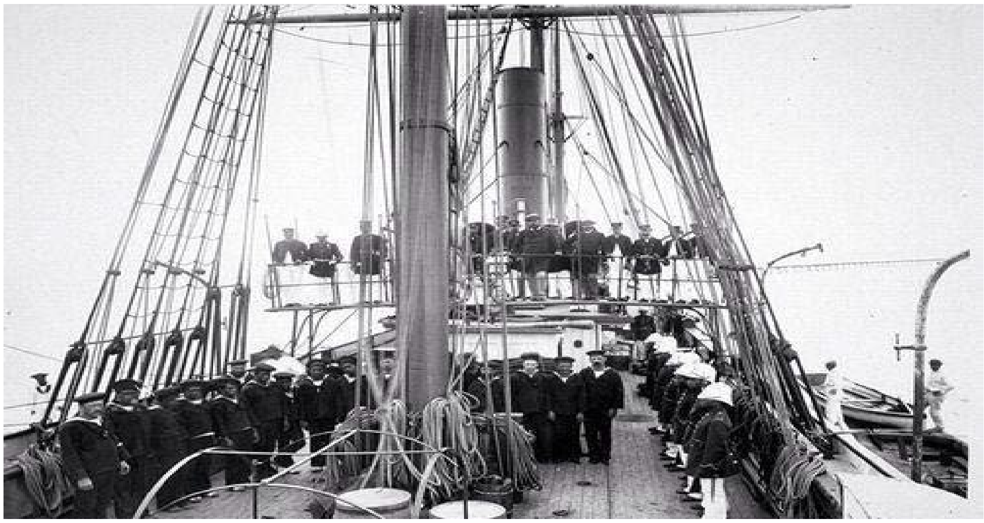

Image 1. King Kalākaua, aboard a U.S. Navy warship, is ready to sail from Hawaiʻi to San Francisco (Kamehameha Schools Archive).

Though many traveling kānaka were searching for a better life and more opportunity in other places, their connection to the ʻāina and people of Hawaiʻi never wavered. When Kalākaua and Liliʻuokalani visited San Francisco in the 1880s, they were greeted by many of their compatriots residing in the city. These Native Hawaiians described their undying aloha[11] for Hawaiʻi as their home and how they longed to return, often unable to do so because of the economic hardship (Marques in Kauanui, 2007). Along with makaʻāinana,[12] Hawaiʻi's aliʻi[13] also sought opportunity and experiences elsewhere, albeit with less permanent purposes in mind. The exposure to western influences opened opportunities for Native Hawaiian aliʻi to experience different cultures, governments, and lifestyles.

---

[10] Pressured to change the land ownership structure in Hawaiʻi, Kamehameha III, Kauikeaouli, initiated the Great Māhele that transitioned Hawaiian society to private land ownership. In 1848, land was divided among the monarch, Crown Lands, and the government. While makaʻāinana were able to file claims to land they lived on and cultivated, they did not realize the need to do so under a Western governance system. As foreigners began to file claims for land ownership, so began the displacement of many makaʻāinana families and the eventual private ownership of land as a commodity (Linnekin 1987; Tau-Tassill, Menton, and Tamura 2016).

[11] Love, compassion

[12] Commoner, populace, citizen

[13] Chief, chiefess, ruler, monarch

Throughout history, it was not uncommon for the reigning monarchs and cabinet members of the Hawaiian kingdom to travel to other countries to establish closer diplomatic ties with foreign dignitaries. Their stable finances likely made it easier for them to travel abroad and return to the islands, compared to the struggles of makaʻāinana. For example, Liholiho (Kamehameha II), Alexander Liholiho (Kamehameha IV), and Lot Kapuaiwa (Kamehameha V) each traveled outside of Hawaiʻi to meet with foreign monarchs and governments to strengthen ties between Hawaiʻi and other places, while also exposing young aliʻi to political processes necessary to their future roles. As evidence of their travels, a robust history of nation-to-nation treaties negotiated during those times continues to anchor the strong national identity of kānaka to their sovereign land.

In 1823, Liholiho sailed to England aboard the English whaleship, *L'Aigle,* to meet with King George IV to discuss diplomatic ties and confirm the alliance between Hawaiʻi and Britain. He understood he had very little firsthand knowledge of places and governments outside of Hawaiʻi. Much of what he knew was based on his prior interactions with foreigners in Hawaiʻi and conversations with his advisors. Unfortunately, before he could meet with the king, Liholiho passed in these faraway lands, just days after his wife, Kamāmalu, became ill and died (Kamakau, 1992; Williams & Tune 2001; Beamer, 2014).

Alexander Liholiho and Lot Kapuaiwa also sailed to the continental U.S., England, and France at a young age, accompanying Gerrit P. Judd, the Minister of Finance at the time. The purpose of this trip was to visit France and negotiate treaties in response to unwanted French actions in the islands. This trip would provide both young aliʻi critical exposure to political diplomacy and process (Lowe, 1997; Beamer, 2014).

Princess Kaʻiulani traveled out of Hawaiʻi to learn about international affairs. In 1889, the princess was instructed by Kalākaua, sitting monarch at that time, that she would travel to England for schooling at the young age of thirteen. In Kalākaua's eyes, the experience would prepare her for her future role as leader of her people. Kaʻiulani attended Great Harrowden Hall where she made many friends and excelled in her studies. In her letters back to family members, she recounts the cold weather and her time spent in school. Her time away greatly strengthened her resolve to take a stand in defense of her home during the overthrow of the kingdom in 1893 and annexation of Hawaiʻi by the U.S. in 1898 (Linnea, 1999).

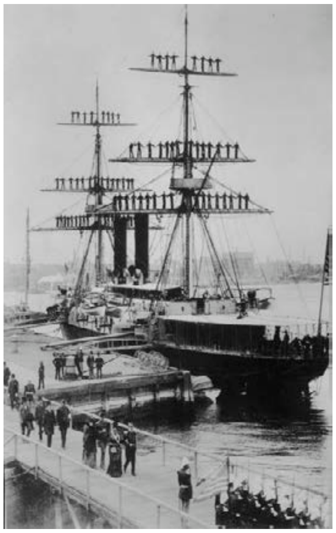

Image 2. Queens Liliʻuokalani and Kapiʻolani traveling to Queen Victoria's jubilee (Kamehameha Schools Archive).

In her memoir, the last reigning monarch, Queen Liliʻuokalani reflects on the travels of different aliʻi in the 1800s. She spoke of travels her brother, David Kalākaua, took to the United States. Although she speculated that he had a love for exploring and a desire to see new parts of the world, she strongly believed that he traveled from Hawaiʻi with the goal of better serving the lāhui.[14] Many of his journeys had political or business purposes and were never meant to be permanent. Rather, they were opportunities to network with other delegates and learn. Liliʻuokalani also wrote of her travels with Queen Kapiʻolani to England, where they attended the Queen's Jubilee, trekking across the continental U.S. in the process. As with the foreign sojourns of Kalākaua, they did not travel with the intention to remain abroad, but rather to meet and network with other dignitaries (Liliʻuokalani, 1990).

---

[14] Nation, race, tribe, people, nationality

In summary, the migration of Native Hawaiian royalty was primarily for education, political, and business matters. As Beamer (2014) stated, there was a "policy of establishing aliʻi connections with royalty of other countries. This move was a significant step in preparing the next generation of mōʻī[15] to be leaders in their international arena" (p.165). Opportunities to travel outside of Hawaiʻi provided diverse experiences for aliʻi to better understand and learn how monarchies and governments were run, establish their political presence with other dignitaries, and return to the islands as effective leaders for the lāhui.

Contemporary Theories of Migration

Several theories have shaped migration research in efforts to better understand the factors that lead people to move. One of the earliest migration studies was led by Ravenstein (1885), who developed a set of migration laws explaining the movement of people in the context of what is now understood as push and pull factors. While his work continued to be referenced for decades, newer theories emerged that integrated social and other dimensions to our understanding of the process (Massey et al., 1998).

Present day theories center on labor, economic, and social factors that drive human migration. For the purpose of this review, we focus on five theories that are fundamental to existing understandings: neoclassical migration, new economics of migration, relative deprivation, segmented labor market, and social capital theory. In each of these theories, a more complex system of push and pull factors serve as organizing forces affecting human population movement (See Figure 1). The theory of push and pull migration factors was formally developed in the mid-1960s and describes four major influences in the decision to migrate: conditions in the place of origin, conditions in the destination, obstacles that arise during migration, and personal factors (Lee, 1966).

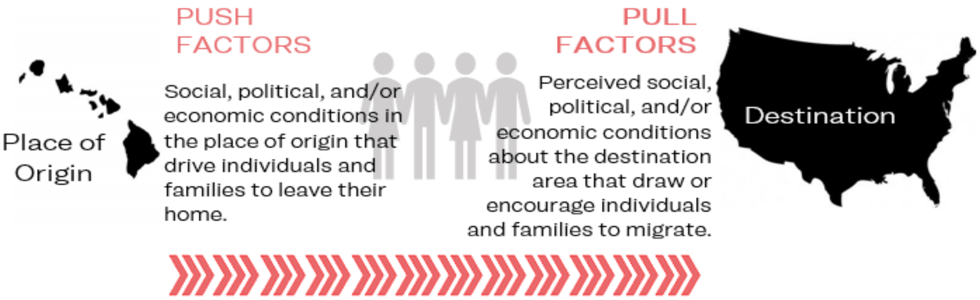
PUSH FACTORS
Place of Origin
Social, political, and/or economic conditions in the place of origin that drive individuals and families to leave their home.
PULL FACTORS
Perceived social, political, and/or economic conditions about the destination area that draw or encourage individuals and families to migrate.
Destination

Figure 1. Graphic illustration of push and pull factors

Potential migrants usually understand well the conditions of their home region and can easily identify factors that drive or "push" them to migrate. Conversely, potential migrants have much less understanding about factors and conditions in the destination but may learn about conditions from other migrants or various sources of information that attract or "pull" them to another place (Lee, 1966).

Neoclassical Migration Theory

Likely the oldest and most known theory, the neoclassical migration theory emerged in the mid-1900s and explains migration as a reaction to economic development and the push and pull of labor market forces. Still the dominant theory of migration today, the basic premise is that macro-level drivers of internal and international migration are created by the supply and demand for labor and wage differentials across regions and nations. The flow of labor accompanies the flow of capital, attracting migrants to urban areas (Massey, 1999).

---

[15] King, queen, sovereign, monarch

From a microeconomic perspective, the decision to move is viewed as an individual calculation based on the expected gains incurred by moving relative to the costs of moving (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1980; Massey et al., 1998). If the returns are estimated to outweigh the cost, migration is the likely choice. Costs may be monetary and also include travel and loss of income while seeking employment, language and cultural barriers, missing family and friends, and time to adapt to new environments (Massey et al., 1998).

New Economics of Migration Theory

Later theories challenged the simplicity of neoclassical approaches. The key insight of the new economics of migration theory is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors but typically by families or households. Further, the decisions of migrants are influenced by a broad set of factors shaped by conditions in the home country. As such, they are not based purely on individual utility-maximizing calculations but are rather a household response to both income risk and to the failures of a variety of markets – labor market, credit market, or insurance market (Massey et al., 1998).

Theory of Relative Deprivation

The theory of relative deprivation builds in a social dimension to these arguments, agreeing that migration decisions are made to improve absolute income, and adding that it is also to increase income relative to that of others (Massey, 1999). Essentially, individuals or households are incentivized to seek higher income relative to others in their reference group and will move to achieve the desired state (Stark & Taylor, 1989). Thus, this theory posits gains in income and wealth are based on perceptions of the relative value of income, in addition to absolute income, an aspect of migration decisions not included in earlier neoclassical models (Massey et al., 1998).

Segmented Labor Market Theory

Emerging in the mid- to late-1900s, the segmented labor market theory focuses on how the demand for skilled and unskilled labor in industrialized societies impacts migration outcomes in destinations (Massey et al., 1998). This theory posits migration is driven by the labor demands of industrial societies. This demand then segments workers into the capital-intensive primary sector or the labor-intensive secondary sector. This bifurcation in the labor market leads to disparities in income, wages, and job characteristics. The primary sector is comprised of workers that are often highly skilled, earn higher wages, and hold stable positions. On the other hand, secondary sector workers often fill unskilled positions, earn lower wages, and are at risk of being laid off at any given time (Massey et al., 1998; Constant & Massey 2005). Additionally, industrial societies base wages on status and prestige making it difficult for employers to raise wages for low-income positions, without proportionately raising the wages across the hierarchy. In segmented labor markets there is also the potential for "ethnic enclaves" to develop where positions are filled by migrant or race/ethnic minority workers (Massey et al., 1998).

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory is a generally accepted explanation in most migration processes, which recognizes social resources gained through the act of migration that serve to perpetuate migration. Introduced in the late-1970s, this theory suggests migrants and former migrants are sources of knowledge that non-migrants can access to learn more about the process of migration and increasingly decrease the risk of migration for those considering it. Massey et al. (1998) defined migrant networks as "sets of interpersonal ties connecting migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin" (p.42). These connections have the potential to perpetuate migration as they reduce the risk and cost of migrating and can also lead to financial capital gains.

Together, these five theories are instrumental in building an understanding migration patterns of Hawaiʻi's people, including Native Hawaiians and other indigenous and Pacific Islander people. Recent declines in Hawaiʻi's population after years of growth have drawn increased attention to the underlying economic reasons for negative net migration rates, relating back to the theories discussed. The next section will further explore these concepts in relation to the existing literature on the migration experiences of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

Prior Research on Native Hawaiian Migration

Among the young and the old, the evidence outlined in this section clearly indicates that economic and educational opportunities are key drivers of migration from Hawaiʻi among Native Hawaiians and others. Data also show higher educational attainment, income, and homeownership among Native Hawaiians residing on the continental U.S., compared to living at home. Strongly counterbalancing the quest to meet basic needs for family survival (food, water, and shelter) are ties to ʻohana, ʻāina, and culture that powerfully bind Native Hawaiian community members to home. Social ties at times outweigh other factors, causing some to follow other family members.

Perceived and Real Economic Opportunities in Faraway Places

Economic standing and potential economic gains play a role in the decision-making process around migration. In Hawaiʻi, early migrants came for both religious purpose and economic opportunity, whether in land, sugar, or other businesses. Less is known about what drives people to migrate away from Hawaiʻi. As the cost of living continues to spike, the media has highlighted economic concerns as a leading driver of outmigration from the islands (Shapiro, 1999; Eugene Tian in Hawaiʻi News Now, 2016; Ikaika Hussey in Petekin, 2017).

Beginning with migration experiences as far back as the 1950s, economic opportunity and financial factors were cited as reasons why Native Hawaiians sought to live elsewhere. A small study involving 35 Native Hawaiian kūpuna,[16] caretakers, and key informants in Hawaiʻi and California found that nearly all participants who left the state reported few economic opportunities and livable-wage jobs in Hawaiʻi as the primary reason for moving during the mid-1990s (Nakatsuka, Esquivel, Levin, Browne, and Braun, 2013). As one participant stated, "I couldn't afford to live in Hawaiʻi, because there weren't enough jobs, so I joined the National Guard and moved to Texas and stayed there" (Nakatsuka et al. 2013, p.138). While many of these individuals left Hawaiʻi more than five decades ago, their stories are consistent with the experiences of local families today.

A 2002 study conducted with nearly 4,000 Kamehameha Schools[17] alumni showed that among those who were somewhat or very likely to leave Hawaiʻi, half cited economic reasons such as jobs and housing. Respondents, all Native Hawaiians who graduated between 1930 and 2002, reported they felt migration to the continent would provide opportunities to improve economic outcomes (Ishibashi, 2005).

---

[16] Elders, grandparents, ancestors

[17] Kamehameha Schools, a private school in Hawaiʻi that primarily serves Native Hawaiian learners, works to fulfill Ke Aliʻi Pauahi's wish to improve the wellbeing of Native Hawaiians in perpetuity through quality educational opportunities.

Economic opportunity and financial security were echoed as the most common reasons to leave Hawai‘i in a study by Lassetter, Callister, and Miyamoto (2012). Through interviews with 27 former Native Hawaiian Hawai‘i residents living in Nevada, ranging in age from 23 to 63 years old, researchers found that participants were unable to properly provide for their families in Hawai‘i. Although many were able to achieve the desired financial security in their new place, not all were entirely successful and often struggled to make ends meet (Lassetter, Callister, and Miyamoto 2012). This phenomenon links back to migration theories, where migrants are aware of the factors in their home region that compel them to move. However, conditions away may come as a surprise, including experiencing segmented labor markets, constrained wages, and limited opportunities as ethnic minorities in their destinations.

Relatedly, homeownership was an indicator of economic prosperity for participants (Lassetter, Callister, and Miyamoto, 2012; Nakatsuka et al., 2013). However, while homeownership is unobtainable for many in Hawai‘i, this prospect becomes a reality in other places. Malone (2004) found that Native Hawaiians living on the continental U.S. are significantly more likely to own a home than islanders. These findings are consistent with other research establishing the links between economic wellbeing and housing conditions. According to the World Health Organization (2018), "income constraints" force people to live in substandard housing conditions, resulting in social tensions and stress.

In Hawai‘i, overcrowding in the home has influenced many decisions to leave (Nakatsuka et al., 2013). Native Hawaiian families generally meet housing needs by living in multigenerational homes and often have larger households (Malone & Shoda-Sutherland, 2005; Corey, Biess, Pindu, and Sitko, 2017).[18] Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander families are three times more likely to reside or live in a multigenerational home, compared to White families (Lofquist, 2013, p.13). The decision to move in with parents or live in multigenerational homes helps decrease the economic burden on younger and older generations (Lofquist, 2013). In this fashion, Native Hawaiians have a somewhat lower housing cost burden most likely due to larger household sizes and lower home values and rents. Nonetheless, housing continues to be a major issue for local families vying for limited affordable housing and especially Native Hawaiians who experience lower incomes on average.

Does Leaving Pay Off? Differences in Employment and Income

Smaller studies find that Native Hawaiians residing in Hawai‘i experience less favorable economic outcomes with lower per capita income and higher unemployment and poverty compared to those on the U.S. continent (Malone & Shoda-Sutherland, 2005). These outcomes may be linked to more education and occupational opportunities in other states compared to those in Hawai‘i.

Ishibashi (2005) examined the relationship between migration and educational and economic gains among Kamehameha Schools' alumni. Using a logistic regression controlling for educational attainment, gender, and age, the study reported that Kamehameha Schools alumni who left Hawai‘i and returned were more likely to hold a professional or management position than those alumni who never left. However, there was no significant difference in the likelihood of professional or management positions held between those who continued to live outside of Hawaiʻi and those who reside in Hawaiʻi.

---

[18] Malone and Shoda-Sutherland (2005) found that 9.7 percent of Native Hawaiian households in Hawai‘i include at least one sub-family compared to 3.2 percent of Native Hawaiian households on the continent. Similarly, a more recent U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development report (Corey, Biess, Pindus, and Sitko, 2017) found that Native Hawaiians often live in larger households, 4 people compared to 3 or fewer on average for the state.

The study also found geographic residence to be related to income differences. Alumni residing outside Hawaiʻi were significantly more likely to be in the highest income bracket ($100,000 and higher) compared to those who left and returned and permanent residents (29 percent vs 22 percent vs 16 percent, respectively) (Ishibashi, 2005). While the analysis demonstrates differences in income levels across migrant groups, Ishibashi (2005) explains limitations to the study such as inability to control for several other demographic factors (e.g., marital status, household size, industry, etc.) that have been shown to affect the relationship between migration and income.

Malone (2004) conducted a similar analysis as Ishibashi (2005) using Census 2000 data to understand the relationship between migrant status and income. An initial analysis shows significant differences in income between departees (those that left and remained afar) and islanders (those that never left Hawaiʻi), and returnees (those who left the islands and returned) and islanders. Those who left the islands and either returned or lived afar at the time of the study were "20% more likely to have higher wage and salary income than are islanders" (Malone, 2004, pg. 161). Additional analyses show the significant income differences between these migrant groups (islanders, returnees, and departees) decreased when demographic characteristics (e.g., marital status), personal factors (e.g., ethnic heritage, linguistic isolation, household size, etc.), and employment and industry were controlled.

Relatedly, Nakatsuka et al. (2013) also found economic gains among kūpuna, 65 years or older, living on the continental U.S. The study team compared the mean income of households run by Native Hawaiian elders in Hawaiʻi and other states, finding that households in other states had an annual household income of approximately $2,500 more than households in Hawaiʻi.

Education Seekers

In addition to occupational opportunities, studies find that limited educational prospects in Hawaiʻi also influence migration decisions (Wright, 1979; Malone, 2004; Ishibashi, 2005; Nakatsuka et al., 2012; Kamehameha Schools, 2013). The decision to attend college is not often made on a whim but is connected to anticipated economic and employment gains. Post-secondary education strengthens future job opportunities and success, increases earning power, and enhances skills and knowledge (Schultz & Higbee, 2007).

An early research effort emphasized the decision of study participants to move to the continent after high school graduation to "see the world," "for schooling," and "for a job" (Wright, 1979, p.205). Though cost of living and improved wages mattered, school and employment were most important at that time. The opportunity to live away from Hawaiʻi also presented the chance to be independent as young adults. Furthermore, Wright's interviews with 44 migrants living away highlighted the importance of college in the decision to leave, either right after graduating high school or through a college transfer, followed by military reasons (Wright, 1979). Though this work dates back 40 years, educational opportunities persist as a determinant of the decision to leave Hawaiʻi.

For Native Hawaiians, educational prospects available in higher education and for their children in the continental U.S. have pulled many to leave their island homes. Among kūpuna, qualitative interviews suggest that the opportunity to pursue higher education in the states are common factors triggering a departure. Some kūpuna chose to leave in their younger years for better quality education for their children (Nakatsuka et al., 2013). As one participant stated, "I moved to the mainland… so my children can be well-educated" (Nakatsuka et al., 2013, p.138). Relatedly, the 2002 Kamehameha Schools' alumni survey showed that nearly half (47 percent) of Native Hawaiian alumni who were living or previously lived outside of Hawaiʻi left for college (Ishibashi, 2005).

Additionally, Malone (2004) examined Hawaiʻi's brain drain by looking at rates of educational attainment by migration status. Using Census 2000 data, he found that across all Native Hawaiians born in Hawaiʻi, those who moved to the continent were significantly more likely to hold a bachelor's degree than those who remained in Hawaiʻi. He stated "such a finding lends support for the existence of an actual brain drain, whereby Hawaiians with higher degrees are relocating to the U.S. continent, even after controlling for other potentially influential factors" (Malone, 2004, p.161).

Family and Culture as the Ties That Bind

Although economic and educational opportunities are top priorities for prospective migrations, social and family ties and connection to cultural values are conditions affecting migration of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. ʻOhana, ʻāina, and moʻokūʻauhau[19] are highly important to Native Hawaiians, creating a highly influential reason to stay or return (Malone, 2004; Kanaʻiaupuni & Malone, 2006). According to Fukuda (2012), Hawaiʻi is a collectivistic society influenced by both Hawaiian and Asian culture which values strong social networks. Leaving to the continent often means sacrificing access to family and social support, negating migration as an option for many.

Even back in the 1970s, a primary reason individuals had never considered living away from Hawaiʻi is because this place is, quite simply, home (Wright, 1979). Social ties bind people to the islands, in addition to lifestyle and satisfactory employment (Wright, 1979). Among Kamehameha Schools alumni who left the state, two-thirds were pulled back to Hawaiʻi for family reasons (Ishibashi, 2005).

On the other hand, family can also be a reason to leave the state. Among Kamehameha Schools graduates, 19 percent of alumni who were likely to leave Hawaiʻi and 12 percent of alumni who had previously lived on the continent reported family was a reason for them to leave (Ishibashi, 2005). Family as a push factor can be understood from many views – the desire to distance oneself from difficult family ties or situations, and family can operate to pull migrants to other places to care to family members abroad, to be closer to them, or to find ways to better provide for them (Wright, 1979; Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009; Browne & Braun, 2017).

Likewise, Native Hawaiians may be inclined to migrate out of state if their siblings or spouse choose to leave, as was seen in Browne and Braun's (2017) study. It is also common for Native Hawaiians to migrate out of Hawaiʻi to be with or support family who are already living away. Nakatsuka et al. (2013) found that kūpuna who were interviewed sometimes moved to support their grandchildren out of state.

Overall, for Native Hawaiians who choose to leave Hawaiʻi and reside elsewhere, whether for college or other opportunities, research has shown they may experience feelings of isolation or rejection when they return to Hawaiʻi. This disconnect may stem from difficulties in assimilating to different lifestyles on the continent (Fukuda, 2012). A past study showed that Native Hawaiians who live in Hawaiʻi are likely to identify as

---

[19] Genealogy

Native Hawaiian more than their counterparts on the continent. This is likely a result of islanders living in an environment of shared values of place and culture that strongly connect them to each other and where they live (Kanaʻiaupuni & Liebler, 2005). For Native Hawaiians who live away from Hawaiʻi, connections to culture and place are sustained by participating in cultural groups and making frequent visits back to the islands (Nakatsuka et al., 2013; Browne & Braun, 2017).

Conclusion

From the 1800s, Hawaiʻi has rapidly transformed economically, socially, and politically, creating a place that is unable to support a thriving Native Hawaiian community. This has resulted in a Native Hawaiian diaspora as individuals and families move away from the islands in search of economic and educational opportunities. This diaspora presents a modern challenge to Native Hawaiian identity and culture, bringing separation of people from each other, from the land, and from the ancestral home (Kanaʻiaupuni & Malone, 2006).

The decision to leave is not easy. It involves a complex set of drivers and repercussions for individuals, families, and communities that considers a range of social, economic, and educational factors. But despite the economic hardships and lack of opportunity, there are many factors that root Native Hawaiians to these islands. Native Hawaiians are strongly connected to Hawaiʻi because of their ʻohana, the ʻāina itself, and the moʻokūʻauhau of both.

Though many may be pushed to leave Hawaiʻi for broader exposure elsewhere, the call to come back home remains. Kauanui (1998) claims that "a common characteristic of Hawaiians in the continent is a continued bond of loyalty to Hawaiʻi as an ancestral land base and often the desire for an eventual return migration" (p.685). This begs the question of how we can shift current economic and social conditions in Hawaiʻi to ensure the success of our people when they return, as well as how the state can improve these conditions, so individuals and families have ample opportunities here in Hawaiʻi to not feel pushed or pulled to leave.

Perhaps the two most critical questions that lie before us now are what is Hawaiʻi's future and where are its native people in those plans? As these islands undergo ever-increasing challenges of overdevelopment and environmental degradation, we all, whether indigenous or not, must work together to protect this place. And yet, for whom is Hawaiʻi's future, when more and more of its indigenous population cannot afford to live on and care for this precious ʻāina? From a Hawaiian worldview, these questions require answers accounting for our place as a people not only now, but also in the next 50, 100, or even 1,000 years. Finding ways to navigate the delicate balance between the ability for Native Hawaiians to live here and the rising cost of living is imperative to support the indigenous people of these islands. Clearly, more resources and answers are needed to support Native Hawaiian and local families who would otherwise choose to stay in their island home. By helping to advance a greater understanding of the history and factors behind the outmigration of Native Hawaiians, this research seeks to catalyze policies and decision-making to strategically support and promote a healthy, thriving Hawaiʻi that sustains indigenous and local family life.

References

Beamer, K. (2014). *No Mākou ka Mana: Liberating the Nation*. Kamehameha Publishing.

Browne, C. V., & K. L. Braun. (2017). "Away from the Islands: Diaspora's Effects on Native Hawaiian Elders and Families in California." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 32* (October), 395-411. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10823-017-9335-3.

Constant, A., & Massey, D. S. (2005). "Labor Market Segmentation and the Earnings of German Guestworkers." *Population Research and Policy Review 24*, (no. 5), 489-512. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40230919.

Corey, K., Biess, J., Pindus, N., & Sitko, D. (2017). *Housing Needs of Native Hawaiians: A Report from the Assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs.* https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/housing-needs-native-hawaiians.html

Fornander, A. (1916). *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore*. Bishop Museum Press. http://www.ulukau.org/elib/cgi-bin/library?c=fornander4&l=en.

Fukuda, D. Y. K. (2012). *The Effects of Length of Stay and Family Contact on the Hawaii Brain Drain Phenomenon.* [PhD. Diss. Pacific University]. https://commons.pacific.edu/spp/376

Hawai'i News Now Staff. (2016, December 21). Census: Hawai'i Increase in People Leaving for Mainland. *Hawai'i News Now.* http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/34110768/census-hawaii-sees-increase-in-people-leaving-for-mainland

Ishibashi, K. (2005). *Geographic and Social Ties to Hawai'i: Responses from the KS Alumni Survey*. Unpublished manuscript. Kamehameha Schools, Strategy & Transformation.

Kamakau, S. M. (1992). *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i*. Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools. (2013). *Multi-Generational Alumni Survey 2013*. Unpublished manuscript. Kamehameha Schools , Strategy & Transformation.

Kanaʻiaupuni, S. M., & Liebler, C. A. (2005). Pondering Poi Dog: Place and Racial Identification of Multiracial Native Hawaiians. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 28*(4), 687-721. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870500092852.

Kanaʻiaupuni, S. M.,& Malone, N. (2006). This Land is My Land: The Role of Place in Native Hawaiian Identity. *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being,* 3(1), 281-307. https://kamehamehapublishing.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2020/09/Hulili_Vol3_14.pdf.

Kauanui, J.K. (1998). Off-island Hawaiians "Making" Ourselves at "Home": A [Gendered] Contradiction in Terms? *Women's Studies International Forum, 21*(6), 681-693. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(98)00081-8

Kauanui, J. K. (2007). Diasporic Deracination and "Off-Island" Hawaiians. *The Contemporary Pacific, 19* (1) 138-160. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23721976.

Lassetter, J. H., Callister L.C., & Miyamoto, S.Z.. (2012). Perceptions of Health and Well-Being Held by Native Hawaiian Migrants. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 23*(1), 5-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659611423835.

Lee, E.S. (1966). A Theory of Migration. *Demography,3* (1) 47-57. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2060063.

Liliʻuokalani. (1990). *Hawaiʻi's Story by Hawaiʻi's Queen*. Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing.

Linnea, S. (1999*). Princess Kaʻiulani: Hope of a Nation, Heart of a People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers.

Linnekin, J. (1987). Statistical Analysis of the Great Māhele: Some Preliminary Findings. *The Journal of Pacific History, 22* (1), 15-33. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25168914.

Lofquist, D. (2013). *Multigenerational Households* (Working Paper #2013-20). U.S. Census Bureau: Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2013/acs/lofquist-01.pdf.

Lowe, R.H. (1997). *Kamehameha IV: Alexander Liholiho*. Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Schools Press.

Lyons, J.K. (2004). Memoirs of Henry Obookiah: A Rhetorical History. *The Hawaiian Journal of History 38*, 35-57. https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10524/579.

Malo, D. (1903). *Hawaiian Antiquities*. (Translated by Nathaniel B. Emerson.) Honolulu, HI: Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd.

Malone, N. J. (2004). Modern Hawaiian Migration: Brain Drain or Brain Gain? *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being 1* (1), 149-169. https://kamehamehapublishing.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2020/09/Hulili_Vol1_10.pdf.

Malone, N.J., & Shoda-Sutherland, C. (2005). Kau Liʻiliʻi: Characteristics of Native Hawaiians in Hawaiʻi and the Continental United States. https://www.ksbe.edu/assets/research/collection/05_0163_malone.pdf.

Massey, D. S. (1999). Why does Immigration Occur? A Theoretical Synthesis. In C. Hirschman et al (Eds.)*The Handbook of International Migration*. (pp.37-52)The Russell Sage Foundation. https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/pony2014shama/files/2014/02/Kaczmarczyk_Reading-1.pdf

Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.E. (1998). *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nakatsuka, N. J., Esquivel, L.M., Levin, M.J., Browne, C.V., & Braun, K.L. (2013). Identifying the Unique Challenges Facing Kanaka Maoli Kūpuna Residing Outside of Hawaiʻi. *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being(9)*, 133-151. https://kamehamehapublishing.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2020/09/Hulili_Vol9_6.pdf.

Petekin, O. (2017, November 21). Why Hawaiʻi Trends Toward Large and Extended Families. *Civil Beat*.http://www.civilbeat.org/2017/11/why-hawaii-trends-toward-large-and-extended-families/

Pukui, M.K. (1983). *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings*. Honolulu, Hawaiʻi: Bishop Museum Press.

Pukui, M.K., & Elbert, S.H. (1986). *Hawaiian Dictionary*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaiʻi Press.

Rare Plant Program. (n.d.) *Division of Forestry and Wildlife.* Retrieved September 30, 2019. https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/ecosystems/rare-plants/.

Ravenstein, E.G. (1885). The Laws of Migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society of London, 48*(2), 167-235. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2979181.

Schultz, J.L., & Higbee, J.L. (2007). Reasons for Attending College: The Student Point of View. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education, 23* (2), 69-76. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42802288.

Shapiro, D. (1999, April 3). Volcanic Ash: Expatriates See Hawaiʻi's Big Picture. *Star Bulletin.* http://archives.starbulletin.com/1999/04/03/editorial/shapiro.html.

Sjaastad, L.A. (1962). The Costs and Returns of Human Migration. *The Journal of Political Economy, 70* (5), 80-93. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829105.

Stark, O., & Taylor, J.E. (1989). Relative Deprivation and International Migration. *Demography, 26*, (1), 1-14. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2061490.

Tau-Tassill, L., Menton, L.K. & Tamura, E.H. (2016). *A History of Hawaiʻi* (3rd ed.) Curriculum Research and Development Group, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa.

Todaro, M. P. (1980). Internal Migration in Developing Countries: A Survey. In *Population and Economic Change in Developing Countries* (361-402). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. 2018. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018." https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-total.html.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. 2018. "Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018." https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-total.html.

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. 2017. "Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017." https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-total.html

U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. 2016. "Estimates of the Components of Resident Population Change: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016." https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-national-total.html

Williams, J.S., & .Tune, S.C. (2001). *Kamehameha II: Liholiho and the Impact of Change.* Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Schools Press.

World Health Organization. 2018. "Household Crowding." In WHO Housing and Health Guidelines, 21-30. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/publications/housing-health-guidelines/en/.

Wright, P. A. (1979). Residents Leave Paradise: A Study of Outmigration From Hawaii To The Mainland. [PhD diss., University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa].

Glossary

‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i	Hawaiian Language
‘Āina	Land, earth
Ali‘i	Chief, chiefess, ruler, monarch
Aloha	Love, compassion
Kama‘āina	Native-born, one born in a place, host
Kānaka	Human being, man, person, individual
Ka pae ‘āina o Hawai‘i	Hawaiian Island chain
Kūpuna	Elders, grandparents, ancestors
Lāhui	Nation, race, tribe, people, nationality
Maka‘āinana	Commoner, populace; people in general; citizen subject
Mō‘ī	King, queen, sovereign, monarch
Mo‘okū‘auhau	Genealogy
Mo‘olelo	Story, tale, myth, history, tradition, etc.
‘Ohana	Family unit
‘Ōlelo no‘eau	Proverb, wise saying, traditional saying
One hānau	Birthplace, homeland
Pae ‘āina	Group of islands, archipelago