

“KE AUPUNI: HE AHA IA?”: USING JOSEPH NAWAHĪ’S CONCEPTION OF THE  
AUPUNI BODY AS A FRAMEWORK TO HO‘OHAWAI‘I

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## Abstract

Joseph Nawahī's conception of the aupuni body can be seen as an ancestral knowledge-based framework used to understand the construction of space between and around us in 21st century Hawai'i. Operating on the premise that aupuni is not some magical, esoteric concept, I explored the four mahele of the aupuni – 'āina, lāhui, kānāwai, and waiwai. Mālama Pu'uloa workday participants were sampled to understand how we perceived aupuni at Kapapahu, along the shoreline of Honouliuli. The aupuni body framework was a viable guide for constructing a bridge in understanding how *aupuni* is perceived. The aupuni at Kapapahu is, at its core, community-based stewardship and education guided by aloha 'āina. As members of a lāhui, this framework enables us to be intentional in our endeavors as we navigate away from American Imperialism and the Western ideologies of nationhood and instead strive to ho'ohawai'i Kapapahu and beyond.

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## Introduction

The first time I set foot in Hawai‘i was in 2015, at what the United States has deemed *Joint Base Pearl Harbor – Hickam*. There, as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Air Force, I contributed to the destruction of Hawai‘i by giving the green light to many missions that have caused degradation on a large scale that spans the entire pae ‘āina. Therefore, as a Hawaiian Studies student, when it came time to choose my topic of research, I knew that I needed to utilize the knowledge I gained as a mechanism to heal my own relationship with this place, starting with the shore of Pu‘uloa, the very place from where I caused damage in the military.

From my point of view, I do not see how anyone could receive a meaningful education in Hawaiian Studies, such as I have, without wanting to unsettle the present status quo. There was not ever a choice that I consciously made, saying to myself, “I want to start caring about Hawaiian things,” as though it were some fad diet that is both started and abandoned on a whim. Instead, my arrival at this research stems from the understanding that my own well-being is intimately dependent on the well-being of the space I am in and also of the community around me. Here in Hawai‘i, and more specifically at Kamakakūokalani, I have been fortunate enough to be allowed into this community as an outsider and call it my home, and my heart is filled with gratitude for Hawai‘i and its people. My goal is that this research serves as the perpetuation of a reciprocal relationship between Hawai‘i and myself as I try to give back and express my gratitude for it sustaining me both physically and spiritually. Therefore, consider this study my love letter to Hawai‘i and my Kanaka ‘Ōiwi peers and mentors. E mau nō ka lāhui Hawai‘i.

Social Worker Michael S. Spencer says, “We must believe that all people, both from dominant and targeted groups, have a critical role in dismantling oppression and generating a vision for a socially just future.” Allies must come from all groups, and without such



participation, there is little chance of a socially just future for any of us.<sup>1</sup> The social climate these days is dire, and heterosexual CIS males of presumably, at least in some part, European descent seem to be among the only American demographic that is not being targeted by the waves of fascism that are currently sweeping across the American Empire; and it is an empire, to be sure, as I will later elaborate on.

As a part of the community here, our options are clear; we are either part of the solution or a part of the problem. Oppression does not mandate us to intentionally harm in order to perpetuate it, only that we stand by and do nothing to disrupt it.<sup>2</sup> In Hawai‘i, a primary source of oppression is American imperialism, driven mainly by militaristic stratagems.<sup>3</sup> This research serves to loosen said imperialism’s grip on Hawai‘i, and more specifically, the shoreline of Honouliuli within Pu‘uloa at Kapapahu Point Park.

Pu‘uloa can be incredibly challenging to access due to both ambiguous and not-so-ambiguous boundaries the city, state, and military maintain. However, I was fortunate enough to have a friend who connected me to a non-profit that did community workdays in the area. There, throughout my graduate education, I spent some of my free time clearing mangroves in the heart of what current maps, such as Apple and Google, label as “West Loch Estates.” As I worked at Kapapahu Point Park, I developed relationships with a larger group of people who share a common interest in helping to create an abundant future in the space, and eventually, I was asked

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<sup>1</sup> M. S. Spencer, “A Social Worker’s Reflections on Power, Privilege, and Oppression,” *Social Work* 53, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 99, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/53.2.99>.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, “A Social Worker’s Reflection,” 100.

<sup>3</sup> Kyle Kajihiro, “Becoming ‘Pearl Harbor’: A ‘lost Geography’ of American Empire,” *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (M.A., United States -- Hawaii, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2014), 2, <http://www.proquest.com/pqdtlocal1005836/docview/1609381665/abstract/8DD8366A74194DE6PQ/1>.

to join the Pu‘uloa Strategic Partnership. As a Hawaiian Studies student, because of the connections and relationships I have built at this place, I am using Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays at Kapapahu as a case study to exemplify an aupuni.<sup>4</sup>

Looking at mahele records and oral histories, slight variations in the name sometimes occur, but most records refer to it as Kapapahu. This name harkens to the mo‘olelo of Laumeki, a child born as an eel to Kaihuopala‘ai, his wife Kaohai, and his older sibling, Kapapahu, who was born in human form.<sup>5</sup> Such performance cartographies in the form of inoa ‘āina, mo‘olelo, mahele ‘āina, mo‘okū‘auhau, etc., are an essential part of adequately orienting ourselves to an ancestral Kanaka landscape,<sup>6</sup> as they not only tell the story of our place of

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<sup>4</sup> Kumu Laiana Wong from Kawaihuilani frequently reminds his haumāna “pua does not always mean flower.” This adage draws attention to the fact one-to-one translations between ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and English are often problematic, resulting in the dilution or altogether alteration of intended meanings. Most ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i words have various meanings and grammatical forms that are dependent solely on context; this becomes impractical to include full definitions in the footnotes because half of this paper would be out-of-context definitions. However, to not include all definitions might be taken as implication that no further meaning exists. Therefore, I will not be providing translations for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, though occasional interpretations will be used as is appropriate to synthesize and illustrate information. If you, as the reader, are unfamiliar with any ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i words in this thesis, I encourage you to search for the words here to ensure you can explore all possible meanings: <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/>.

<sup>5</sup> Kepā Maly and Onaona Maly, “HE MO‘OLELO ‘ĀINA– TRADITIONS AND STORIED PLACES IN THE DISTRICT OF ‘EWA AND MOANALUA (IN THE DISTRICT OF KONA), ISLAND OF O‘AHU,” A TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES STUDY – TECHNICAL REPORT, TMK Overview Sheets Zone 9-1 to 9 (Various Parcels); and Zone 1-1 (Various Parcels) (Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i: Kumu Pono Associates LLC, April 21, 2012), 106.

<sup>6</sup> Katrina-Ann Rose-Marie Kapāanaokalāokeola Oliveira, *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2014), 65.

interest but also inform and connect to places across O‘ahu and the entire pae ‘āina, as is the case with Laumeki leading the ‘anae to Lā‘ie and Kapapahu becoming a rock off the coast of Maui.<sup>7</sup>

One account of the physical landscape provides us with some information about the ancestral metes and bounds of the Kapapahu:

Kukahiko, sworn: I was born at Honouliuli, an ahupuaa on Oahu; born in 1810. Know boundaries, am kamaaina of the land and sea. I know [Ka]papahu. I belong there. It is a cape, the division of Hoaeae & Honouliuli. . . . The fishery opposite Hoaeae where a man can stand belongs to Hoaeae, and outside in deep water is Honouliuli, and so on, the shore water belongs to the land & the deep water of Honouliuli, till you come to Kalaeokane, a village of Kupalii, which is a point of division between Honouliuli & Waikele, in assessing the ancient tax, putting houses on the line so as to evade both. Thence the line ran on the edge of the shore, giving no water to Auiole. The line of Honouliuli cutting across the land to Panau. . . . There the whole Kai of Homakaia belonged to Waipio.<sup>8</sup>

Today, these ancestral metes and bounds are loosely adhered to, if at all, as Western minds have reimagined the geography at Kapapahu. Because of this, when this research uses the place name “Kapapahu,” it is done so while acknowledging that, at present, the name is used to identify the city park, which includes the cape and narrow shoreline that extends south from

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<sup>7</sup> Maly and Maly, “HE MO‘OLELO ‘ĀINA,” 106–10.

<sup>8</sup> Maly and Maly, 375.

there, beyond the mouth of Honouliuli stream, and on to the Pearl Harbor National Wildlife Refuge Honouliuli Unit.<sup>9</sup>

The goal of this research is to move away from these foreign geographies and concepts of human domination over land and instead begin to try and (re)envision how the space around us, and between us, is constructed by using a framework that is born out of ancestral knowledge – the *aupuni*. Using Mālama Pu‘uloa community workdays at Kapapahu as a case study, I wanted to know – what does an *aupuni* look like if it is not something we try to put down on a physical map with black borders around it?

This research serves a couple of different purposes. First and foremost, it is to help us, as a *lāhui*, to be deliberate in our efforts as we decolonize. Not simply running away from anything that smells of American imperialism, but instead intentionally running *towards* things that manifest Hawai‘i as we ho‘ohawai‘i.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, this study aims to show that an *aupuni* framework can serve as a vehicle to engage in ho‘ohawai‘i at Kapapahu and beyond.

One of the first things I wanted to assert with this research is that I do not use *ancestral* to imply antiquity. Instead, I suggest the use of mo‘okū‘auhau as a way to connect across lifetimes. It is a thread of continuity, connection, and identity that we hold in our hands, which we then pass on to those who come after us. *Ancestral*, therefore, is not exclusively a means to connect to a past but also a future.

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<sup>9</sup> For additional information, see: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/pearl-harbor>

<sup>10</sup> Bruce Ka‘imi Watson, “‘Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,’” 2021, 19, <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/75775>.

In 1895, when Joseph Nawahī published “Ke Aupuni, he aha ia?”<sup>11</sup> the world was much different than it is now, as globalization has since connected anyone with internet access to the rest of the world with the touch of a button. To assess the practicality of the aupuni framework, given the changes which have occurred in Hawai‘i since the dawn of the 20th century, this research uses a blending of knowledge systems, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi and Western, to arrive at a practical application of an ancestral aupuni framework in the present day that considers how the concept of aupuni might also be bolstered and proliferated into Kanaka futurities. Qualitative inquiry, the Western aspect of the above knowledge systems, will be used within a case study research design during Mālama Pu‘uloa Community Workdays at Kapapuhi Point Park. Combining the two schools of knowledge, this research aims to contribute to the forging of a resilient Hawai‘i.

During a keynote conversation with Dr. Kamana Beamer during the Pi‘o Summit at the end of 2022, Dr. Cornell West called attention to the fact that all empires fall – it is a historical guarantee.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent conversations on colonization and how Hawai‘i’s existence can be perpetuated despite that colonization followed. West homes in on the fact that *the soul*, or what we might here consider our humanity, is our means of connection against the backdrop of catastrophe.<sup>13</sup> We can meet people where they are by building on the initial connections we make

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Kahooluhi Nawahi, “Ke Aupuni; Heaha ia?,” *Ke Aloha Aina*, May 25, 1895, 1st edition, Papakilo Database.

<sup>12</sup> Cornell West, “Keynote Discussion” (Pi‘o Summit 2022: WAI SOVEREIGNTY & JUSTICE, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Dec 15).

<sup>13</sup> West, “Keynote Discussion.”

that are based on our shared vulnerability as humans.<sup>14</sup> This comes from the idea that we should not talk about hope, he says, but instead *be* hope.<sup>15</sup> Do not just talk about aupuni; instead, *be* aupuni. From there, we can build a path to ho‘ohawai‘i previously colonized spaces and people’s perceptions of those spaces.

“There needs to be consistency in our efforts,” replied Dr. Cornell West when asked by Dr. Beamer how we can get the word out [to ho‘ohawai‘i] world perceptions about Hawai‘i. He also says to take a consistent and cohesive show on the road. As such, I hope that this research serves as a meaningful contribution to the composition of such a show, so that it might prove to be practically useful in the future to properly and confidently facilitate ho‘ohawai‘i.

The body of this research is organized into four main mahele, and, within each mahele of this paper, I will look at the perceptions of the military (i.e., transient community), our local resident community [i.e., Boy Scouts of America (BSA), Leeward Community College (LCC), independent volunteers, and Mālama Pu‘uloa staff], as well as myself, the participant observer, of each respective mahele. It is expected that emergent relationships and connections between the different themes will present themselves throughout the analysis process, and these will be discussed as they appear.

### **Ancestral Places and Lost Geographies**

To demonstrate an aupuni, this research must first ground itself in the ancestral connections that define the relationships between people and place in Hawai‘i. In the book *Ancestral Places*, Dr. Kapā‘anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira writes, “To truly know a place is to

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<sup>14</sup> Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> West, “Keynote Discussion.”

be able to recite its stories and chant the landscape.<sup>16</sup> Noelani Goodyear-Kā‘opua shares the mana‘o of ‘Īmaikalani Winchester, who points out that “For a sixteen-year-old kid who knows nothing else other than living downtown someplace, if they can get out and experience some different things, return to their past, they can actually breathe that life – that ea– into our cultures and traditions again”; this reinforces “*ke ea o ka ‘āina*” as something that is defined by the proliferation and nurturing of reciprocal relationships as a way to assert autonomy and be self-sufficient.<sup>17</sup> This research, at its core, seeks to do just this, breathe that ea back into the space and community at Kapapahu so that we might truly know it.

The imposition of a foreign cartography over the native one severs connections to Kapapahu and cuts the community off from its ea - a result of Hawai‘i finding itself in the position of being under the imperialistic control of the United States of America.<sup>18</sup> This relationship is non-consensual and is characterized by ambiguous degrees of sovereignty that eerily begin to resemble an impenetrable caste system upon closer examination.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Kyle Kajihiro, a geographer who studies the effects of U.S. imperialism at Pu‘uloa, explains the ins and outs of this arrangement that Hawai‘i has with the U.S.:

Unlike empires, [imperial formations] are processes of becoming, not fixed things. Not least, they are states of deferral that mete out promissory notes that are not exceptions to

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<sup>16</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 66.

<sup>17</sup> Noelani Goodyear-Kā‘opua, “Reproducing the Ropes of Resistance: Hawaiian Studies Methodologies,” in *Kanaka ‘ōiwi Methodologies: Mo‘olelo and Metaphor* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Kyle Kajihiro, “Becoming ‘Pearl Harbor,’” 6.

<sup>19</sup> Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, First edition (New York: Random House, 2020), 24.

their operation but constitutive of them: imperial guardianship, trusteeships, delayed autonomy, temporary intervention, conditional tutelage, military takeover in the name of humanitarian works, violent intervention in the name of human rights and security measures in the name of peace.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of such a relationship, this study attempts to demonstrate the existence of an *aupuni* by using a framework proposed for use by Ka‘imi Watson. Under his thinking, the Western geographies and epistemologies that dominate Hawai‘i result from a process called “*ho‘ohaole*.” However, he offers up a counter to this process, which is to *ho‘ohawai‘i*:

Ho‘oHawai‘i is not simply to "make Hawaiian" as one may try to do by adding pineapple pieces to a pizza. Instead, *ho‘oHawai‘i* is to adapt, adopt, and adjust propensities, properties, and behaviors in order to cause resonance with this space, to participate and abide by the tenets which create an *aupuni* Hawai‘i to live harmoniously with all of the other inhabitants of the biosphere . . . *Aupuni* is the product of a worldview which prioritizes place and is therefore space specific.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, in this research, I sought to *ho‘ohawai‘i* by way of Joseph Nawahī’s *aupuni*. Kanaka ‘Ōiwi "linguicide and epistemicide"<sup>22</sup> have thrived since the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. As a result, many members of the *lāhui* are chasing an idea of a Westernized sovereign space instead of that which is intrinsic to and inherently compatible with Hawai‘i.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Kajihiro, "Becoming ‘Pearl Harbor,’” 128.

<sup>21</sup> Watson, “‘Mahikihihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,’” 2021, 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> Watson, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Watson, 1.



However, one must use caution, Watson remarks, when using English words to imagine a future for Hawai‘i, echoing the sentiment that if “‘pua does not always mean ‘flower,’ aupuni may not always mean nation.”<sup>24</sup> Keeping this in mind, it is critical to approach an aupuni as not being bound by artificial borders but instead bound by ‘āina.

Despite such widespread dispossession, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi still can breathe life into their kulāiwi. The connections that we, as people, have to ‘āina are not solely defined by the physical space that our bodies occupy. This is because those same connections are not individualistic but communal in nature and can therefore be felt indirectly, regardless of any existing diaspora.<sup>25</sup> Thus, by simply staying connected to a community, we can facilitate relationships with those ancestral places even when we cannot permanently reside there.<sup>26</sup>

Kapapapuhi is still a generative place where community members share labor and learning in a way that facilitates the existence of an aupuni.<sup>27</sup> In *Gathering Tides*, comprehensive detail illustrates the idea and process for creating generative spaces to practice our kuleana.<sup>28</sup> Within the context of perpetuating Kanaka identity and culture, Vaughan says that we can use “cultural kīpuka [as] places where Native Hawaiian culture . . . [endures beyond]

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<sup>24</sup> Watson, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> Mehana Blaich Vaughan, *Kaiāulu: Gathering Tides* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2018), 124.

<sup>26</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Vaughan, 125.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian*, Rev. and enl. ed (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 155: clear place or oasis within a lava bed where there may be vegetation.

dynamic forces of political and economic change throughout the twentieth century.”<sup>29</sup> Within these areas, generations of ‘ohana still practice traditional farming and fishing methods.<sup>30</sup>

Although the participants at Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays are not necessarily ‘ohana by blood, we are ‘ohana by way of our mutual humanity. At Kapapapuhi, however, land has been entirely turned over to private landholders, state agencies, and the federal government – causing a hindrance to unimpeded community access. Therefore, this research builds on Vaughan’s asserted precedent that communities can still tend to and care for ‘āina despite being unable to inhabit the area permanently.<sup>31</sup>

### **What Definitions Exist for Aupuni?**

Recently, there has been growing interest in redefining how we envision the state in which an ancestral Hawai‘i exists and continues to be perpetuated into the future, and I imagine that we could spend pages discussing how aupuni can be defined. However, available literature seems to agree that it is, at its core, a particular form of government that is based on aloha ‘āina.<sup>32</sup> Multiple sources break down the word *aupuni* into smaller parts – *au* and *puni*. Watson<sup>33</sup> offers *au* as being the “area or territory, especially places which sustain life;” *puni*, he goes on,

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<sup>29</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 87.

<sup>30</sup> Vaughan, 87.

<sup>31</sup> Vaughan, 121.

<sup>32</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” passim.

<sup>33</sup> Watson, 11.

“indicates an intimate and defining relationship,” and “The authority in an aupuni is possessed by place and not by people.”<sup>34</sup>

If we look at some of our puke wehewehe, Pukui and Elbert tell us that aupuni is “government, kingdom, dominion, nation, people under a ruler; national.”<sup>35</sup> In “A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language,” Lorrin Andrews, like Watson, breaks *aupuni* into its smaller parts – “*Au*, a place, and *puni*, around,”<sup>36</sup> which lends itself to the notion laid out by Watson that we are bound by the space, the aupuni, as opposed to us artificially bounding it with imaginary political lines. Andrews also provides more context on the more nuanced characteristics of an aupuni, “Originally, the word did not imply a large country, as there were formerly several aupuni on one island. At present, the word is used to signify . . . a kingdom; the dominion and jurisdiction of a king.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, aupuni can even be used as a stative verb to indicate “an undisturbed state; to be in a state of peace and quietness . . .”<sup>38</sup> While many sources exist to help us grasp the multifaceted richness of an aupuni, there is a significant lack of information regarding how an aupuni exists despite imperial dominance. This research seeks to address this question – how does aupuni abide today, and what does it look like in contrast to the looming shadow of U.S. occupation?

### **Methodology and Methods**

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<sup>34</sup> Watson, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 33.

<sup>36</sup> Lorrin Andrews, Noenoe K. Silva, and Albert J. Schütz, *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language: To Which Is Appended an English-Hawaiian Vocabulary and a Chronological Table of Remarkable Events*, 1st ed (Waipahu, Hawai‘i: Island Heritage Pub., 2003), 34.

<sup>37</sup> Andrews, Silva, and Schütz, *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Andrews, Silva, and Schütz, 34.

The geography of Hawai‘i has, in recent history, been hijacked and misshaped by imperial influences, which have contributed to the degradation of the land and the erosion of its culture. This research seeks to disrupt these imperial influences by presenting an alternative vision not beholden to the English connotations of nationhood - *aupuni*. To achieve this aim, the study integrates the ancestral past of Kapapahu with a framework for abundance developed by Nawahī at the end of the 19th century. Although it is well over 100 years old, it remains relevant today as a framework to ho‘ohawai‘i.

The dominance of foreign thought in modern-day Hawai‘i has led many to pursue an Americanized version of sovereignty, which is fundamentally at odds with the foundational principles of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi philosophies. As we seek to recenter ourselves on the path of Kanaka philosophy, we can look to recent research which has proposed the *aupuni* framework as a philosophical alternative to the concept of a "sovereign nation." This framework holds significant promise as a catalyst for achieving "ho‘ohawai‘i in Hawai‘i." However, there remains a considerable gap in the knowledge concerning a practical application of Nawahī’s *aupuni body* framework in a hyper-globalized 21st century.

Nawahī provided an outline of what he saw as the four mahele that make up the anatomy of an *aupuni*, and it is his definition of *aupuni* which can serve as the epistemological antithesis to the Western notion of *nation* within this research. The body, he says, is composed of different parts, or mahele, which work together in harmony, guided by the head, the pūniu po‘o, who embodies the lolo no‘ono‘o, or a foundational Kanaka ‘Ōiwi philosophy of existence – aloha ‘āina.

If we apply Joseph Nawahī’s *aupuni body* framework to Mālama Pu‘uloa community workdays at Kapapahu, what does this *aupuni* look like? To answer this question, I sampled

three different populations – a transient military population, a local resident population, and myself as a participant observer by using a combination of field notes and an online survey to capture the essence of how the aupuni is perceived.

### Using a Qualitative Methodology

I, as the researcher, was the qualitative case study's primary data collection and analysis instrument. This approach enabled me to fully immerse myself in the research process and collect rich, detailed data through participant observation and interaction.<sup>39</sup> The study was empirical in nature, which means it involved the collection of data from real-life situations.<sup>40</sup> The real-life context of the study was the Mālama Pu'uloa community workdays at Kapapahu, which aimed to investigate the phenomenon of ho'ohawa'i through a case study research design<sup>41</sup>; this enabled a more focused and detailed analysis of the relevant phenomena and an exploration of the subjective experiences and meanings by those involved.<sup>42</sup> Qualitative research is particularly suited to investigating such personal experiences, as it enables a more nuanced understanding of the experiences under study.<sup>43</sup>

Sampling within the Mālama Pu'uloa case study allowed for selecting individuals familiar with the work and the space in which it was being performed. I gained access to the

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<sup>39</sup> Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, Fourth edition, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 294.

<sup>40</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 37.

<sup>41</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 37–40.

<sup>42</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 13–20.

Mālama Pu‘uloa community workdays and the samples by permission of the Executive Director of Mālama Pu‘uloa, Sandy Ward.

### Using a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Methodology

Like Ka‘imi Watson, I hypothesized that Nawahī’s aupuni framework could serve as a way to demonstrate an alternative to the concept of a *sovereign nation*, and it holds great potential as a catalyst, therefore, to ho‘ohawai‘i Hawai‘i. However, despite its promise, there is currently a significant gap in knowledge surrounding the practical application of this framework in the context of Hawai‘i’s imperial formation. Therefore, this research endeavors to comprehensively analyze the perceived landscape of each mahele of the aupuni to provide a detailed understanding of the entire anatomy of the aupuni body at Kapapahu. In this research, the working English definitions for the parts of Nawahī’s aupuni body are illuminated, to the extent possible, by Watson:

1. ‘āina – "...the place and space which support life" and "...the iwi, skeletal framework of the [aupuni]." <sup>44</sup>
2. lāhui – "...the collection of kanaka, humanity, the muscle which allows the aupuni to move forward." <sup>45</sup>
3. kānawai – "...the connective tissue, the sinew, and veins which hold the aupuni together and keep all the mahele in communication... better understood as [Hawaiian] life ways." <sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Watson, ““Mahikihihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,”” 13.

<sup>45</sup> Watson, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Watson, 13.

4. waiwai – "...the vital blood of the aupuni...which [is] the various mea consumed, used, and shared through the kānāwai which sustain, support, and encourage sufficient distribution."<sup>47</sup>

By filling this gap in knowledge between theory and practical application, this research sought to facilitate a more nuanced and informed discussion surrounding the implementation of Nawahī's framework and its potential to demonstrate the aupuni we seek.

This study explored the potential of Nawahī's framework for an aupuni body for implementation through Mālama Puʻuloa workdays at Kapapahu, with the ultimate goal of promoting hoʻohawaiʻi, as opposed to aimlessly dismantling this imperial system that is before us now. The issue at hand, therefore, is the dominance of Western thought in modern-day Hawaiʻi. It has been proposed then, as a consequence, some might instinctively gravitate to an Americanized version of sovereignty, which is based on boundaries that separate, as opposed to permeable boundaries where one can come and go as they please.<sup>48</sup> Such limitations fundamentally contradict the core principles of Kanaka ʻOīwi philosophies such as aloha ʻāina.<sup>49</sup> We need to generate, revitalize, and uphold traditional aloha ʻāina philosophies and values; and this was exemplified through the implementation of Nawahī's framework at Mālama Puʻuloa workdays at Kapapahu, answering the question: Ke aupuni, he aha ia?

#### Research Approach

As I previously mentioned, I used a case study approach, which involved exploring the phenomenon of hoʻohawaiʻi in the bounded system of the Mālama Puʻuloa community workdays

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<sup>47</sup> Watson, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, intro., Apple Books.

<sup>49</sup> Watson, "Mahikihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai," 16–17.

at Kapapahu. This approach enabled me to collect detailed data from multiple sources of information, including field notes and survey samples from workday participants. The study's pre-determined focus on specific contexts (i.e., the four mahele of the aupuni) enabled a more focused and detailed analysis of the phenomenon, which I then thematically coded. This qualitative study aimed to demonstrate an aupuni at Kapapahu among participants in Mālama Pu'uloa workdays, thereby seeking to disrupt the imperial influences on the geographies of that space and present an alternative vision for the future. The study integrated critical ancestral connections by using a framework for abundance developed at the end of the 19th century to achieve this aim.

## Methods

### **Participants**

To select appropriate participants, purposeful typical sampling was used to identify individuals actively involved and engaged in the work with Mālama Pu'uloa at Kapapahu Point Park. This approach enabled me to select participants with experiences they could draw from to describe how they perceived each of the mahele within the context of the workdays and where they occurred. In determining the sample criteria, I considered the need for a population that could provide meaningful insights into the research topic. As a result, participants had to be older than 18, as they had the highest probability of having agency, autonomy, and self-governance; this was important because it allowed participants to move freely around the research setting without adult supervision. Additionally, since I used purposeful sampling, the sample size of 76 respondents was deemed appropriate for this qualitative case study, as it provided data that reached a point of redundancy and saturation. Ultimately, this multi-methods approach provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of an aupuni and its potential for



practical application at Kapapahuhi and beyond this case study and into large-scale ho‘ohawai‘i initiatives.<sup>50</sup>

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data for this study was collected in two ways – survey and observational field notes. The survey was distributed using a QR code that could be scanned from mobile devices after completing the workday. This data collection method allowed participants more convenience and flexibility, which I anticipated could likely lead to a higher response rate, given the outdoor environment. The survey contained six questions – one classification question and five open-ended questions – designed to probe for perceptions of the four different mahele of the aupuni body: 1) What organization are you here with, if any? (2) For *‘āina*, I asked, “Reflecting on Kapapahuhi’s story and your experiences here today, how would you describe the space?” (3) To gauge *lāhui*, the question was “If you have participated in a Mālama Pu‘uloa workday before, what was your reason(s) for coming back? -or- If you have not participated before, do you think you might participate again? Why?” (4) *Kānāwai* was drawn out by asking, “Thinking about the work you did today, do you think it benefited the environment and/or other people? If so, how?” (5) For *waiwai*, “As you find yourself wondering about the potential of Kapapahuhi, what do you think its abundant future looks like?” (6) “What is one of your biggest takeaways from your time volunteering?”

In addition to the survey, I recorded field notes throughout the data collection period during workdays as the volunteers engaged with the space. These field notes provided a supplemental view of what happened during the workday to be combined with the survey responses to triangulate the findings. Since I am familiar with the area already, having

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<sup>50</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 101–2.

participated in past community workdays, there was no need to acquaint myself with the site before the beginning of the study. I was accustomed to what jobs were being done during these workdays and their locations at the site. The type of labor a person was doing depended on the individual's abilities. I played a "participant as observer" role.<sup>51</sup> These field notes complemented the survey responses and vice versa, yielding similar emergent themes. I observed *‘āina* by richly describing the place and space that supports life at Kapapahu; *lāhui*, by richly detailing things that denote some type of reciprocal relationship or significant connection with *‘āina* and other people; *kānāwai*, by thickly describing workday participant actions and (re)generative interactions with the entire biosphere; and *waiwai* by characterizing the types of mea that are shared and consumed here.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

This research probed for perceptions of the four mahele of Nawahī's conceptions of aupuni, each through carefully thought-out open-ended questions corresponding to a specific mahele. Furthermore, a fifth open-ended question was factored in (Question 6). This final open-ended inquiry was used as supplemental information in tandem with the primary questions being analyzed for each mahele. Question 6 was not explicitly geared towards a single mahele but instead just asked about the biggest takeaways from the Mālama Pu'uloa workdays. An initial glance at the compiled survey data shows that certain groups tended to have shorter answers, so having another cache of available responses to pull from served as a way to include potential supplemental data for perception identification among those who otherwise provided shorter answers.

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<sup>51</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 144.

nVivo 12 software was used for all data analysis. I prioritized *in vivo* coding, which involved using participants' exact words to describe the individual experience.<sup>52</sup> However, contingency coding plans were necessary, as the respondents' intended meanings were sometimes clearly apparent yet not entirely explicit. In these cases, descriptive coding, which is used to label and categorize data, or concept coding, was used to identify key ideas or themes in the data, were employed as necessary, with the understanding that, when using the words of others without extensive member checks, such coding methods must be used judiciously so that the respondents' words and original meaning were not taken out of context.<sup>53</sup> By using these three types of coding, I was able to extract dominant themes and corresponding coding patterns which induced those themes for each mahele, which I expected to contribute to the validation of Nawahī's aupuni body framework as a viable template for ho'ohawai'i efforts.

I performed simultaneous research and continuous analysis by thematically categorizing data from field notes and online surveys during the same general timeframe, employing an overall inductive and comparative analysis strategy.<sup>54</sup> The data was grouped on similar dimensions of collective concepts, those dimensions were given names, and then they became patterns, allowing me to extract the themes from the data.<sup>55</sup> In some instances, no mutually exclusive patterns could be categorized for some of the themes; in these cases, the data took a

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<sup>52</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3E [Third edition] (Los Angeles ; London: SAGE, 2016), chap. 3, Apple Books.

<sup>53</sup> Saldaña, *The Coding Manual*, chap. 3, Apple Books.

<sup>54</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 202.

<sup>55</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 32.

direct path from *in vivo* to becoming a theme without the intermediary step of being grouped into patterns.

As a participant observer, with all that my positionality implies, I have invested more time in orienting myself with Kapapapuhi than someone such as a Marine from our transient community sample, which just arrived at their duty station in Hawai‘i. For example, as someone who has spent a lot of time learning about Kapapapuhi, I deeply understand the history and significance of the area and the different ways that people use and interact with the space. This understanding was essential for interpreting the data that I collected and for understanding the different perspectives of the people who use the area, in addition to utilizing my field notes to illustrate data from the survey respondents further.

The resident community sample that will be discussed included those from local school groups. These individuals were expected to come into the situation with a somewhat stronger connection to the space and an interest in its future. They were able to provide valuable insights into the ways that the space is used and the challenges that it faces, and they helped to both complement my field notes as well as fill in any gaps in my observations.

The transient community sample included those recently transplanted and visiting the area for a short time; in this case study, this was only military personnel, though had the study gone on longer, it could have been expanded to other populations to include tourists who come to volunteer sometimes. These individuals had different perspectives on the space, as they were unfamiliar with its history and culture. However, they were still able to provide valuable insights into the ways that visitors perceive the space. By understanding the different perspectives of the people who use the space, I developed a more holistic understanding of a 21st-century aupuni at

Kapapahu. This understanding is essential for developing strategies for managing and preserving the space in ways that ho‘ohawai‘i.

The ultimate goal of this research was to demonstrate that an aupuni exists at Kapapahu. I sought to confirm the proposed framework provides us with a pathway to not just aimlessly decolonize Hawai‘i, running in the opposite direction of anything seen as haole, but instead laser-focus on a goal that actively transforms colonized spaces through a process of ho‘ohawai‘i. The three primary sample groups – transient military community, local resident community, and participant observer – provided the data that will be used to paint the picture of ‘āina here in this chapter. Using a combination of survey responses from the wide variety of participants at Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays and field notes from myself, the researcher, as a participant observer on those same workdays, I hoped to induce the perceived essence of the aupuni among the participants.

The survey questions were relatively straightforward to analyze, as they had been designed in collaboration with academic peers and mentors. The goal was to develop questions that would elicit the type of answers relevant to the specific mahele that I was looking for perceptions of but also not intentionally lead respondents down paths of suggestion. For coding methodology, I primarily relied on *in vivo* coding during my initial coding process, using the participants’ own words to code their responses as much as possible given the data collection setting (e.g., people were tired and hungry, it was hot out, etc.); this allowed me to give an accurate accounting of how the participants experienced the workday.

Field notes required a little more work to analyze. Because I would be analyzing the same set of nine field notes across the four mahele, I needed to devise a way to ensure that I was going through the proper steps to switch contexts as I moved through the aupuni make-up mentally;

this involved performing a word frequency query using nVivo that could show me what people were talking about concerning the particular words that I was looking at. Then, I would identify themes in word usage and perform a text search query, where I would dig down into the context of the specific word used to begin coding my field note data. All coding from all sample groups was stored in the same data bank. This allowed for a more holistic view of the case study while also allowing me to have the ability to dig down deep for individual sample groups if desired.

## Ethical Considerations

### **Informed Consent**

I took great care to obtain informed consent from all survey participants. To achieve this, I used the consent form provided by UH Mānoa IRB templates, which outlined the purpose and nature of the research, as well as any potential risks or benefits of participation. Once participants read the consent form, they were asked to click "Continue" to indicate their agreement to participate. Every effort was made to ensure the confidentiality of this research's participant data. No personally identifiable information was asked of the participants, nor was there any included in the sample data.

### **Debriefing**

I debriefed with Mālama Pu'uloa employees who completed the survey at the end of each workday. The debriefing allowed participants to share their experiences and comments about the survey. I also used the debriefing to answer any questions that participants had, allowing me to collect valuable feedback and address any concerns.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Trustworthiness Criteria

For validity and consistency, I strived to adhere to Tracy's "big-tent criteria for conducting excellent qualitative research:" (1) Must be on a worthy topic; (2) conducted with rich rigor; (3) transparency of methods; (4) Credibility: Research resonates with a variety of audiences, makes a significant contribution, and attends to ethical considerations.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, this research has meaningful coherence, interconnecting literature, research, questions, findings, and interpretations.<sup>57</sup>

In terms of credibility, I used peer review to arrive at the final design of the survey instrument, wording the questions in a way that was not leading but still beckoned to the specific perceptions being sought out. Dependability and consistency of the survey was ensured through a thorough accounting of the coding and analysis processes; this accounting described, in detail, how data was collected, how patterns were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry.<sup>58</sup> I provided thick descriptions that were highly detailed and descriptive.<sup>59</sup> I also used maximum variation to achieve the best spread of representation from the different attributes present at Kapapahu during these workdays.<sup>60</sup>

#### Internal Validity

As part of this research, I included Mālama Pu'uloa employee respondents, which subsequently enabled me to conduct limited member checks within the small population of this

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<sup>56</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 240.

<sup>57</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 240

<sup>58</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 252.

<sup>59</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 256.

<sup>60</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 257.

particular group of participants to help validate the accuracy and credibility of the data. The member check process involved engaging in follow-up discussions with the employees to confirm that their experiences and perspectives were accurately reflected in the data collected. Through this process, I enhanced the validity of the findings and ensured that the research was grounded in the voices and experiences of the participants. Additionally, I used triangulation between two forms of qualitative data analyzed against the backdrop of three separate cases – transient military, local community, and participant observer. Overall, this study utilized a comprehensive and rigorous approach to qualitative research, which allowed for a nuanced and holistic exploration of *aupuni* at Kapapahuhi.<sup>61</sup>

#### Limitations and Delimitations

Qualitative case studies can provide rich and detailed insights into complex phenomena, but they also have limitations and delimitations that need to be considered. In this thesis, I utilized a qualitative case study approach to explore the experiences of a specific group of participants in a particular context. While this approach allowed for a detailed examination of the participants' experiences, it also had limitations. Firstly, the findings may not be generalizable to all other contexts, given the unique characteristics of the case under investigation – as Ka‘imi Watson says, “What is pono in Pālolo may be hewa in ‘Ewa.”<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the research involved subjective interpretations of data, which may have influenced the results.

Additionally, the case study was time-intensive, limiting the number of cases that could be studied and making longitudinal sampling an impractical addition to this research's scope. The research delimitations included selecting a single case study and potential participant

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<sup>61</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, 259.

<sup>62</sup> Watson, “‘Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,’” 16.



selection biases. Furthermore, ethical considerations also had to be taken into account, which may have limited the scope of the research. Overall, this research and its methodological rigor aimed to comprehensively explore the participants' experiences while acknowledging the limitations and delimitations of the qualitative case study approach.

## Mahele 1: ‘Āina

### Overview and Coding Selection

Vaughan notes that ‘āina is “that which feeds,” providing sustenance for our physical health while nourishing us “spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.”<sup>63</sup> Such relations are seen throughout many variations of Kānaka self-referring nomenclatures, reinforcing an identity that is indelibly rooted in ‘āina: Kua‘āina (people who live off and care for the ‘āina), Kama‘āina (child of ‘āina), Kupa o ka ‘āina (native of the ‘āina), and ēwe [of ‘āina] (sprout, rootlet, lineage, kin).<sup>64</sup> Thus, this study acknowledges that to envision Kānaka futurities successfully, one must first understand that ‘āina is the genesis of human existence and the scaffolding for the perception of that existence.<sup>65</sup> The first mahele of Nawahī’s aupuni body is the iwi. As discussed earlier, Watson defines ‘āina as “the place and space that supports life,”<sup>66</sup> and Oliveira says it is, among its many other nuanced properties, “family to Kānaka” and a “continuum that spans land and sea.”<sup>67</sup>

Performance cartographies are a way of mapping a location; in this particular instance, we can use them to locate ourselves spatially and temporally. Moreover, “being able to mentally

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<sup>63</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 40.

<sup>65</sup> “He Pule Hoolaa Alii (A Prayer Consecrating a Chief) — Ulukau Books,” accessed October 30, 2022, <https://puke.ulukau.org/ulukau-books/?a=d&d=EBOOKHOOLAAALII.2.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txPT-kumulipo-----EBOOK%252DHOOLAAALII>, 56.

<sup>66</sup> Watson, “Mahikihihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 13.

<sup>67</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 40.

map a location is largely a product of enjoying an intimate relationship with a place.”<sup>68</sup>

However, the range of pre-existing place-based knowledge varied significantly from person to person during the workdays at Kapapahu, so while there is an ongoing attempt to bring in more performance cartographies into the workday education portions, due to time limitations, the education focused heavily on very basic inoa ‘āina, for now, along with easily digestible historical references.

To guide my coding choices for *‘āina*, I first looked to the impetus of this research, Watston’s “Mahikihiki mai ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia I ka Wai” and his operational definition of *‘āina* within the context of Nawahī’s aupuni body, “the place and space which supports life.”<sup>69</sup> This definition prompted me to look for descriptions of the physical and spiritual (i.e., immaterial) spectrums of *‘āina* at Kapapahu; for *‘āina* is not just the physical features we see with our eyes but also the invisible attributes which are indicative of its well-being and are conducive to life.

In the survey, the codes for *‘āina* were induced by asking questions 2 and 6. As I previously stated, question 6 enriched the data from the other open-ended questions, such as question 2, which asked, “Reflecting on what you know about Kapapahu’s story and your experiences at the workday, how would you describe the space?” Because I was dealing with sample groups who may or may not have understood the nuanced definitions of *‘āina*, I needed to find a way to draw out pertinent responses from the participants without resorting to lengthy English definitions or imposing my own biases by leading them to my personal understandings of it. Therefore, question 2 was created in a way that conceptually brought everyone to a

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<sup>68</sup> Oliveira, 57.

<sup>69</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 13.

common starting point – describing the space, Kapapahuhi, in light of their shared experiences and knowledge gained through their time spent at Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays.

In my field notes, I looked for the usages of inoa ‘āina, tangible and intangible characteristics of the land and waterscapes, and indications of life sustained by ‘āina. I utilized the nVivo word frequency query to identify patterns in word usage in the field notes, and then I performed a text search query to dig into the context of the specific word usage to code for ‘āina. The survey responses coded from questions 2 and 6 were combined with the coded observations from my field notes. In total, six primary themes were induced through the analysis: *ancestral connections*, *‘āina momona*, *negative impacts*, *gathering space*, *sense of responsibility*, and *positive impacts*.

### Findings

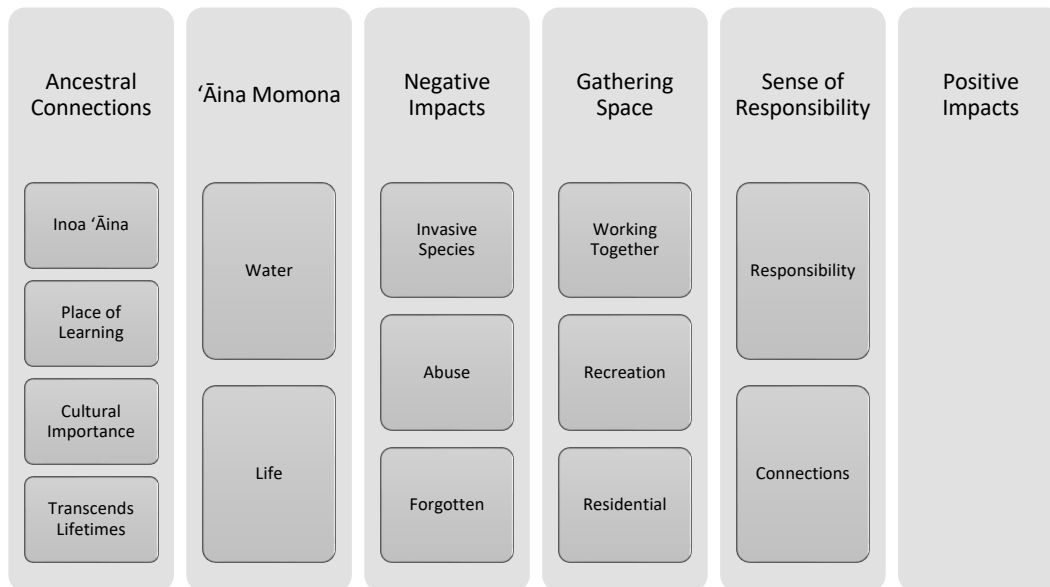


Figure 1 Emergent themes and patterns for “‘āina”

### Ancestral Connections

This emergent theme reflects the inalienable relationship between people and place, such as that Oliveira mentions in *Ancestral Places*.<sup>70</sup> The coded patterns that generated this theme reflected the ability of Kānaka to connect across space and time to access and transfer ancestral knowledge.<sup>71</sup> There were four patterns that the raw coding was organized into before assigning the interpretative themes: *inoa ‘āina, place of learning, cultural importance, and transcends lifetimes.*

#### Inoa ‘Āina

In *Ancestral Places*, Oliveira highlights the different ways that Kānaka orient to the world by using concepts that are native to Hawai‘i as opposed to those which were dreamed up in Eurocentric minds.<sup>72</sup> For example, she discusses the importance of place names, or inoa ‘āina, which are not just labels for physical locations, but also carry with them the history and stories of the people who have lived there. In this way, inoa ‘āina can be seen as a form of performance cartography, connecting places and the people who inhabited them. Oliveira also discusses the importance of honoring kūpuna and how we can connect with the places where they lived and learn about their stories.<sup>73</sup>

Kapapapuhi, traditionally a fishery and buffer area between Hō‘ae‘ae and Honouliuli, was known for its abundance of ‘anae, looked after by Kapapapuhi’s younger brother, Laumeki, and both of them were the children of Kaihuopala‘ai and Kaohai, a family after whom many of

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<sup>70</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 25–45.

<sup>71</sup> Maile Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai‘i and Oceania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 228.

<sup>72</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 65–93.

<sup>73</sup> Oliveira, 42–45.

the places in this part of Honouliuli are named.<sup>74</sup> The close ancestral relationship between Kapapahu and the ‘anae is echoed in some data: “Multiple clean and clear loko i‘a with abundant fish and other native sea creatures within it. Clear sights of the open and clean water of . . . Kapapahu and Pu‘uloa.” [R#50]<sup>75</sup> In addition to the abundance of fish, the area was also known for its abundance of fresh water and for being the “breadbasket of O‘ahu.” [FN#3]

### Place of Learning

‘Āina teaches.<sup>76</sup> Not only does Kapapahu exist as part of a larger network of mutually informing places that one could use to orient themselves in space, but it also imparts knowledge directly to those who physically and spiritually interact with the space. One way knowledge is gained here is through experience from “physical activity, which is fun.” [R#34] Additionally, “haumāna” can “explore before diving into place-based-learning” at this “sacred place” that is “ideal for ‘āina based learning for grade school students.” [R#52] Such learning experiences can even be “therapeutic,” bringing up feelings such as “serene, calming, and peaceful” that are brought on by “listening to the stories and even pulling weeds.” [R#13] Furthermore, it “needs to be restored” because “it’s a sacred ground” according to one military member. [R#73]

### Cultural Importance

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<sup>74</sup> Maly and Maly, “HE MO‘OLELO ‘ĀINA,” 108–9.

<sup>75</sup> How sources of data will be referenced in the narrative: Quotes and excerpts will be labeled with either "R" for survey respondents or "FN" for field notes, followed by a specific reference number. For example, a quote from the seventh survey respondent will be annotated as [R#07] or referred to in the narrative in plain language." The respondent’s organization may also be included in brackets (e.g., [LCC] for Leeward Community College or [BSA] for Boy Scouts of America). For field notes, the same format will be used with "FN" followed by a corresponding number (e.g., FN#2 or FN#5). There are nine field notes used in the analysis.

<sup>76</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 78.

Here importance refers to a perceived inherent value that is being imparted to this place because of the understanding that cultural significance exists here for one reason or another. For instance, in my field notes, one workday participant said, “This place has wonderful mana.” [FN#2] A survey respondent from the local community expounded, “Just learning about the history and hearing the stories, you can just feel the importance [of Kapapahu], especially cultural importance besides caring for the land.” [R#22] The residential community’s respect for ‘āina is not lost on the transient military members who participate in the workdays, as they note “how respected the land is in Hawaiian culture.” [R#72]

### Transcends Lifetimes

In *Possessing Polynesians*, Maile Arvin highlights the explanations of Kamaoli Kuwada regarding the fluidity of Indigenous space-time.<sup>77</sup> Across even vast distances of space and time, Kapapahu is seen as “a valuable community resource . . . to link current and future generations to the wisdom, mana, and traditions of the ancestors.” [R#06] A military member noticed the duality of impacts in the space, which are an accumulation of effects from “antiquity and modernity,” [R#67] acknowledging that there are cultural resources at Kapapahu that have been heavily impacted by the state of Hawai‘i today (i.e., environmental degradation, mangrove overgrowth, etc.). This concept of transcendent space and time does not just look to the past but also extends into a future of potential abundance, as Mālama Pu‘uloa leadership was noted in my field notes as saying when we are old just like them, they want us to bring our kids and grandkids to go fishing here.” [FN#4]

### ‘Āina Momona

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<sup>77</sup> Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*, 228.

Kame‘eleihiwa provides a relevant description of ‘āina momona as “[land] fat with food.”<sup>78</sup> Here, at Kapapahuhi, however, the food is not available to us, yet, ironically, it is, at the same time, everywhere. If the area had not been ruined by gross negligence, humans would be able to access it, but instead, we see posted signs that say the food in the area is not safe to eat because of contamination (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Sign warning to not consume things from the area

## Water

Under the ‘āina momona theme, the patterns, and subsequent raw codes, convey the ‘āina’s fertility and abundance of potential food sources. The first of these patterns, *water*, is, as we know, a prerequisite for life to exist. One survey respondent [R#46] from a school group noted that the water “is abundant in life and meaning,” while the military seemed to focus more on how “muddy” the area was a result of all the water, as opposed to the abundance of water being a facilitator of life. [R#58] As an observer, I commented on the abundance of water a few different times in my field notes. For instance, after we had a substantial amount of rain, I

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<sup>78</sup> Lilikalā K. Kame‘eleihiwa, “Kaulana O‘ahu a Me He ‘Āina Momona,” in *Food and Power in Hawai‘i: Visions of Food Democracy*, Food in Asia and the Pacific (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016), 55.



noticed that “the main loko i‘a in the area that we are restoring has an unusually high-water level, even covering the bike path that we use for the truck to carry tools out to the working area.”

[FN#8] During another workday, I observed a primary source of fresh water, Honouliuli Stream, which “is able to flow freely into this area” in addition to there being “just a lot of ground water in this area [even] when the stream isn’t high” in its normal cycle during the high tide where water from Kaihuopala‘ai<sup>79</sup> comes inland. [FN#7]

## Life

As previously stated, Kapapahu is practically oozing abundance, although we are currently not granted access to that abundance. This realization came up in my field notes as well: “He ali‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka”<sup>80</sup> - we didn’t degrade Pu‘uloa to the point of being dead and desolate. Kapapahu is alive and thriving. Instead, the ‘āina seems to have cut us off. We abused it, and now it refuses to sustain us as humans. However, it still sustains plenty of non-human life.” [FN#1] This juxtaposition of abundance and neglect was not lost on one respondent from the LCC school group, who said, “The space that I was able to work in and see was overgrown, opala found here and there like people not malama ka aina. At the same time it was glowing with life and a beautiful work in progress.”<sup>81</sup> [R#47] To echo this, an employee

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<sup>79</sup> “Hālau Pu‘uloa,” 20: This is the ancestral name of what is commonly referred to as “West Loch” today, accessed April 7, 2023, [https://www.ksbe.edu/assets/site/special\\_section/regions/ewa/Halau\\_o\\_Puuloa\\_Full-Ewa-Aina-Inventory\\_Binder.pdf](https://www.ksbe.edu/assets/site/special_section/regions/ewa/Halau_o_Puuloa_Full-Ewa-Aina-Inventory_Binder.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, trans., *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, Digital, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication, no. 71 (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Bishop Museum Press, 1983), #144.

<sup>81</sup> In some survey responses, ‘okina and kahakō have been used intermittently or completely omitted by the respondents. In these cases, I have quoted them exactly as they answered because the inclusion of them is a matter of personal choice. Similarly, if any grammatical errors were present in the responses, I left them unaltered in this paper unless the meaning was not clear.

mentioned that “Historically [it’s] ‘āina momona, traumatized by decades of colonization/pollution/neglect/injustice and disregard for the wisdom of the Hawaiian people and now, a hope spot for positive, community-driven change.” [R#51]

### **Negative Impacts**

My field notes and the survey responses repeatedly indicated that Kapapahu is in a state of degradation, a symptom of its imperial formation.<sup>82</sup> It then becomes clear that we cannot discuss the state of this ‘āina without discussing the impacts that American imperialism has wrought upon it.<sup>83</sup> Thus, three patterns were coded in the end, which yielded *negative impacts: invasive species, abuse, and forgotten.*

### **Invasive Species**

The first pattern is *invasive species*, or the degradation that can be traced back to being an effect of human interaction with this space that supports life; chief among these is the introduction of mangroves.<sup>84</sup> Hi‘ilei Kawelo, a founding member of the non-profit, Paepae o He‘eia, has commented on such degradation and has had experiences similar to those that we are having at Kapapahu, where the invasive mangroves have severely altered the natural infrastructure of the ecosystem.”<sup>85</sup> A residential community member who was participating as an individual commented on the “neglected Hawaiian fishpond impacted by invasive species (e.g.,

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<sup>82</sup> Kajihiro, “Becoming ‘Pearl Harbor,’” *passim*.

<sup>83</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, “Kaulana O‘ahu a Me He ‘Āina Momona,” 55.

<sup>84</sup> “Hawaiian Ruderal Mangrove | NatureServe Explorer,” accessed April 1, 2023, [https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT\\_GLOBAL.2.860784/Rhizophora\\_mangle\\_-\\_Bruguiera\\_sexangula\\_-\\_Bruguiera\\_parviflora\\_Hawaiian\\_Ruderal\\_Swamp\\_Group](https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.860784/Rhizophora_mangle_-_Bruguiera_sexangula_-_Bruguiera_parviflora_Hawaiian_Ruderal_Swamp_Group).

<sup>85</sup> Hi‘ilei Kawelo, “HI‘ILEI KAWELO,” in *Food and Power in Hawai‘i* (United States: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016), 82.

mangrove).” [R#76] In the field notes, I annotated that the mangroves “still continue to spread . . . as the little pods move with the water and get deposited along the shore, even though we do our best to cut them down” and “they are just so hard to control.” [FN#6]

### Abuse

Perhaps some of the most unsettling findings came from those words and phrases that impart being and consciousness to ‘āina, speaking of the abuse which occurred in this place in a way that could have easily been used to speak about another human. This is no surprise, however, as we look back to Oliveira and her acknowledgments of how ‘āina is the older sibling of Kanaka.<sup>86</sup> It makes sense, then, that numerous references were made to Kapapapuhi being able to experience pain or psychological discomfort. For instance, one respondent, not with an organization, felt that the area is “in serious distress” [R#25], while others say it is “traumatized” [R#51] and feels “pain.” [R#03]. In talking with one of the volunteers during my own time working, they expressed that there is “trauma of people and land here at Kapapapuhi.” [FN#9]

### Forgotten

Kapapapuhi has been forgotten, or lost, in multiple ways, which Kajihiro illuminates in his research.<sup>87</sup> He emphasizes, “Ke Awalau o Pu‘uloa has been made ‘lost’ as in something that cannot be found or known. That is, it has been made to disappear from everyday knowledge and practices, just as it has disappeared as a problem for scholars of imperialism.”<sup>88</sup> We see this reflected throughout the data gathered during Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays. For example, one

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<sup>86</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 6.

<sup>87</sup> Kyle Kajihiro, “Becoming ‘Pearl Harbor,’” 8.

<sup>88</sup> Kajihiro, 8.

respondent from LCC wrote, “Kapapahuhi [is] a hidden gem, on its way to being restored so its history and stories can be shared to, and appreciated by future generations.” [R#48] In the field notes, I was also able to capture this same notion of Kapapahuhi being hidden or unknown in recording “[one person] did talk about how [we are] working on creating food systems, and how Pu‘uloa used to be kind of the breadbasket of O‘ahu that had the largest collection of freshwater across the island. But now it’s kind of a forgotten area.” [FN#3]

### **Gathering Space**

Ka‘imi Watson defines ‘āina as being “the place and space that supports life.”<sup>89</sup> Even though Kapapahuhi is part of a hidden, or lost, geography that has suffered decades of neglect and dispossession, it is still a *gathering space* that carries life within it. As such, I arrived at this theme by analyzing three coded dimensions: *working together, recreation, and residential*.

#### **Working Together**

Mehana Vaughan says that we can “build community and enact kuleana by regularly gathering to care for . . .” this area even though community members are no longer able to permanently reside there in the sense that they used to.<sup>90</sup> A respondent, volunteering as an individual, expressed, “It’s cool to see how something that used to seem just dumpy and full of brush is becoming a place that brings us together.” [R#33] Furthermore, an LCC student felt that Kapapahuhi is “a place where the hui works together to rebuild abundance to Pu‘uloa.” [R#50] As an observer, I conveyed the thoughts of one government official who came to monitor the

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<sup>89</sup> Watson, “Mahikihihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 13.

<sup>90</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 120.

workday, saying, “Many people from different backgrounds and different cultures [are] coming together [at Kapapahu].” [FN#2]

### Recreation

Today, a recreational aspect of Kapapahu must be taken into account, and that is the current jurisdictional status in which it exists as a city park - something almost solely dedicated to serving as a place of recreation, by definition.<sup>91</sup> The park is a popular spot for fishing, swimming, and picnicking. There is also a walking path that runs through the park, which is popular with joggers and walkers. The collected data suggests that Kapapahu Point Park is a locale where people come to relax, exercise, and enjoy the outdoors. For instance, I mention the “people running along the walking path that cuts across [the] park.” [FN#5] What’s more, I remarked on the variety of recreation, such as the golfers on the golf course and the ori tahiti practitioners. [FN#3]

However, what’s interesting is that this particular pattern did not show itself in the survey responses; instead, it only appeared in my field notes. In thinking of explanations as to why this was not brought up in the survey responses, it stands to reason that I simply had more situational awareness since I understood that the capacity in which I was there was that of a participant observer. It is entirely likely that the survey respondents did not notice the recreation happening around them while they were up to their waists in mud and pulling out mangroves.

### Residential

The residents in and around Kapapahu Point Park are diverse. The area is home to people who live in permanent housing and unhoused people. As I say in my field notes, "I have

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<sup>91</sup> “Definition of ‘park,’” April 2, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/park>.

been stopped by community members from the surrounding housing area that ask me . . . what I am doing here as they walk through.” [FN#1] In another note, I recorded that the "current unhoused population is prone to substance abuse and addiction – something that is expressly and exclusively observed by more privileged people who frequent the area." [FN#3] Although some people can technically reside on this land, it is either done so illegally or in a way incompatible with the ancestral and natural state of Kapapahu. So, while the place and space *does* support human life, it's a very one-sided relationship that only benefits the people, often at the detriment of the 'āina.

### **Sense of Responsibility**

When discussing 'āina, the perceived responsibility of humans to care for it comes through, solidifying the idea that we and the biosphere around us are functionally inseparable. In her book, Mehana Vaughan quotes Kamealoha Forrest: “[ ‘ Āina is] a place people go to, but to see it as its living being, you go there, you clean it, you take care of it, protect it from people that will do it harm like you would anybody, any little sister, little brother, older person.”<sup>92</sup> The analysis revealed two patterns to support this theme: *responsibility* and *connections*.

#### Responsibility

The responses coded as the theme *responsibility* express, at minimum, a sense of duty and obligation to care for the land. This is evident in statements from the LCC student responses, such as “It’s a wonderful place to take care of and see the importance in care,” [R#09] and “The space is very welcoming and inspirational in wanting to help restore the land.” [R#29] Yet still, the sense of responsibility was not lost on our military volunteers, who feel that “conservation is important,” [R#57] that "it’s a sacred ground that needs to be restored" [R#73] and it is

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<sup>92</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 119.

"inspiring and evolving," according to one of the residential community members [R#74].

Similar ideas appeared in the field notes: "Everybody is very engaged with the area, not scared to get deep in the muddy water in order to pull the mangroves out" [FN#7] because it is a way of "acknowledging the reciprocal relationship that we have with [this] space." [FN#5] From a holistic view, the responses coded as the pattern *responsibility* express a sense of duty, obligation, and connection. These responses suggest that participants believe humans are responsible for caring for the 'āina.

### Connections

There were also expressions of *connections* to Kapapahuhi, and some of the survey respondents saw it as a place of beauty, serenity, and community. This connection was made clear among the school group participants when they said things such as, "[the] experience at the workday [has] left me with a deep appreciation for the space" [R#17], and it's "a place that is cared and loved for." [R#18] One military member felt as though "It was a good . . . experience and feels great to give back to the community!" [R#32] They see themselves as part of a larger effort to restore the 'āina and to protect it for future generations. This sense of community presents itself in other assertions made by military members, like, "It was a way to give [to, and] take part in something bigger than yourself. . . [Seeing] a . . . difference [that] one can make is very impactful" [R#66], and "I feel like I did something good for the community." [R#75] Overall, the responses pointed towards a sense of connection to Kapapahuhi and others who also care about it. In addition, I also witnessed a sense of connection and bonding with the 'āina in my field notes:

The volunteers aren't letting their personal schedules get in the way of coming out here on just one day of the week, but instead find a workaround to come out here on other

days. It would be easy to just say “Oh, it happens on a day I work so I can’t come out and volunteer.” They are making it a point to come out and stay engaged with this place on a regular basis.” [FN#8]

### **Positive Impacts**

The restoration of Kapapahuhi has had several positive impacts. One of these impacts is the return of native plants and animals to the area; this is due, in part, to the removal of invasive mangroves, which had previously blocked out native species. These benefits can facilitate a “reseeding” of the surrounding areas and communities, according to what Vaughan mentions in her discussions of kīpuka, which she says provide reserves to restore the essential [native] character of a place.<sup>93</sup> One survey respondent from LCC [R#11] noted, “It was very informative and nice to see the difference from when I used to bike here and it was completely covered in mangroves to now where it’s clear and I can see more.” [R#11] Other LCC students wrote that they “think [Kapapahuhi] is very pleasant and [they] have been here when there was not much work done and it is amazing to see the change and plans to make more things happen.” [R#16] According to a military member, “a large amount of mangrove has been removed since my last time here about 6 months ago, [and] seeing the progress today gave me a renewed hope for the project. [R#61] In my field notes, I specifically annotated the reseeding of native fauna in the area:

We have had one ‘alae ‘ula around the work area, that we knew about, which hangs out in the main pond, and today we saw that it had a baby with it. A couple years ago, according to the workers, you wouldn’t have even found an adult out here, let alone a baby. They say the thick mangroves deter them from making their home out here - a

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<sup>93</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 123.



place that they would have typically called home before the overgrowth of the mangroves. [FN#8]

For us, the Mālama Pu‘uloa workday participants, ‘āina is seen as being far more than simply *land*; it reflects the innate relationships between us, as humans, and the biosphere in which we exist. Ancestral connections are central to this understanding, as ‘āina is not merely a stage upon which we act out our lives, but instead a vital part of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi identity that has been passed down through generations. The theme *‘āina momona* reinforced this idea, emphasizing the importance of reciprocity between Kapapahu and us to encourage abundance now and into the future. However, human actions have had negative impacts here, which makes it crucial for us to maintain a sense of responsibility to care for this place so that we may heal the damage done. Despite the degradation that others and myself observed, this ‘āina remains a gathering space where we can come together and bolster our relationships with it and each other. Furthermore, recognizing our collective duty to care for ‘āina and actively practicing this responsibility has led to positive impacts on the health of the larger aupuni body at Kapapahu.

## Mahele 2: Lāhui

### Overview and Coding Selection

In this research, I sought to ho‘ohawai‘i in a way that is both relevant and compatible with the state of the world in an increasingly turbulent 21st century. To do so, I utilized Joseph Nawahī’s conception of the aupuni body as a framework to ho‘ohawai‘i Kapapapuhi, despite the effects which the violent American imperialism has exacted upon the space. To demonstrate said aupuni, I looked at perceptions of *lāhui* among the transient military community, the local resident community, and myself as an observational participant.

My analysis made it clear, relatively quickly, that *‘āina* was the most intricate of the mahele to code because it had so many dimensions that needed to be considered. In contrast, *lāhui* was somewhat easier to condense into a more focused scope. Although there were fewer distinct themes, the nuanced complexity of this mahele should not be underestimated. At this point, we should remind ourselves of our operational definition of *lāhui*, which underpins this chapter:

The second mahele of the aupuni is the flesh, *lāhui* is the collection of *kanaka*, humanity, the muscle which allows the aupuni to move forward. All humans are attached to and depend upon *‘āina*. The Kumulipo reminds *kanaka* that we are the younger siblings to *‘āina*. . . . As the youngest siblings, it is the kuleana of the *lāhui kanaka* to attend to and to be guided by *‘āina* our elders. *‘Ōiwi* are indeed shaped by the *iwi* [*‘āina*].<sup>94</sup>

So then, who are the *kānaka*, the humanity, that make up *lāhui* today? Since we are taking a moment at the beginning of this chapter to orient ourselves to the concept of *lāhui*, let us supplement the above definition, which Watson provides, with some excerpts from our available

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<sup>94</sup> Watson, “‘Mahikihihi Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,’” 13.

dictionaries. Pukui and Elbert tell us it is a “great company of people.” They even expand the definition beyond humanity and include species of living things.<sup>95</sup> In its intransitive verb form, it can mean “to assemble” or “gather together.”<sup>96</sup> What’s more is that Lorrin Andrews identified *lāhui* as being “a time of coming together,” “an assemblage,” or a “union of many.”<sup>97</sup> Therefore, as I pored through the survey responses and my observational field notes as a workday participant, my primary focus for this mahele was identifying connections and bonds between people/people and people/place.

Again, I needed to look for perceptions of this mahele among the survey respondents in a way that didn’t dilute meaning with one-to-one English translations or impose my own biases. As such, if the entire function of the human collective is to care for and serve ‘āina, then conceptions of this were expected to show up, to some extent, in respondents’ given reasons for returning. Therefore, in question 3, I asked, “If you have participated in a Mālama Pu‘uloa workday before, what was your reason(s) for coming back? -or- If you have only participated once, do you think you might participate again? Why?” Again, question 6 supplemented the data in open-ended question 3.

The field notes included descriptions of the material and immaterial dimensions of *lāhui* at Kapapahuhi and my reflections on these experiences. I again used the nVivo word frequency query to identify patterns in word usage in the field notes. I then performed a text search query to dig into the context of the specific word usage to code for *lāhui*. The survey responses coded from question 3 and those selected from question 6 were combined with the coded observations

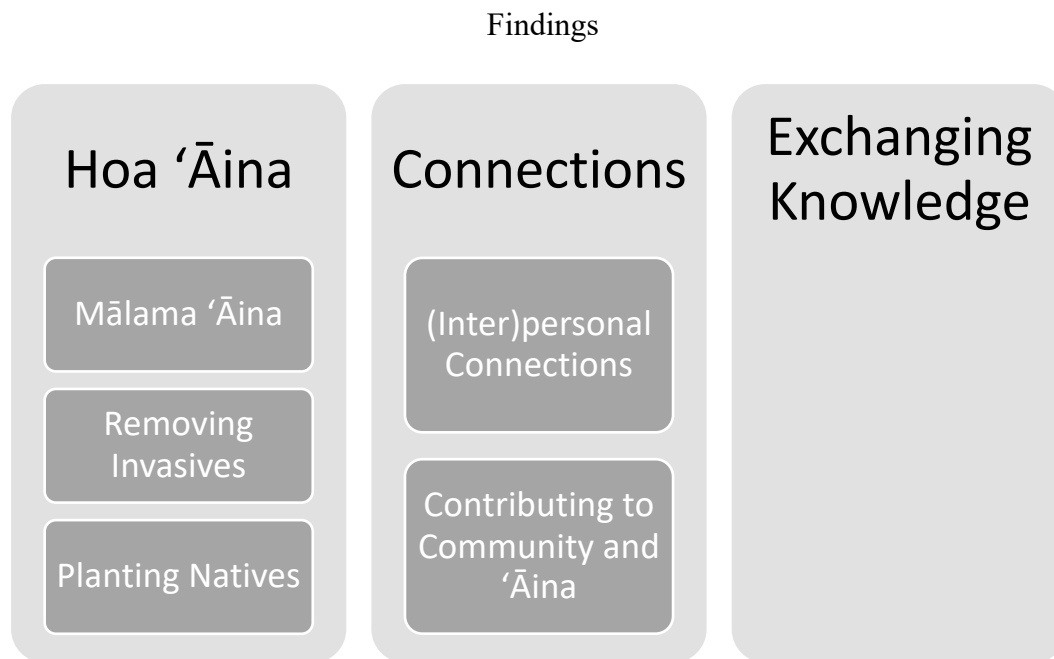
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<sup>95</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 190.

<sup>96</sup> Pukui and Elbert, 190.

<sup>97</sup> Andrews, Silva, Schütz, *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language*, 327.

recorded in my field notes. In total, three core themes were induced through the analysis: *hoa ‘āina*, *connections*, and *exchanging knowledge*.



*Figure 3 Emergent themes and patterns for “lāhui”*

### **Hoa ‘Āina**

I fully expected a theme to emerge that echoed the relationship which Watson mentions, between people and ‘āina, in that ‘āina is something to be served and tended to. I did not expect *hoa ‘āina* to be the overwhelming majority of the coded data for this mahele. Instead, I anticipated most respondents would discuss interpersonal connections, illustrating the collective nature of existence here in Hawai‘i. Nonetheless, ‘āina is placed above all else, according to the data that was gathered through this research, reinforcing the fact that ‘āina is indeed an ali‘i to whom we, as humans, are subservient.<sup>98</sup> Three patterns prompted the theme *hoa ‘āina*, which were *mālama ‘āina*, *removing invasives*, and *planting natives*.

### **Mālama ‘Āina**

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<sup>98</sup> Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No ‘eau*, #144.

To be coded under *mālama ʻāina*, the response needed to have mentioned actions like “helping,” “contributing,” or, of course, “mālama.” One such respondent, a volunteer from LCC, said, “On one hand, I return because we use the opportunity as a mālama ʻāina event for students. But, we always choose to offer Mālama Puʻuloa (instead of going to another mālama ʻāina location) because I appreciate the mission and efforts of Mālama Puʻuloa (Hui O Hoʻohonua) and Kapapahu Point Park is the backyard/community of many of our students.” [R#48] Some of the Marines expressed they “enjoyed helping benefit the island” [R#70] and that they would return to do “more good for the island.” [R#73] In concert with these responses was the Mālama Puʻuloa employee, who mentioned they “love bringing this ʻāina back to what it once was before it was neglected” [R#04], and my field notes, which recorded someone as saying the “work is about laulima . . . many hands coming together to [help accomplish] many things.” [FN#2]

#### Removing Invasives

Although *removing invasives* might seem like it belongs under *mālama ʻāina*, there were enough mentions of it to warrant it receiving its own pattern. In thinking about why this could be, I attribute it to the fact that in Kapapahu, at least, the removal of invasive species and other foreign things is going to be a battle that is fought by the lāhui for a very long time, and it is the overwhelming majority of the types of mālama ʻāina work that are being done there during these workdays, both now and into the foreseeable future. This is one of the biggest takeaways from how we, as humans, tend to ʻāina, our older sibling. However, only seven references were coded for *removing invasives* among the survey respondents, meaning the other 18 came from the field notes. What is also particularly interesting is that the answers were weighted differently between me as the observer and the survey respondents; as an observer, I focussed on the specific actions that were being performed (e.g., removing mangroves, invasive snails), while the survey

respondents tended to focus more on a more holistic view of their interactions with ‘āina, with more general references to restoration work as a whole, as opposed to naming specific tasks. One participant from LCC said:

“A lot of the work at Mālama Pu‘uloa feels daunting, but visible progress can be made in a single half day, but that’s only the above ground work of removing invasive mangroves or picking out trash. Generational work of improving the water quality, removing military systems around Pu‘uloa, creating sustainable waste disposal, and actually maintaining the physical work will take years. It’s overwhelming, but I would like to continue participating, one day at a time, to liberate Pu‘uloa.” [R#24]

This response almost perfectly encapsulates the inclusion criteria for *removing invasives*, which was not just expressions of removing invasive non-human biology, but also eliminating artificial waste and military systems (i.e., anything foreign that is not helping to bolster the aupuni). As the participant observer, the specifics of how the removal of invasives was carried out are reflected in my field notes:

Today, the community members tend (mostly) to be more spread out, creating almost a swath of a clearing effort, while not necessarily concentrating their strength on a singular task, such as working together to pull out a giant tree from the swampy area but instead working together to surround a large area with a bunch of baby mangroves with thinner, but well established, roots. [FN#6]

The dedication of the transient and local resident populations also came through in my field note recordings, again capturing an aspect of the workdays that survey respondents seem not to have reflected on too much regarding the particulars of their own interaction with place and people: “they are making a lot of progress clearing the deeper areas of mangrove. Often up to their

stomachs in mud. They take it as an opportunity to joke around and laugh, having fun while they do the work.” [FN#7] Responses like this reinforce Vaughan’s assertion that by working together, communal connections can be forged, even within “a Western property system geared toward privatization, partition, and sale.”<sup>99</sup>

These particulars of specific actions and methods of accomplishing work seemed vital to me because I was trying to capture how the lāhui worked together to accomplish tasks. Ultimately, the synthesis of this data, using the field notes as a macro-scale narrative of the responses which came from the survey, shows that participants in the Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays felt a strong sense of responsibility and accomplishment when removing invasive species. The lāhui understood the importance of removing invasives, which is one of the ways that we can be *hoa* to this ‘āina at Kapapahu.

#### Planting Natives

The codes that fell under the pattern *planting natives* were balanced similarly to *removing invasives*. As opposed to *removing invasives*, however, *planting natives* was any process of reintroducing or regenerating the native biosphere and physical environment. In the survey responses, people tended to express fewer tangible things, abstract concepts like *restoration* or *helping*; however, my observations in the field notes provided what comes out to be supplemental information to the thought processes and individual perceptions revealed throughout the survey responses. Through the synthesis of both data collection methods, it was evident that planting natives is another significant aspect of being a *hoa* ‘āina within the lāhui at Kapapahu, specifically in this area that used to be abundant with safely-consumable fresh

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<sup>99</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 113.

water and food resources.<sup>100</sup> One participant from the local housing community expressed their motivation to come back and participate in bringing back abundance because of their hopeful vision for the restoration for future generations, saying:

I have lived in West Loch Fairways (which is the neighborhood on the other side of the golf course) for 30 years and have run / walked the West Loch Shoreline path on a regular basis. When I first started recreating on the path in 1993 there was much less mangrove. One could see the fish ponds and there were a lot of fish. At that time, I did not know or understand where I was or its greater history. I keep coming back because I think it is important to try to restore this area so that future generations can enjoy it as I have. I know the bigger plan of the Malama Puuloa project is bring back the abundance of food. [R#25]

A volunteer from LCC described the experience of planting and engaging in activities they may not have known about before: “The reason I would come back are the experience of planting and doing activities that I didn’t know.” [R#12] Meanwhile, the importance of restoring the land to its previous abundance is highlighted by one BSA participant who said they “understand the need to restore the aina to abundance once again.” [R#38]

In my field notes, the role of regenerating the population of native plants as part of our efforts to be *hoā ‘āina* at Kapapahu Point Park is emphasized, annotating that I had seen “*pā‘ū o hi‘iaka* and *milo* growing here, both artificially and naturally planted . . . [and] *‘ahu‘awa*, which is a grassy sedge that is pounded into cordage.” [FN#3] As a whole, participant references tended to include a motivation to restore the land to its previous abundance, an

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<sup>100</sup> M.D. Monsarratt, *Map No. 630*, Land Survey, 1/2400 (Honouliuli, Ewa, Kingdom of Hawai‘i, 1878), 0630, State of Hawai‘i Department of Accounting and General Services.



appreciation for the opportunity to contribute through planting activities, and mentions of the importance of native species in our endeavors to be *hoā ‘āina*.

## Connections

The next induced theme was *connections*, which contained within it the patterns *(inter)personal connections* and *contributing to community and ‘āina*. Throughout the responses to the survey and the entries in the field notes, there were many references to plugging oneself into something bigger than the individual. Oliveira speaks to this notion of connections, both between people/people and people/‘āina: “Maka‘āinana enjoyed close interaction with other maka‘āinana. . . . Interdependence and reliance on one another [and the land] created a societal bond that ensured that people of all ranks worked together for the common good of all.”<sup>101</sup>

### (Inter)personal Connections

The sense of community and the relationships formed through the work during Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays were highlighted by many participants, reflecting the pattern *(Inter)personal connections* that appears to resonate deeply with the *lāhui* involved in the workdays. While participating in activities like planting natives, also of note was the wide diversity of people who were interacting with each other and connecting: “There are a wide variety of groups interacting today: Marines, school groups, and various community volunteers.” [FN#6] Evidently, one characteristic of *lāhui* is that it is pluralistic, inclusive of all those willing to work together toward a common, if even abstract, good.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 45.

<sup>102</sup> The reason that I offer this caveat for abstractness is because, although there is indication of contributing towards a common good, I cannot with a high level of confidence say precisely *what* that common good is, especially among the responses from the military respondents who represent the transient population in this study.

One participant from LCC expressed their enjoyment of the experience and the hope for future opportunities, stating, "This is my first time and I really enjoyed it, so I hope we come back to do this again!" [R#09] Another participant, also from LCC, emphasized the therapeutic and enjoyable nature of working with friends, stating, "I would [come back], especially with friends because it's more therapeutic and enjoyable." [R#13]

The connections among the participants extended beyond simple friendships to include a sense of shared purpose. A participant from LCC acknowledged the longevity of the work required at Mālama Pu'uloa but expressed their commitment to continuing to participate, stating, "I would like to continue participating, one day at a time, to liberate Pu'uloa." [R#24] One of their peers echoed this sentiment: "I believe in the mission and love to see how the site changes with time. As part of my organization, I also recommend workdays at Mālama Pu'uloa and try to get others involved." [R#53]

The sense of connection was also evident in the field notes, where workday participants were observed engaging in introductions and icebreaker activities, fostering a sense of camaraderie among the volunteers. One field note [#9] described how the facilitator from Mālama Pu'uloa led an "aloha circle" at the start of the day, promoting connection and inclusivity among the participants. Then, during a cordage-making activity, students were observed talking and bonding over their shared experiences, with one particular participant proudly holding up her completed cordage and expressing pride in her accomplishment. [FN#9] Other participants were observed engaging in conversations about their lives and personal goals while working on the task at hand, further highlighting the social aspect of the work at Mālama Pu'uloa. [FN#9]

The historical and cultural context of the place was discussed among the participants. I heard them reflecting on the importance of working together as a community to protect and restore Kapapahu, an area that holds much significance to any *lāhui* that gathers here. In Field Note #2, I recorded the comments of a government worker who came to speak to the workday participants: ". . . we do this kind of work so that future generations can come to Kapapahu and take a stroll in the park, go fish, and go swimming once the water becomes safe. This place has wonderful mana. It's bringing people together and helping them find themselves." Findings like these highlight the significance of *interpersonal connections* in the participants' experience at Mālama Pu'uloa workdays.

The sense of community bonding and shared purpose fostered by working together created meaningful connections among Kapapahu's *lāhui*. These connections contribute to the restoration work's success at Kapapahu and provide the participants with support, motivation, and fulfillment. Assertions such as "This is my first time and I really enjoyed it, so I hope we come back to do this again!" [R#09, LCC] and "I believe in the mission and love to see how the site changes with time" [R#53, LCC], along with the observations from the field notes, which show volunteers bonding over shared experiences, further emphasize the significance of *interpersonal connections* as part of coming together here and existing together as part of a *lāhui* during these workdays.

#### Contributing to Community and 'Āina

To be included under the pattern *contributing to community and 'āina*," I looked at data that either explicitly or in-explicitly implied helping or tending, as one would help a family member or a friend. Some participants expressed a sense of fulfillment and motivation to continue their involvement in community and environmental efforts. For instance, one survey

respondent from LCC said that they ". . . think that it is a great experience and I would try [and continue] to [help] our environment." [R#14] Another person from that same group shared that it was their "first time participating in a Malama Puuloa workday and [they] would definitely do it again because it's a beautiful environment to help out as community." [R#17]

Other respondents also touched on being part of something bigger than oneself and positively impacting the community. One person, who volunteers on an individual basis, stated, "It feels good to know I'm impacting my community and helping a non-profit," [R#33] while another local resident community member from the BSA wrote, "I like that many different groups come together for the effort." [R#44] Additionally, some participants mentioned their commitment to their military unit and the battalion's effort to help the community. [R#61, #63, #67, #68]

Field notes from the observations helped capture the collaborative nature of the local residential community and transient military members' efforts. For example, one mentioned, "The military guys (Single Marine Program) seem to be very teamwork-oriented." [FN#3] They were seen working together to accomplish tasks, such as removing large mangrove trunks with a tow rope, led by an unofficial leader. [FN#3] Yet another note describes how the community members worked in a coordinated manner to surround an area with baby mangroves, demonstrating a seemingly coordinated and collective effort toward clearing and restoration. [FN#6]

The connection between the community's efforts and the desire to preserve the land and culture for future generations also showed up in the findings. For instance, I mentioned how the community members were motivated to create a safe environment for future generations to enjoy Kapapahu. [FN#2] This highlights the importance of contributing to the sustainability and

well-being of the land and community for the benefit of future generations. The pattern *contributing to community and 'āina* is seen throughout the data, really showcasing the significance of collective efforts towards the betterment of the 'āina and lāhui at this place.

### **Exchanging knowledge**

As I continued my inquiry into the inner workings of the *lāhui* mahele during Mālama Pu'uloa workdays, the analysis uncovered intriguing findings that brought about this theme of *exchanging knowledge*. Through the survey and observations, I ran across numerous instances where participants actively shared and transmitted knowledge during the work.

In the online survey, one participant stated, "I came back for my senior learning project for AVID." [R#34, Not with an organization] Another volunteer, a Marine, wrote they would return "because [they] love the story behind it." [R#43] Yet another participant who wasn't associated with an organization expressed, "This was my first time and would definitely come again. The work was manageable and fun. I also appreciated the mo'olelo and being able to learn about the space." [R#74] Answers such as these reveal how volunteers are drawn to Mālama Pu'uloa not only for the sharing labor aspect of the restoration work but also for the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of the place (i.e., the restoration of knowledge).

Field notes provided rich insights into the *exchanging of knowledge* among the participants. For instance, during one workday, a volunteer shared their expertise on native plants and animals, "talking about the native dragonflies that we have here, and how some of the dragonflies we see around are not native. They were also pointing out that we had one of the native ones that was flying around us while we were working." [FN#4] Moreover, they also shared their past restoration work experience by imparting knowledge about how other areas on

the island handle similar situations [FN#4], highlighting the collaborative nature of the work at Kapapahu, where participants seemed to share their knowledge and experiences readily.

The significance of knowledge exchange was further observed during the opening oli we performed before starting the work. As described in the field notes, "After we felt like no more people were going to show up, we did our usual oli (E Ho Mai) before starting at the burial mound, we do this to ask for knowledge to be granted to us from the 'āina and the resident kūpuna as we are out here working in the space." [FN#5] In performing this oli, we honored not only the mo'okū'auhau of this place but also the importance of the application of ancestral knowledge in the work being carried out at Kapapahu.

During physical work, people often engaged in the exchanging of knowledge in various ways. Some shared techniques and tips with fellow volunteers, providing instructions and advice on how to pound 'ahu 'awa stem. [FN#9] Additionally, these exchanges also appear to have fostered senses of (inter)personal connections among the participants, as evident in the field notes that captured "lots of laughing and encouragement between [them]." [FN#9] The data I collected from the online survey and field notes provided compelling evidence for knowledge exchanges among the participants at the Mālama Pu'uloa workdays; from sharing personal experiences and expertise to engaging in oli and collaborative learning, these exchanges play a critical role in the lāhui at Kapapahu.

This mahele carried strong connections among the lāhui and the commitment to restoring and caring for 'āina through physical and immaterial processes. The number of references related to community involvement in restoring the land, such as making connections with self, others, and place, contributing to the community and 'āina, and sharing knowledge highlight what it means to be part of the lāhui here. There is an evident dedication and effort on the part of this

community in working together to positively impact the environment, restore abundance, and create a better place for present and future generations.

The rewarding experiences, progress seen, and sense of contributing to something bigger than oneself were evident throughout the sample data, indicating that satisfaction and fulfillment are likely derived from being an active participant in restoration efforts such as we have here at Kapapahu Point Part. This analysis also drew attention to the importance of ancestral practices for social interaction,<sup>103</sup> such as pounding ahu ‘awa and learning about the stories and best practices of restoration in preserving and perpetuating the cultural heritage of the *lāhui*. These findings underscore the significance of community-driven efforts and the unwavering commitment to mālama ‘āina and restoring the health and well-being of the land as a larger collective.

In the context of Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays at Kapapahu, this mahele, *lāhui*, reflects our conceptualizations of the connections between us as the participants and the place we are practicing our kuleana. At the heart of being a part of this *lāhui* is our role as *hoa ‘āina*, as it is through this relationship this particular aspect of the *aupuni* body thrives and prospers, contributing to the overall health of the entire anatomy. *Exchanging knowledge* is also a crucial characteristic of this *lāhui*, as it allows for the transfer of ancestral knowledge and practices that have sustained Kānaka throughout countless generations. Together, these themes emphasize the importance of understanding and honoring the connections between ‘āina and ourselves. According to my analysis of the samples, this *lāhui* recognizes and embraces such connections, working to protect and preserve the *iwi* which give *aupuni* at Kapapahu its form.

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<sup>103</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 39.

### Mahele 3: Kānāwai

#### Overview and Coding Selection

This research aimed to make material the aupuni body conceived by Joseph Nawahī in 1895. Since aupuni does indeed persist today, even in the face of smothering American imperialism, I began by hypothesizing that it can be perceived by everyone to some, albeit varied, extent. It's not an esoteric concept observable by only small, select populations. While the lāhui is the muscle that mobilizes the aupuni body, the kānāwai establishes and promotes equitable satiation among the collective existence of the mahele.<sup>104</sup> Again, I defer to Watson and his descriptions of the different parts of the aupuni body to guide us in the exploratory coding of the characteristics which constitute *kānāwai* at Kapapahu:

[It holds] the aupuni together and keep all the mahele in communication. Kānāwai is often translated as law but kānāwai can be better understood as lifeways. . . . Kānāwai [are] generative, in that by following kānāwai, the life of the 'āina and all who live upon it are improved. Kānāwai facilitate the ability for the life giving wai to kahe mau. This value is critical to understanding how life of the aupuni body is sustained. 'Ōiwi worked with the natural environment not just for individual consumption but instead the ideal was to actively contribute to sustaining a mā'ona moku, striving for mutual mā'ona, shared satiety amongst the entire aupuni body and not individual abundance or excess in one mahele.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, in the survey questions, I needed to find a way to coax out conceptions of generative actions as well as improvements to the life of the 'āina and the lāhui tending to it; as

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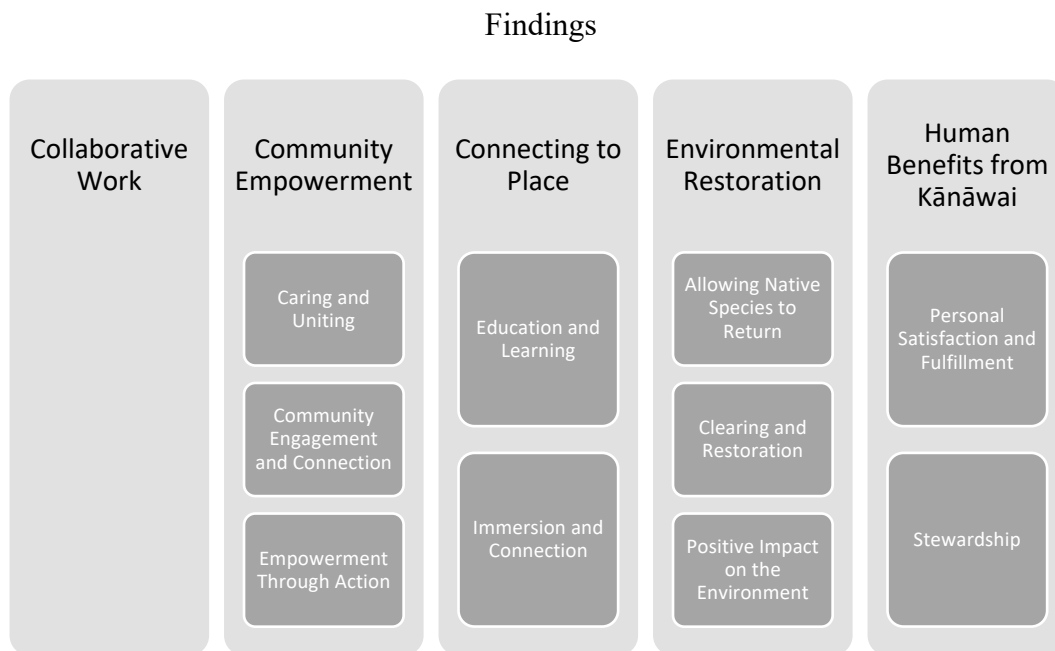
<sup>104</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 14.

<sup>105</sup> Watson, 13–14.



with *‘āina* and *lāhui*, this had to be done in a way that didn’t impose my own notions of *kānāwai* on the respondents or adulterate its meaning through watered-down English definitions. My design for question 4 was relatively straightforward, as I needed respondents to reflect on the actions they performed; and, if those actions were indeed generative, then there should also be perceived benefits to *‘āina* and the *lāhui*. Thus, I asked: “Thinking about the work you have done at Kapapahuhi, do you think it has benefited the environment and/or other people? If so, how?”

For data to have been coded under *kānāwai* in the survey responses, I sought answers from questions 4 and 6 that conveyed these generative actions interpersonally or between people and place. For my field notes, another word frequency query was performed with the nVivo software, focusing on generative actions identified within the results.



*Figure 4 Emergent themes and patterns for “kānāwai”*

### **Collaborative Work**

The first emergent theme discussed in this chapter reflects the collaborative work among the *lāhui* that helps to characterize *kānāwai* at Kapapahuhi, including the involvement of different communities and the building of new interpersonal connections. Watson says an

“aupuni can have neither citizens nor refugees” because “the pursuit of pono for an aupuni is not an individual or collective seeking of abundance but instead the efforts toward achieving systemic satisfaction, mā‘ona.”<sup>106</sup> According to this theme, pluralism and equity rule the day here at Kapapahu during Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays. Everybody, regardless of background, works and contributes to the same cause according to their individual “specialized” capabilities.<sup>107</sup> The benefits derived here are equally distributed among everyone involved. Within *collaborative work*, no mutually exclusive patterns were readily identified; however, the 12 codes that comprised this theme richly and collectively describe this dimension of *kānāwai*.

*Collaborative work* was brought about by participants who had expressed how working together as a diverse group of volunteers contributed to the success of a larger, mutually-beneficial goal. This was seen in responses like “I believe [we] did a small contribution and [the ‘āina] also was very inspirational.” [R#10, LCC] This sentiment was further echoed by one of their peers who shared that “Any work done there benefits the people and the environment immensely. It shows that all hands working together can accomplish anything!” [R#47] These responses indicated that collaborative efforts may be seen as positively impacting the ‘āina and as motivation to continue that work.

I further illustrated the perceptions of the volunteers from different backgrounds that came together to contribute to the same cause within my field notes, taking down the words of a facilitator who spoke after a workday, explaining that it’s “not just Native Hawaiians, not just people from the islands, it’s people from the mainland, it’s people from other countries, people from all around the world to come and give back to the island. That’s the true meaning of aloha.”

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<sup>106</sup> Watson, 18.

<sup>107</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 109.

[FN#2] Every time I observed the workdays, I saw how this work with Mālama Pu‘uloa had brought people from diverse backgrounds together, creating a sense of community and shared purpose. Those with military experience tend to come together here, actively participating in the project; as I mentioned in Field Note #4, I had “just spent the day clearing mangroves again. Today, I took the opportunity to spend more time conversing with the other volunteers. I didn’t really interact much with the staff members today. But what’s surprising is that a lot of the volunteers here have military experience it seems.” [FN#4] On the same note, I also mention how the act of coming together seemed to create a sense of inclusivity which then led to more interaction: “we got to talking about the Air Force. . . . and I guess they were able to deduce that I was also part of the Air Force . . . so we had a common bond there . . . [also] the person working next to them was in the military; they were in the Marines. [FN#4]

Altogether, *collaborative work* was a noteworthy part of the Mālama Pu‘uloa experience that the participants had. People from diverse backgrounds came together to contribute during the workday, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. Ultimately, the collected data shows that this collaborative effort was perceived as beneficial and inspiring for continued work towards a common goal.

### **Community Empowerment**

This theme included patterns that reflect the community-building aspects of *kānāwai*. In *Kaiāulu*, Vaughan calls attention to the fact that “places need communities, not just private landowners or government agencies, to care for them” and that such a community can be grown by “volunteer[ing] for restoration efforts” and “contributing different forms of expertise” to “efforts that nurture health of land and people.”<sup>108</sup> The three correlating patterns that brought

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<sup>108</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 172.

about the theme *community empowerment* were *caring and uniting*, *community engagement and connection*, and *empowerment through action*.

### Caring and Uniting

I identified *caring and uniting* as a key pattern within *community empowerment*. Participants expressed an appreciation for ancestral lifeways they experienced, if even conceptually, and the commitment to uniting to restore the environment. Survey respondent #46, who was from LCC, said, "The environment is one step closer to being restored to native Hawaiian ways and the people are uniting to bring the Hawaiian culture, ways, and knowledge back to the community." Complementary to this survey response, I recorded the words spoken by another participant which were similar, in my field notes, saying, "It's the culture, the people, the diversity, how everybody is so close, everybody tends to be so nice, it's the way of aloha – the reciprocity. That's what they see in these events here [FN#2]." These data excerpts express pride in Hawai'i and the unique aspects of its culture, people, and diversity.

The field notes highlight how the community comes together to empower each other and make a positive impact. I shared that someone had commented on the concept of *laulima* and how it was "bringing people together to work towards a common goal." [FN#2] A sense of caring and uniting was observed as people checked on each other's well-being during the workdays: "People are looking out for each other and the physical environment around us. . . . asking 'how are you all doing?' 'Are you all drinking enough water?'; ensuring no one was injured." [FN#4] Particular Marines were seen taking on roles as *de facto* leaders, checking on everyone else, and providing encouragement during the activity. [FN#3] I also noticed knowledge exchanges and collaborative interactions during these workdays, with individuals helping each other and sharing techniques rooted in ancestral knowledge, particularly with one

participant who was noted guiding another participant on the proper plating for a specific type of cordage using the 'ahu 'awa that grows in the area. In turn, this new knowledge appeared to be received with approval and understanding. [FN#9] Such collaborative approaches toward problem-solving and knowledge-sharing are crucial for community empowerment.

### Community Engagement and Connection

The theme *community empowerment* was also observed through a recurring pattern of *community engagement and connection* in the data. Specifically, participants shared how community involvement has positively impacted Kapapahuhi and fostered a sense of belonging and togetherness as one respondent stated that "creating a . . . spot that inspires positive change, community empowerment has improved the flow of the stream, education about the area's history of abundance, improved shoreline/stream habitat for native species...what has been accomplished is proof of concept that community hana, grounded in Hawaiian mo'olelo and ike kūpuna can be a vehicle for restoration - and a promising strategy for water and food security in the wake of climate change." [R#51, Mālama Pu'uloa employee]

Instances of *community engagement and connection* create valuable opportunities for interaction and bonding, as exemplified in Field Note #2, which describes how the day started with introductions among all the volunteers, standing in a circle and expressing gratitude towards each other and Kapapahuhi. Volunteers then went around, sharing where they were from and their favorite ice cream, fostering a sense of camaraderie and personal connection among the participants. [FN#2] This initial act of acknowledgment and appreciation set the tone for the day's activities.

Moreover, community engagement extended beyond the immediate restoration activities. Community members from the surrounding housing areas showed curiosity and interest in the

project, as highlighted in one field note: "As I've been walking around, I have been stopped by community members from the surrounding housing area that ask me about the area and what I am doing here as they walk through." [FN#1] This shows that Mālama Pu'uloa's work has generated awareness and curiosity among the local community, promoting meaningful dialogue and engagement.

### Empowerment Through Action

One Mālama Pu'uloa employee, R#03, expressed:

"I do think [efforts] have benefited the environment . . . because I've seen over the last few years native species like the endangered Alae ula return and nest in the recovered fishponds. . . native plants, that were not planted by us, naturally grow and increased stream flow in Honouliuli stream, benefit[ing] other people in the sense that it gives them a space to come learn about native ecosystems and food systems in their own neighborhood. It allows people to connect to 'āina and develop personal relationships with each other, themselves, and Pu'uloa".

This seems to showcase the impact of our community efforts at Kapapahuhi and the educational opportunities Mālama Pu'uloa has created for the community, fostering more robust connections to the space and each other.

Similarly, a participant from LCC, R#29, talked about the transformative nature of their work in removing invasive species, stating:

"The work we all did has greatly helped the environment because mangroves are invasive plants that displace native plants [and] also reduce the animal habitat quality for native animals which are important to Hawaii. The work has also benefited other people so they can come and walk the sidewalks that don't have any more overgrown mangroves and

enjoy the open view with their family and pets."

This quote underscored the tangible outcomes of community action in addressing pressing environmental challenges and creating a more accessible and enjoyable community space for all to enjoy.

Field notes brought to the forefront a sense of necessary flexibility and the provision of jobs for everyone in *community empowerment*; as I mentioned, volunteers could pick what they wanted to do according to their individual ability so that they could contribute as much as they were able. [FN#3] This pattern represented feelings of empowerment and positive impacts on the ‘āina and lāhui. Ultimately, empowering individuals to take action for the betterment of a larger collective can create a ripple effect of positive change for both people and ‘āina. Therefore, community-driven actions promote positive change and a sense of empowerment among community members in this aupuni which we seek at Kapapahu.

### **Connecting to Place**

Early on in my review of literature, I already explained that a deep connection to place is an integral aspect of Kanaka existence.<sup>109</sup> This overarching theme, *connection to place*, underscores the importance of creating and maintaining meaningful relationships between people and their environment, including educating newcomers about Kapapahu’s mo‘okū‘auhau and the positive impact that residing in this space has on individuals.<sup>110</sup> Oliveira asserts that mo‘olelo hold a unique power in providing support and insight into the fundamental institutions of society,

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<sup>109</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, passim.

<sup>110</sup> For further reading on proper actions as newcomers to a place like Kapapahu, please see: Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 172.

ultimately strengthening a people's bond to their ancestral lands and culture.<sup>111</sup> Two patterns comprised the theme *connection to place - educating and learning*, and *immersion and connection* - solidifying the interconnectedness between knowing a place and being connected with it.<sup>112</sup>

### Education and Learning

Several participants mentioned how learning at Kapapahu benefits both people and the 'āina. For instance, a Mālama Pu'uloa employee said:

“[I] think [the work] has benefited the environment. . . . because I've seen over the last few years native species like the endangered Alae ula return and nest in the recovered fishponds. I've seen native plants, that were not planted by us, naturally grow and increased stream flow in Honouliuli stream. It has benefited other people in the sense that it gives them a space to come learn about native ecosystems and food systems in their own neighborhood. It allows people to connect to 'Āina and develop personal relationships with each other, themselves, and Pu'uloa.” [R#03]

I also came across a respondent who said, “People and the environment definitely benefit [when we] learn about the history of the area with the stream and fishponds being discovered.” [R#48, LCC] Someone else, a Mālama Pu'uloa employee, talked about “educating people about the area's history of abundance, thus serving as a promising strategy for water and food security in the face of climate change.” [R#51] Finally, another respondent felt that “Aside from the obvious benefit of clearing invasive and restoring the ecosystem, [this work] is also educating people and

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<sup>111</sup> Oliveira, *Ancestral Places*, 81.

<sup>112</sup> For additional information see: *TEDxMaui - Dr. Pualani Kanahale - Living the Myth and Unlocking the Metaphor*, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PDipPnD2d8>.



bringing the community together." [R#53, LCC] Looking at this data, the Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays at Kapapahu Point Park have provided educational opportunities for the community to learn about the native ecosystems and potential food systems, bolstering their connections to Kapapahu.

On that same workday, the mentors for an LCC school group had been instructing students to collect ‘ahu ‘awa in a certain way to encourage propagation, according to the field notes. The students were engaged and enthusiastic, asking questions and actively participating in the hands-on restoration activities, showing their eagerness to learn and connect with the place [FN#9].

#### Immersion and Connection

*Immersion and connection* was another pattern that revealed itself as being part of the theme *connection to place*. Among the local community respondents, I came across expressions of belief that peoples’ restoration efforts benefited Kapapahu as well as people. [R#02, R#08, R#09, R#28] One Mālama Pu‘uloa employee seems to see their well-being as being intertwined with the well-being of Kapapahu, noting that “it’s a net benefit . . . and [we are] thanked by random passersby walking the park for the work we do.” [R#02] Another participant stated, "I think it helps the overall restoration of this place which helps the environment. Eventually the environment will help out the people." [R#09]

I likewise recognized *immersion and connection* in my field notes, where participants were observed engaging with the space in ways that warranted mention in the data collection process. For instance, one participant, a Marine who was interested in the area’s fauna, showed me a specific type of spider that they had found twice and expressed curiosity about the research being conducted. [FN#6] Another participant, who had been pounding cordage, proudly held up

the cordage they had finished pounding, showcasing their newly acquired skill with a smile on their face. [FN#9] Such interactions with ‘āina and the sense of accomplishment and pride in contributing to the restoration efforts reflected what I see to be *immersion and connection to Kapapahu*.

Also captured, in appropriate detail, were some conversations regarding the future of Kapapahu and aspirations for healing both the people and the land. One small group was heard discussing how they wanted to address the trauma of people and land at Kapapahu, which displays a significant sense of connection and commitment to this ‘āina [FN#9], meaning that participants not only engage in tangible restoration activities but also develop a sense of ownership, pride, and concern for the ‘āina and lāhui.

Many participants demonstrated immersion and connection to place as they participated in kānāwai. This connection to place was evident through their actions and showed a sense of dedication and responsibility towards ‘āina and lāhui. Their involvement could imply belief in the benefits of engaging with the biosphere in meaningful ways, which directly showcased their commitment to Kapapahu and its lāhui.

### **Environmental Restoration**

This theme contained codes that expressed efforts to restore and improve the natural environment, including clearing land, allowing native species to return, and implementing sustainable practices. Part of being a lāhui on this ‘āina means carrying kuleana, and that “kuleana can emerge from working with and for the land.”<sup>113</sup> While this research is cautious about performing translations, I offer some approximate interpretations for the word “kuleana,”

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<sup>113</sup> Hōkūlani Aikau, “From Malihini to Hoaaina,” in *Mo ‘okū ‘auhau as Methodology* (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2019), 87.

given what is available to us through our puke wehewehe resources; it is there that we find that kuleana is not only a “responsibility” to a place, but it is also the “privilege” to draw benefit from it.<sup>114</sup>

During Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays at Kapapahuhi, the data shows three primary ways people perform environmental restoration to establish kuleana: *allowing native species to return, clearing and restoration, and positive impact on the environment.*

#### Allowing Native Species to Return

A pattern emerged in which participants talked about the positive impact on environmental restoration efforts by allowing native species to return and thrive. Many expressed appreciation for the ecological benefits of these efforts. As one person from LCC stated, “. . . more lives could be saved and more plant life could thrive.” [R#07] In echo of that were other answers, such as “[this will] give a chance for native plants and animals to grow and thrive” [R#11], as well as “it helps us build more pilina, and we can help to create more homes for the more native plants.” [R#15]

Others acknowledged the importance of restoring Kapapahuhi Point Park to support native species and promote biodiversity, which indicates that efforts were seen as improving the place’s aesthetics and creating opportunities for native species to thrive and propagate. One respondent mentioned, “The fish are back and the birds are too. We are planting native plants and restoring the aina.” [R#38, BSA] Participants also recognized the broader implications of workday participation beyond the purely ecological benefits. Specifically, they spoke about the positive effects on the community and the potential for inspiring others. As an example, one participant mentioned, “It has shown . . . what can happen when people come together to

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<sup>114</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 179.

accomplish a common goal." [R#50, LCC]

### Clearing and Restoration

Participants expressed that their efforts had caused an immediate change in the pattern *clearing and restoration*, such as Respondent #R01 with the BSA, who mentioned we had “removed lots of invasive plants.” Someone else commented on the group effort, stating, “. . . it was a group effort we all did our best to alleviate the mess and make the environment safer for future generations.” [R#13, LCC] Others remarked on the aesthetic improvements to the space, stating, “We tried to clean up and make it look pretty” [R#14, LCC], and “We got rid of a lot of invasive weeds.” [R#23, LCC] People also recognized their work’s spiritual and cultural significance, with one person relating the work they performed back to my statement, which I gave at the beginning of the day that explained my purpose at the workday as a participant observer. [R#27, LCC] Also, some Marines emphasized removing harmful plants and trees. [R#32, #39]

The Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays were also seen as a way to support native species and promote biodiversity. Some of the survey respondents replied that there had been a benefit because "plants that are not allowing native species to grow and removing trash is helping" [R#45, Marine], and "we're clearing up the land for others to hopefully see." [R#69, Marine] Others also highlighted the incremental impact of their work, stating, "It was a small impact, but every little bit helps" [R#59, Marine] and "It's these small, consistent, and incremental steps that make a huge difference." [R#74, Not With an Organization]

These findings for the pattern *clearing and restoration* suggest that participants see their efforts in clearing invasive plants and restoring the environment as having a positive impact. Moreover, they highlight the multifaceted nature of the restoration work, including physical,

spiritual, cultural, and ecological aspects. Furthermore, the findings indicate that participants recognize the interconnectedness of these different dimensions in their holistic approach to engaging in kānāwai at Kapapapuhi.

#### Positive Impact on the Environment

Next, I identified *positive impact on the environment* as part of the induced theme, *environmental restoration*. People seemed to be aware of the benefits of the work that people were doing to restore Kapapapuhi. One participant felt that “each of the mangrove shoots we pull and branches we cut get us closer to allowing the water to flow back into the ponds.” [R#05, Not With an Organization] Others referred to the visible progress made during the workdays, “. . . you can see the difference . . . Whether it be clearing out weeds or mangrove, as things begin to clear up, the bigger picture is more evident.” [R#18, LCC] Another participant mentioned how the area that their group helped clear out is now where they saw the baby ‘*alae*‘*ula*, indicating the restoration of a habitat for native species. [R#21, LCC] Some of the military volunteers also expressed that the collective efforts at Kapapapuhi have contributed to “creating fish ponds and improved habitat for waterfowl.” [R#71, #76, Marines]

Participants highlighted the cultural significance of restoring the land to its former glory and bringing back “Native Hawaiian” ways. For example, a respondent from LCC felt the environment at Kapapapuhi “. . . is one step closer to being restored to native Hawaiian ways, and the people are uniting to bring the Hawaiian culture, ways, and knowledge back to the community.” [R#46] Participants also noted that Mālama Pu‘*uloa* workdays have helped in presenting the community with a different view of the park and Pu‘*uloa*, along with a renewed sense of connection to the land. [R#54, #48, LCC] Overall, participants seem to feel their efforts at Kapapapuhi have positively impacted the ‘*āina*, contributing to an overall healthy *aupuni*

body.

### **Human Benefits from Kānāwai**

Although this chapter focuses on kānāwai, it stands to reason that some of the benefits of these generative actions would find their way into the data; although I dedicate more time to this in the next chapter, here, keeping our focus on *kānāwai*, it includes codes that are representative of personal rewards and motivation that individuals experience through their participation in the various aspects of *kānāwai*, including being rewarded for their work, feeling motivated to improve, and seeing the positive impact of kānāwai on the environment. Finally, the patterns that induced *human benefits from Kānāwai* were *personal satisfaction and fulfillment* and *stewardship*

#### **Personal Satisfaction and Fulfillment**

There were enough codes to warrant the creation of the pattern *personal satisfaction and fulfillment*, which show some of the benefits that come with kānāwai's reciprocal nature.

Respondent #15, from LCC, said this work "helps us build more pilina, and we can help to create more homes for the more native plants." Another LCC respondent, #16, expressed that this work "just makes people, especially Native Hawaiians very happy to be here." Here, we might consider this an emotional connection and sense of happiness that participants feel when engaging in kānāwai, such as *clearing, restoration, education, and learning*.

The Field Notes also revealed that participants felt rewarded for their efforts. One Marine stated, "It makes you want to be a better person." [FN#6] Another Marine was heard expressing appreciation for being recognized with a volunteer ribbon for their uniform, indicating the sense of pride and accomplishment from engaging in kānāwai. [FN#6] Ultimately, we can see that that *kānāwai* leads to personal satisfaction, fulfillment, and a sense of reward in addition to

contributing to benefits to ‘āiina and a deeper appreciation for the significance of Kapapahuhi. Additionally, these findings show the positive impacts of k n wai and emphasize its importance in promoting personal and community well-being in 21st-century Hawai‘i.

### Stewardship

Finally, I was able to identify, although to a relatively minimal level, the pattern of having a sense of stewardship. As one participant answered, "I surely hope [I can come back], we made quite a lot of [places] for fish and native plants here." [R#42, LCC] This sentiment pointed to having a sense of responsibility to care for the  ina and recognizing the role of humans as its stewards.

Another participant expressed how the benefits of k n wai proliferate throughout future generations, saying, "For my students, they will know that the area is in their backyard and that without our kokua, there is a chance for a piece of history to disappear. . . . [and it’s a]cultural and educational area for all ages to learn about." [R#52, LCC] Here, I saw a connection to Kapapahuhi as a source of ancestral knowledge and a desire to pass this legacy to future generations. Moreover, participants recognized the significance of the land and the need to sustain abundance, with one stating, “This land provided for many people before me and it should to this day.” [R#62, Marine] Responses like these indeed reflected a desire to preserve and protect Kapapahuhi Point Park for the benefit of all.

K n wai, the generative actions performed and conceptualized by us, the l hui, during M lama Pu‘uloa workdays at Kapapahuhi reflected a holistic approach to community building that emphasizes collaboration, community empowerment, and a deep connection to place. This approach recognizes that environmental restoration is essential to community well-being and that human benefits can be derived from k n wai. Collaborative work is central to this approach, as it

allows for the pooling of resources and knowledge, creating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. By empowering communities to take an active role in shaping their environment, kānāwai creates a sense of pride and ownership, fostering a deeper connection to place.

Environmental restoration is an essential aspect of this approach, as it allows for the revitalization of ecosystems and the promotion of biodiversity, benefiting both the environment and the community. Human benefits from kānāwai are also significant, as the restoration of natural resources can improve public health and provide economic opportunities for local communities. Thus, kānāwai represents a holistic and sustainable approach to community building that recognizes the importance of collaboration, community empowerment, and a deep connection to place.



## Mahele 4: Waiwai

### Overview and Coding Selection

The matter of aupuni perceptions is not one of establishing its existence or non-existence, but rather, it *is* a matter of exploring what aupuni looks like today in an effort to ho‘ohawai‘i futurities here in Hawai‘i. The final mahele of this aupuni which Joseph Nawahī mentions in his article, is *waiwai*, which Watson explains is “the blood” of the body – the nutrient-rich substance that flows through and is distributed by way of the *kānāwai*, to be equally dispersed throughout the ancestrally based physiology of Hawai‘i.<sup>115</sup> Waiwai, therefore, “are the various mea consumed, used, and shared” so that all of the mahele are “satiated and healthy.”<sup>116</sup>

The *in vivo* method served particularly well here, as *waiwai* was, perhaps, one of the less abstract concepts to gauge perceptions of. For survey responses to be coded under *waiwai*, it was necessary to get people to talk about those things which can be consumed and sustain physical and spiritual well-being. This became a little tricky at Kapapahuhi, however; because of its degraded state, there are few ways that we can safely draw physical sustenance from the space. As such, the survey prompt was designed in a way that had respondents anticipate an abundant future for Kapapahuhi – one in which the physical *waiwai* are safe for human consumption. On the spectrum of *waiwai*, however, I expected there would also be perceptions of spiritual *waiwai* which could nurture the *lāhui* and, therefore, the entire aupuni body. These immaterial *waiwai* would have the ability to satiate in the here and now. I looked for aspects of the survey responses to questions 5 and 6 that referred to these life-giving consumables, physical or otherwise. To bring out the perceptions of *waiwai* among the survey respondents, question 5 asked, “As you

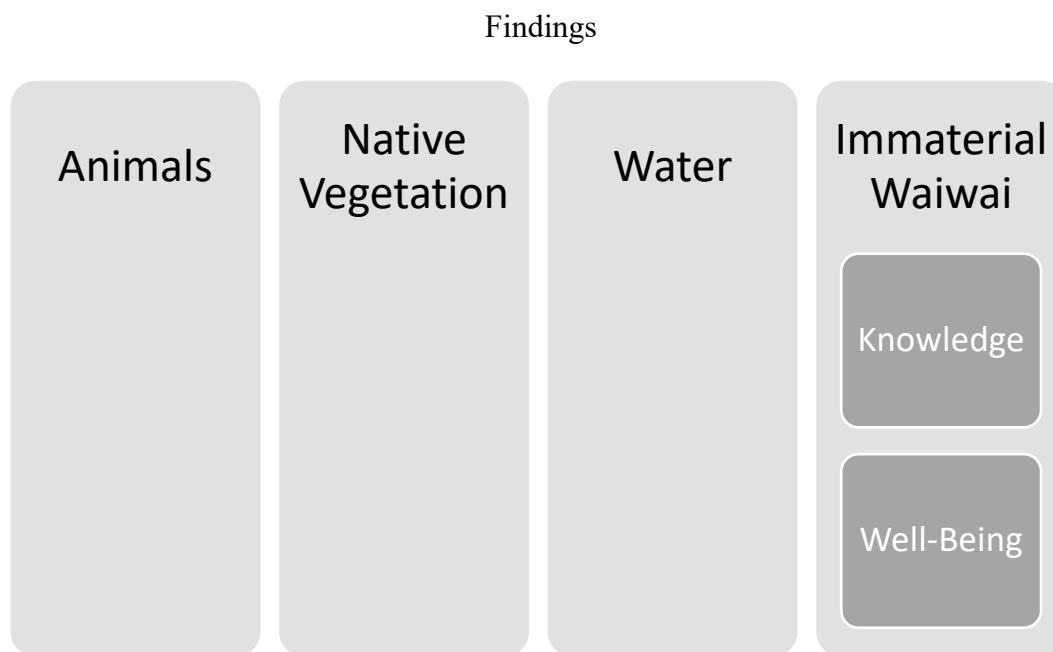
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<sup>115</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opaē Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 14.

<sup>116</sup> Watson, 14.

find yourself wondering about the potential of Kapapapuhi, what do you think its abundant future looks like?”

Regarding field notes, by performing another word frequency query in the nVivo software, I quickly identified nouns representative of the physical and immaterial waiwai being transferred from one entity to another. After the word frequency search, I queried the same words within the data to explore the contexts in which they were being used. From there, subsequent codes, patterns, and themes were induced.



*Figure 5 Emergent themes and patterns for “waiwai”*

### **Animals**

I’ve included *animals* as part of *waiwai* by coding under the context of their straightforward physical capacities in which we, as humanity, consume them as part of the reciprocal relationship between our lāhui and the ‘āina (e.g., hulu, ‘ai, etc.). As I said earlier, the predominantly straightforward and material nature of this mahele meant that analysis for most of the themes, such as *animals*, was simply a matter of literal word identification. What’s more, the focus of this research was not to investigate the different types of animals but to look for their

existence in the collected data. The same, therefore, goes for the themes *native vegetation* and *water*, which I will also discuss in this chapter.

Through analysis of the survey data in concert with the field notes, the theme *animals*, as part of *waiwai*, brings attention to the importance of native wildlife and their habitats as part of an abundant future for Kapapahu Point Park. A Mālama Pu‘uloa employee’s response reflects the understanding that the restoration of native habitats and the protection of endangered species are crucial components of building a sustainable and abundant future for Pu‘uloa, stating, “I think food production out of Nihola is a long way away, and look at my work in the now more of as habitat restoration for native wildlife. There is a very endangered Alae Ula that is sitting on eggs that I see every day, that’s future right there in my eyes.” [R#02]

Another employee, R#03, envisions an abundant future as “a functioning native ecosystem with native birds, fish, insects, plants, all coexisting . . . Once the ecosystem can sustain itself and there is an abundance of community, planting food crops and restoring fishponds to feed Ewa is how I see abundance,” seeming to emphasize the importance of restoring and maintaining the balance here, including the presence of native animals, to ensure an abundant future. Some also express the idea of Pu‘uloa as a place that provides for both the community and the wildlife, providing “fruit trees and edible plants on park grounds, and eventually, fish [that] could be farmed in the loi safely.” [R#05, Not with an organization]

The significance of native wildlife and their habitats in the cultural and ecological context of Kapapahu is also worth noting. The presence of animals here appears to be a key indicator of a thriving ecosystem and a sustainable future, with people mentioning a desire for this ‘āina to be “rich in plants and better environment for plants and animals” [R#12, LCC], “alive with fish to feed community, views of the entire coastline from Kapolei to Lē‘ahi, maintained with care in

‘ōlelo hawai‘i, mo‘olelo passed down, multigenerational, loved" [R#24, LCC], and "thriving and flourishing with nature and animals." [R#34, Not with an organization] At Kapapahuhi, *waiwai* encompasses a more profound meaning beyond literal translations that denote wealth and instead calls attention to the interconnectedness and sustainability of the biosphere around us, including the presence of native animals and the habitats that support them. Ultimately, an abundant future for Pu‘uloa includes the restoration of native ecosystems.

### **Native Vegetation**

The theme *native vegetation* was also found to be a core part of *waiwai* at Kapapahuhi. Survey respondents expressed their conception of an abundant ‘āina, which included references to fruit trees, edible plants, and lo‘i. [R#05, Not with an organization] They also saw native vegetation as “a cultural resource and a contributor to the overall health of the island ecosystem.” [R#06, Not with an organization] Some participants hoped to “bring Kapapahuhi to life again,” [R#09, LCC] while a Marine, Respondent #73, wanted to see it “return[ed] to its former use as farmlands,” and while this particular person doesn’t express comprehension of the importance of native species explicitly, they seem to have picked up on the fact that for us to have abundance of crops that we can cultivate, the restoration work, like removing mangroves, allows these native species to thrive. Respondent #11 says that an abundant Kapapahuhi is where it is given a chance for native plants . . . to grow and thrive. [LCC]

In my field notes, I mentioned specific examples of native plants, such as ākulikuli, pā‘ū o hi‘iaka, and milo, in the Pu‘uloa area which I observed. [FN#3] These native plants were seen as valuable and contributed to the richness of the ecosystem. However, in the same context, I also noted the presence of invasive species, such as mangrove and ironwood trees, which

threaten the native vegetation, and volunteers worked to clear out these invasive species and create space for the native garden planting area. [FN#3, #5]

## **Water**

The significance of water as a vital type waiwai was also seen in the findings, with one person from the online survey remarking, "We can create a home for wildlife and have food and water sources for the local community." [R#37, Military] Another respondent spoke about "thriving watersheds/ahupua'a throughout the 'Ewa moku, multi-generational learning, stewardship of thriving waters, Hawaiian/modern food systems, thriving communities with equitable access to abundant resources." [R#51, Mālama Pu'uloa Employee] The connection between water and the community's well-being was palpable with this respondent, expressing a desire for full access to the waters of Pu'uloa being emphasized as a collaborative effort involving the Department of Defense.

Field notes noted the abundance of water in the area, showing that if we can somehow find a way to make the water safe to use at Kapapahuhi, there would be plenty of it. Volunteers were observed working diligently in the mud, often waist-deep in the completely saturated ground, as they worked to clear out mangroves submerged or growing along the shoreline. [FN#4] The significance of water was further underscored by my observations of the high-water level that accompanied a few days of intermittent but regular rain, with the water covering a paved path used for transportation. [FN#8]

Water is everywhere here, and if properly managed and cared for, it could be utilized as a critical resource for human-friendly abundance in the area. The connection between water and the well-being of the ecosystem and the community was evident in the narratives captured in the

online survey and field notes, underscoring the significance of water as part of *waiwai* at Kapapahu.

### **Immaterial Waiwai**

The theme, *immaterial waiwai*, was derived from interactions between participants and ‘āina, which Mehana Vaughan and Adam Ayers explain as including the “perpetuation of ancestral roles and authority, respectful relationships, social cohesion, and balance of rights and responsibilities . . .”<sup>117</sup> Immaterial waiwai are considered to be non-use values, or what scholar Pua‘alaikahoniho‘omau Pascua describes as being “the ways place-based . . . groups interact with their surroundings to derive all forms of sustenance and maintain a connection to place.”<sup>118</sup> Two patterns were coded under *immaterial waiwai: knowledge* and *well-being*. These patterns remind us that the value of the aupuni is in its ability to provide mea for physical use and consumption as well as spiritual mā‘ona.

#### Knowledge

One emergent pattern associated with the theme *immaterial waiwai* is *knowledge*, something that enriches individuals and communities alike. In one online survey response, *waiwai* is described as a place where community gatherings, education, service projects, and a garden/plant nursery can "give back" to people. Here, knowledge is seen as a resource that can be shared and utilized for the betterment of the community. [R#45, LCC]

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<sup>117</sup> Mehana Blaich Vaughan and Adam L. Ayers, “Customary Access: Sustaining Local Control of Fishing and Food on Kaua‘i’s North Shore,” *Food, Culture & Society* 19, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 531, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2016.1208339>.

<sup>118</sup> Pua‘alaikahoniho‘omau Pascua, “I Ola Ka ‘Āina, I Ola Nō Kākou: Place-Based and Indigenous Perspectives on Cultural Ecosystem Services in Hawai‘i” ([Honolulu] : [University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa], [December 2015], 2015), 1, <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/51175>.

Conversations among people engaged in various activities also reflect the thirst for knowledge. In one of my field notes, individuals inquired about the correct accounting of a particular mo‘olelo associated with Kapapahuhi, possibly indicating a desire for a cohesive version to share with others. [FN#8] In another field note, knowledge exchange is noted, as some individuals help others and share their techniques. [FN#9] These findings collectively point to the significance of knowledge as an immaterial form of waiwai. It can be acquired, shared, and utilized for the benefit of individuals, communities, and ‘āina alike.

### Well-being

The findings for *waiwai* also showed a consistent pattern of *well-being*. Participants expressed perceptions of things that spiritually satiate, such as cultural resources and Kapapahuhi’s use as a community gathering space. One participant stated they would like to see Kapapahuhi become “A cultural resource . . . and a contributor to the overall health of the island ecosystem.” [R#06, Not with an organization] Another participant expressed excitement about the future – that they “can’t wait to see what it will be like . . . seeing how there were multiple groups and people that worked on this, I’m excited to see how the hands that prepared this land and how it will look like in the future.” [R#10, LCC]

Survey respondents highlighted the need for restoring and preserving the pleasure-inducing waiwai of natural beauty: “I see this area and the shoreline of Puuloa as a place for people to recreate, walk, run, and bike.” Furthermore, some respondents also expressed the desire to create a park-like environment where people can derive well-being from recreational activities. [R#35, Military]

This pattern of *well-being* also emerged from the findings in my field notes, which captured the voices and experiences of people involved in the Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays as a

supplement to the perceptions they talk about in their survey responses. For example, one volunteer is noted saying how the sense of pride in the “Hawaiian culture” and the connections between people and the land contribute to the community’s well-being. [FN#2] That same volunteer expressed the significance of their restoration work for future generations, stating, "We do this kind of work so that future generations can come to Kapapahuhi and take a stroll in the park, go fish, and go swimming once the water becomes safe. This place has a wonderful mana. It’s bringing people together and helping them find themselves." [FN#2] Here, mana, a source of power and life, is associated with the restoration work and the sense of community it manifests, contributing to the immaterial waiwai provided by this ‘āina.

When we, the participants, conceptualized waiwai, we envisioned an abundance of animals, plants, water, and immaterial elements such as knowledge and well-being. The consumption, use, and sharing of these various elements are essential to the health and well-being of both ‘āina and us, the lāhui that care for it. Animals and native vegetation are crucial components of potential waiwai here at Kapapahuhi, as they have the potential to provide vital resources such as food, medicine, and materials for building and crafting. Water is also an essential component of waiwai, as it is necessary for sustaining life and supporting this biosphere. However, waiwai is not limited to physical consumables alone; immaterial waiwai, such as knowledge and well-being, are equally important. Knowledge, passed down through generations, promotes the sustainable use and management of waiwai, while *well-being* reflects the spiritual benefits we receive. By recognizing the importance of all components of waiwai, we can work towards a more holistic and sustainable approach to resource management, one that acknowledges the interconnectedness between us, animals, plants, water, and immaterial elements. Ultimately, waiwai represents the outcomes of a way of life that prioritizes the health



and well-being of both ‘āina and the lāhui upon it, promoting a mutually beneficial relationship between the two.

### **Adding the Pūniu Po‘o and Final Thoughts on the Aupuni at Kapapahu**

For this incredibly complex, living, breathing aupuni body to properly function and move with a sense of pono and lōkahi, it must be guided by a leader that “is viscerally aware that all of [the] mahele are vital and the entire aupuni can not function if any of these are missing,” and if any of the mahele are neglected, the “aupuni suffers.”<sup>119</sup> Unlike the other mahele, the gauging of perceptions for this pūniu po‘o, the head of the aupuni that holds within it the lolo no‘ono‘o (i.e., aloha ‘āina), was not necessary since, from an ancestral perspective, this more profound type knowledge and logic required special “training and guidance” to instill within these po‘o, and it is something that was not provided to everyone.<sup>120</sup>

Vaughan says, “In addition to teaching ancestral knowledge,” community leaders should be familiar with “the history of past policy processes and community agreements, while maintaining positive relationships with government and other partners” because true knowledge and skill come only from “sustained practice, far more than can be provided through experiences at an occasional camp, engagement,” or, in our case, a Mālama Pu‘uloa workday.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, Vaughan says that these leaders should be “prepared to apply innovative technologies to farming, fishing, and research; navigate policy; and teach children.”<sup>122</sup>

I have already touched on the fact that, for now, residing or even drawing sustenance for the land is not something that can be done right now. In lieu of that, a collective leadership in the form of a non-profit, like Mālama Pu‘uloa, possesses the proper lolo no‘ono‘o to “adapt, adopt,

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<sup>119</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opaē Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 14–15.

<sup>120</sup> Watson, 15.

<sup>121</sup> Vaughan, *Kaiāulu*, 176.

<sup>122</sup> Vaughan, 177.

and adjust propensities, properties, and behaviors in order to cause resonance with this space, to participate and abide by the tenets which create an aupuni Hawai‘i,”<sup>123</sup> (i.e., ho‘ohawai‘i). At Mālama Pu‘uloa, a strategic partnership, still in its growing phase, is bringing numerous people from a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise together to form a pūniu po‘o with their combined lolo no‘ono‘o. This brain takes form from the collective efforts of a team of people who, in their own respective capacities, fulfill the roles and responsibilities which Watson and Vaughan explain are crucial in pono community leadership.

By performing this research, I wanted to challenge imperial influences on Kapapahuhi’s ancestral geography by presenting the alternative concept of aupuni based on Kanaka ‘Ōiwi knowledge. I used a qualitative analysis of the four mahele of the aupuni body within the context of Mālama Pu‘uloa community workdays at Kapapahuhi; in doing so, I aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire anatomy of the aupuni body in contemporary Hawai‘i. My findings can contribute to a well-informed discussion about implementing Nawahī’s concept of the aupuni body as a philosophical alternative to the Western notion of nationhood, with the potential to empower and improve the collective well-being of everyone in Hawai‘i.

The aupuni body, as conceived by Joseph Nawahī, was identified by Ka‘imi Watson as a framework to ho‘ohawai‘i within a modern-day context. He echoed Nawahī by saying: ‘Āina is “the place and space which support life . . . the iwi of the [aupuni]” which is mobilized and made to function by the lāhui, who is “the collection of kanaka, humanity, the muscle” that engages in the kānawai that are “the connective tissue, the sinew, and veins which hold the aupuni together

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<sup>123</sup> Watson, “Mahikihiki Mai Ka Opae Oehaa a Hihia i Ka Wai,” 19.

and keep all the mahele in communication.”<sup>124</sup> These kānāwai yield the waiwai -“...the vital blood of the aupuni, the various mea consumed, used, and shared.”<sup>125</sup>

I explored the themes and patterns that comprise these four mahele of the aupuni, which collectively contribute to a comprehensive approach to ho‘ohawai‘i. To apply Watson’s theoretical aupuni, which was strongly influenced by Nawahī, in a practical setting at Kapapahu, I needed to understand how people perceived the four mahele without unintentionally biasing or leading them with my own opinions. To achieve this, I devised logical sequences based on Watson and Nawahī’s explanations of the mahele and constructed survey questions that allowed participants to share their own conceptualizations based on their experiences during the Mālama Pu‘uloa workdays.

I took part in the workdays while also observing them. I was aware of my own perspectives and biases, and I made an effort to minimize them as much as possible when recording what I observed during the workdays in my field notes. These notes sometimes provided additional information to the survey responses, and sometimes the survey responses helped to provide more context for my observations.

*‘Āina* encompasses ancestral connections, abundance, and negative impacts from human actions, as well as the potential for positive impacts when we take responsibility for its care. It is a gathering space for humanity that holds a special place in the hearts of the lāhui and one that we must work towards preserving for future generations. *Lāhui* reflects the connections between people and place, as well as the exchanges of knowledge between these entities. It recognizes the importance of hoā ‘āina - those who practice their kuleana to the ‘āina - and their responsibility

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<sup>124</sup> Watson, 13.

<sup>125</sup> Watson, 14.

to care for and protect it for the betterment of all. Kānāwai are the generative actions that prioritize collaborative work, community empowerment, connecting to place, environmental restoration, and human benefits from kānāwai; here, we see the importance of working together to create positive change and an abundant future. Finally, the waiwai from the kānāwai includes animals, native vegetation, water, and immaterial waiwai, such as knowledge and well-being.

Together, these concepts create a framework for understanding the complex relationships between people and place. By recognizing the interconnectedness between these themes and subsequent patterns induced through my data analysis, we can work towards a more equitable future that prioritizes the health and well-being of the entire aupuni body. It is essential, therefore, that we continue to explore and build upon these concepts, recognizing their importance in achieving ho‘ohawai‘i a Kapapahuhi and beyond.

As I reflected on the findings after completing my analysis, it became evident that the aupuni at Kapapahuhi is, in essence, community-based stewardship and education guided by aloha ‘āina. All the mahele, their subsequent themes, as well as the patterns and raw codes held within them, highlight the importance of collective efforts in preserving and protecting the iwi of our aupuni at Kapapahuhi so that both ‘āina and us, as humans connected by our mutual vulnerability, thrive in a feedback loop of pono reciprocity.

The skeletal framework of the aupuni body, ‘āina, can be degraded and broken by human actions, just as our own iwi inside our bodies can be broken and weakened by neglect and poor self-care. Thus, it is essential for the lāhui to tend ‘āina through kānāwai and ensure that it remains healthy and abundant in waiwai. Therefore, I offer an additional, nay critical, dimension of the aupuni body – community-based stewardship and education.

At the beginning of this research report, I mentioned a quote by Kumu ‘Īmaikalani

Winchester, saying how by participating in reciprocal relationships, we breathe life, ea, back into Kanaka ‘Ōiwi culture again, embodying the “*notion of ke ea o ka ‘āina,*” which “has as much to do with proliferating and nurturing relationships in balanced interdependence as it does with asserting autonomy and being self-sufficient.”<sup>126</sup> Through this research, it became clear this the ea, the oxygen, the life force of the aupuni body, is indeed a mutually beneficial community-based relationship with ‘āina – we are the collection of kauwā who serve ‘āina, the ali‘i.<sup>127</sup>

The foundational role of ‘āina, the place, and space that supports life which serves as the iwi of the aupuni body, speaks to the interdependence of humans and the surrounding biosphere. The lāhui is the muscle of the aupuni body, allowing the aupuni to move and proliferate. The themes and patterns from the data also highlight the intrinsic relationship between the waiwai, or vital blood of the aupuni, and community stewardship and education. Through the kānāwai that sustain, support, and encourage the sufficient distribution of waiwai, life-sustaining mea is consumed, used, and shared. Collective action is crucial to maintaining the reciprocity with ‘āina that yields these waiwai, and in doing so, we honor and perpetuate the ancestral connections that facilitate mutual mā‘ona throughout Hawai‘i.

The richness and multidimensionality of the themes and patterns induced through this study ultimately revealed the importance and holistic nature of community-based efforts across all four mahele as a crux for bringing ea to the aupuni body at Kapapahu during Mālama Pu‘uloa community workdays. Such efforts are the very essence of ho‘ohawai‘i, serving as a guidepost for equitable satiation here now and into the future. The relationship between the ‘āina and the lāhui is at the heart of the reflections shared, emphasizing interdependence, as well as the

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<sup>126</sup> Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, “Reproducing the Ropes of Resistance,” 11.

<sup>127</sup> Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No ‘eau*, #144.

collective responsibility we have to maintain pono and lōkahi across all of the aspects of the aupuni body.

In the future, I hope this research will inspire more focused data-gathering efforts; this could involve using more complex coding methods, such as magnitude coding, which can be performed longitudinally to better understand how strongly people from different backgrounds perceive aupuni.<sup>128</sup> Grounded theory development<sup>129</sup> and axial coding<sup>130</sup> could also be useful in identifying specific missed connections that form a more comprehensive understanding of aupuni. Expanding on the research I have recorded in this paper would yield significant benefits. These approaches would enable us to pinpoint exactly where we need to bridge the intellectual gaps and facilitate the growth and perpetuation of aupuni; even individuals with minimal or no knowledge of the four mahele will benefit from this, as it enables us to communicate the essence of aupuni more effectively. By recognizing and addressing the missed connections, we can create a stronger foundation for the ongoing efforts to ho‘ohawai‘i Hawai‘i.

This foundational work can also help Kānaka gain a more nuanced understanding of the concept of *aupuni* and how it exists within the larger lāhui kanaka of Hawai‘i today. The components I discussed in this research apply not only to Kapapahuhi but also to other 'āina-based restoration projects. They shed light on the deeper epistemological processes at work in these projects. By recognizing and focusing on the present existence of numerous aupuni throughout the pae ‘āina, we have ea, here and now.

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<sup>128</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual*, chap. 3, Apple Books.

<sup>129</sup> Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research*, 31–32.

<sup>130</sup> Saldaña, *The Coding Manual*, Appendix A, Apple Books.

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