



**Native Hawaiʻian and French Polynesian
Participation in Organic Agriculture & Food
Sovereignty**

**On the Big Island of Hawaiʻi & Five Islands of
French Polynesia**

Audrey Lipps



Audrey Lipps:

- Researcher
- Individualized Studies: The Western Program and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Jacque Daugherty:

- Faculty Advisor – Individualized Studies

My role on the Big Island of Hawai'i, which later led to research in Tahiti – Why am I passionate?

- WWOOFING (1st and 2nd time)
- Organic Movement Emergence
- 3.5 years of research in the making





Research Question:

What influences the decisions of Native Hawai'ians/Tahitians and non-Native Hawai'ians/Tahitians to participate or not in the consumption and production of organic agriculture?



Hawai'i in Context

- Population
- Native Farmers
- Monsanto
- Organic Movement



Tahiti in Context

- French Occupation
- Illegality of Conventional Agriculture
- Land Distribution

Methodology- Hawaii



Ethnography



Participant Recruitment

Purposive Sampling
Snowball Sampling



13 Semi-Structured Interviews



- 7 Hawai'ians/Pacific Islanders



- 6 Non-Hawai'ians





Methodology- Tahiti



Qualitative Researcher



Participant Recruitment

Purposive Sampling
Snowball Sampling



5 Semi-Structured Interviews



5 Tahitians/Pacific Islanders



5 Islands



Primary Method of Recruiting: Hawaii

Farmer's Market

Primary Method of Recruiting - Tahiti

- Local Airbnbs
- Food Stands
- Cultural Events
- Hotels



Qualitative Content Analysis

- Listened to audio recording and read transcript multiple times. Took notes on potential themes/relevant passages(Osborn and Smith, 2008).
- Re-read the transcript, identifying emerging themes within the interview text
- Created a list of all potential themes (essentially a summary of themes for each interview)
- Identified tentative connections between themes and clustered accordingly
- Consulted transcript multiple times to establish connections grounded in the text
- Consolidated themes



Consolidated Themes



Colonization, Perceptions of
Colonizers and Loss of Cultural
Values



Land Distribution



Classification of Organic
Models, Labels and
Participation



Capitalism, Food Economies &
Abundance



Post-Colonial Resilience



Colonization, Perceptions of Colonizers and Loss of Cultural Values

“How many Natives do you even see around here? None. You need money to buy land, you need money to build infrastructure, farming is a huge addiction. Organic? Most Hawaiians aren’t going to take that gamble. They know the weather well. And they have watched things that have happened. Without more money to put in, you could lose your farm quick. So, farming? It’s for the rich.” – Kahana

Continued.

- “All this condominiums are just crowding around like weeds in such a small space. Usually you would wanna open your condominium sliding door and you can borrow a cup of sugar from the next building. it's gonna come to to that. Even though we have a lot of foreigners, when I say foreigners, from the mainland as well, who live in Kohala, a lot of them want to keep this lifestyle. They don't want the McDonalds to come in. They don't want a big subdivision, gated, you know, to come in. But the attitude in a lot of these foreigners who have moved into Kohala, now that they're here, they always say, that's enough already. They don't want anymore people moving in.” -Kaloaha





Land Distribution

- [In Bora Bora] “It is a problem; there are no taro plantations in Bora Bora, nor vanilla, or vegetables. Here in Taha’a everyone has their plantation, either for taros, vegetables, or vanilla. Because no one plants. I went to Bora Bora, and I took my umara, taro, and vanilla plants. People came to me asking: “give us a bit, a bit”, so I gave.”
- Eliza



Classification of Organic Models, Labels and Participation

- “Pesticides? You get chickens. They do a good job. If the plant weeds, they eat the plant, no problem. Re-plant something else. So these big farmer’s come in and they grow organic on contaminated soil and get away with it. A local family does that, they won’t get away with it. Someone will call the Department of Ag on them. Never fails.” - Kahana
- “There's an intellectual process you need to go through in order to understand why you might not want to eat non-organic food, change your diet, these kind of things. And not sure everyone’s equipped to do that, to go through that process because we have the basic understanding of some science, statistics and all that, and I find a lot of people don't have that. Unless they get sick. And then they're a lot more interested.” – Karen



Capitalism, Food Economies and Abundance

“You know, that market is such a good picture of the question you're interested in, if you look to see who goes to what stands. Haole people I know, if they show up at all, which is not in proportion to their numbers, but they will go to the Hilo, plastic bag market, the non-organic. It's almost a color sort, right there, in the stalls. Which is sad, but it is. You know, food seems to be one of those things that seems to separate people. And many of us haoles feel very strongly about it. Very strongly. So, it prevents people from eating together sometimes. Because everyone asks, is it organic? Is it being sprayed?” - Jonathan

“There's no representation of the farmer's and the management of the market is there. And the recent scare of telling Carl that she's gonna shut down everything but food, like no music, no crafts sort of hippie-haole stuff. So, but no discussion by any representative groups. We might lose the market from that site the first of the year. Market could be an age of change.” - Karen



Cultural Programming and Reclamation of Identity

“By opening a garden, again, my vision wasn’t the sunflower seed, or the bean. It was like, I want this garden to represent Kohala in a bigger way. The kids, they’ll only know going down to the garden doing project. They gotta weed and water. They used to complain the first couple years, “why we gotta water? Why we gotta pull weeds?” Well, how the heck do you plant, you gotta water, you gotta weed you gotta tend to the soil. You can’t plant a seed and then, whoop. Again, teaching them process of life. You know, the cycle. But also soil, water. Where does water come from? What kind of water do we got coming down from the mountain? What kind of soil do we have? Well, we gotta go back to our roots.” – Daniel



Continued.

- “It’s all bio, organic. Not for selling. Not in Raivavae. Everyone has a taro fam. Everyone person, every house, every family. If you don’t farm taro, you were not born in Raivavae. People in Raivavae farm taro. If you don’t, you don’t belong. Very important.” - Giddie



Re-Erasure and Replication of Colonialism – Conclusions and Discourse

Conclusions Continued

- Understanding Hawai'ian and Tahitian identity as a complex and multidimensional Issue
- Recognizing the problems of land ownership and migration to Hawai'i and the differences in land occupations in Tahiti
- Questioning Hawaii's statehood status and the problems with colonial history
- Analyzing historical differences between French and American colonizers and its connection to land and food

Thank you

SAVE our MAUNA KEA
TMT
YPO VALLEY