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# TRADITIONAL AND MODERN ADOPTION PATTERNS IN HAWAII

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## INTRODUCTION

Adoption was an important aspect of traditional Hawaiian culture, and research among modern Hawaiians demonstrates that it is still very important, despite the fact so many other features of the traditional culture have been lost or distorted beyond recognition. In this chapter we attempt to accomplish three tasks: to review the literature describing traditional Hawaiian adoption patterns, to present material from our current research detailing modern practices, and to provide an explanation for the continued significance of adoption among modern Hawaiians. We define "adoption" as the establishment of relationship rules appropriate to a specific set of kinsmen between persons not occupying those genealogical positions. Adoption may be formal (ceremonially or legally validated) or informal, and it may or may not involve a change of residence. In discussing the traditional forms of adoption in this chapter, we use the Hawaiian terminology, but this proves unsatisfactory when it comes to modern practices. For dealing with the latter we distinguish three forms: legal adoption, *hanai*, a Hawaiian term designating 'an agreement to transfer primary parental rights over a child'; and fosterage, which involves the taking care of a child without a transfer of primary parental rights. These are operationally defined, based on a questionnaire sent out to over

one thousand Hawaiian households. Throughout the paper the unqualified term "adoption" is used as a general term which includes all of the more specific categories mentioned above.

## TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

The aboriginal Hawaiians distinguished three forms of adoption. *ho'okama, ho'okane - ho'owahine*, and *hanai.*

*Ho'okama* may be literally translated 'to make a child' (*ho'o* being a causative prefix; *kama* 'child' or 'person'). The implication is that the adopting parents took as their own either someone else's child or an adult for whom they had a special regard. Concerning the *ho'okama* adoption of children Handy and Pukui write:

> The adopting parent becomes to the child *makua ho'okama* (literally 'parent making child his own'), while the child is known as *kaikamahine ho'okama* if it is a girl, or *kaiki ho'okama* if a boy. The relationship comes about as a result of mutual affection and agreement, at first tacit, then unobtrusively discussed, between the child and the older person; the part of the child's true parents, if living, is normally negative; although if there is a strong dislike for the would-be adopting parent the true parent is capable of interfering. This is a relationship involving love, respect and courtesy, but not necessarily responsibility of any sort, and rarely a change of residence (1958:71).

*Ho'okama* referred also to the adoption by older persons of younger adults. Between adopted adults sibling terms were often used. *kaikua'ana ho'okama* (*kaikua'ana* 'older sibling of the same sex as speaker'), *kaikaina ho'okama* (*kaikaina* 'younger sibling of the same sex as speaker'), *kaikuahine ho'okama* (*kaikuahine* 'sister' when male speaking) or *kaikunane ho'okama* (*kaikunane* 'brother' when female speaking) (Pukui and Elbert 1957 115).

The *ho'okane - ho'owahine* relationship is described by Handy and Pukui as "an adoptive platonic marital relationship between persons of opposite sex."[1] Such a relationship might be initiated by a boy who took a fancy to a girl and wanted her as his *wahine ho'owahine*. He proposed this either to the girl or her parents, and if the offer was accepted, his relatives made a feast and roasted a pig to seal the relationship. Alternatively the girl might make the suggestion that the man become her *kane ho'okane*. "Sometimes the *wahine* may be but a child of six or seven while the *kane* is an

adult farmer or fisherman; or the *kane* may be just a little lad while his *wahine* is a mature housewife" (1958:54-55). The following two incidents cited by Handy and Pukui illustrate this form of adoption:

> Hoeawa of Puna became the *kane ho'okane* of a prominent Hilo-pali-ku woman named Hela. Both were married. Hoeawa and Hela were as good to each other as brother and sister. Hoeawa's niece used to go to Hela's with her cousin, Hoeawa's daughter, and both were treated like own nieces. Hela died many years before Hoeawa. She used to give him gifts to take home, and his wife used to make fine mats for him to take to his *wahine ho'owahine*. Such *wahine ho'owahine* and *kane ho'okane* never made love to each other (1958:55).

> I've always liked fishing and dancing and have learned to plait mats, sew, keep house and to plant. I did not know that someone was watching me until a man came to my father's house with his daughter. As soon as I got home with some fish that I had caught that morning, I was called in by my father who told me that I was wanted to be the girl's husband. I looked at her. I had not seen her before. She was well built, homely, but had a sweet disposition. Still I did not want to marry her and leave my father alone. I said, 'I am poor and unable to buy shoes for myself. How could I support a lovely wife like this maiden? Let her be my *wahine ho'owahine* instead.' The father was satisfied and I think the girl was glad, too. For years we were the best of friends, this girl and I. I caught fish for her and carried her gifts whenever I could and she always treated me like her own brother until she died twenty years ago. Her husband was a good man (1958:55-56).

Beaglehole (1939:62) reports a somewhat different use of the terms, stating that they referred to parents adopting into their household the favorite playmate of their child.

The term *hanai*, as a verb, means 'to feed' As a noun it refers to the provider or to a person for whom one provides food. In traditional times it was used to refer to the chiefs who were provided with food by their subjects. "In early Hawaiian traditions, the *Alii-nui* or leige-lord was referred to by the people as their *hanai* and they, in turn, were his *ohua* [retainers] The *ohua* were designated either *hoaaina*, tenants placed upon the land by agreement, or *kupa*, hereditary tenants. The word *hanai*, to the Hawaiians, meant more than just 'the fostering relationship' It implied 'a sympathetic embrace toward one, whose very existence depended upon that embrace' " (Kenn 1939:46-47).

When used in reference to children the concept of *hanai* implied

that the child had been taken into the household of his *makua hanai* 'feeding parents' and reared as their offspring. They assumed complete social rights and obligations in raising their *kama hanai* 'feeding child' (Beaglehole 1939·162-163). The adopting parents were also known as the child's *kahu hanai. Kahu* is translated 'guardian' or 'nurse', and has a secondary meaning referring to cooking, specifically, 'to tend or cook at an oven' (Pukui and Elbert 1957·105).

The evidence available to us from elderly informants and documentary sources suggests that four principles were of particular importance in the traditional patterning of *hanai* relations. These were kinship and seniority between the natural parents and the adopting parents, and the age and sex of the child.

Apparently *hanai* children were almost always taken from within one's own *'ohana* 'kindred grouping', although Handy and Pukui assert that "Sometimes a child was asked for by a friend before it was born, with the idea of thus cementing the friendship through the care of the child, but not if it was the eldest" (1958:72). The significance of kinship for adoptive relations is apparent in the comments of Charles Kenn. "The [adopted] child became a part of the new household (*ohana*) if the [adopters] were also blood relatives; otherwise, it remained a part of the *ohua*, or those that were attached to the household unit but not related in any way blood [*sic*] to the *akana,* or family proper. The Hawaiians were very careful as to the parentage of a *keiki-hanai* or [adopted] child and did not [adopt] 'indiscriminately' as is often believed" (1939:47).

Within the kindred grouping seniority was relevant, for if a senior relative asked for a junior relative's child it was almost impossible for the latter to refuse the request. The rights of grandparents were particularly strong. Some informants said that grandparents' claims on their grandchildren took precedence over those of the natural parents, and that the parents had to have the grandparents' consent in order to keep their own children. The older siblings of parents could also exercise seniority and demand a child, but younger ones could not. The latter might ask for a child, but they had to rely upon implicit supernatural sanctions, rather than authority, to back up their request. If a child's parents were to die, his siblings would be expected to *hanai* him. Within the

child's own generation the first-born was responsible for his siblings in the case of the parents' death or absence, particularly if there were no senior relatives to assume the responsibility If the first-born was old enough to care for his siblings, he was expected to treat them as *hanai* until they were old enough to take care of themselves. If the oldest died or was absent the next oldest took the responsibility, and so on.

Sex was significant in that the first-born male child was considered to belong to the father's side *'ao'ao kane* and the first female child to the mother's side *'ao'ao wahine* (Handy and Pukui 1958:72, Kamakau 1964:26). An example of this is recorded in the tale of a Kauai chief named Holoholoku.

> When Holoholoku, the [adoptive] parent of Maihinali'i, came to Oahu from Kauai (as he was instructed to do in a dream) to seek the wife chosen for his ward, he found her grandmother at Makapu'u. The girl, Malei, was sent for and before she left for Kauai the grandmother expressed her thoughts to Holoholoku. If a daughter should be born of this union of the Oahu chiefess and the Kauai chief, then she (the grandmother) would want to rear her here on Oahu—but if the child was a boy (like his father) then he was to be reared by those of his father's side of the family. Should there be no daughter born, then after death Malei must be brought back to her old home for burial (Handy and Pukui 1958:43).

For subsequent children the picture is somewhat obscure and it is likely that a number of considerations, including sex, were taken into account when one of them was adopted.

Age was a factor in that there was a strong preference for adopting children at birth or shortly thereafter. Kenn states that a child was often promised before birth, especially by one sister to another if the second had no children of her own, and if the child was asked for (1939:47); but according to Handy and Pukui some Hawaiians regarded it as a bad thing to ask for an unborn child while it was *ma kahi haiki* 'in an uncertain place', and that it was better to wait until after it was born, or *ma kahi akea* 'in a wide space' (1958:72).

At the time that the child was given away the natural parents might utter a ceremonial phrase such as *Ke haawi aku nei maua i ke keiki ia olua, kukae-a-na'au,* 'We give the child to you, excrement, intestines and all' The contract was binding and there were severe supernatural sanctions supporting it. If a disagreement arose

between the two sets of parents, and the 'natural parents' *(makua pono i)* tried to recover their child, it was believed that since the faith had been broken the child would either become very sick or would die. Such a disagreement was called *hukihuki* 'pulling back and forth' If, however, the child returned of his own accord, then he was referred to by his adopters as *kukae ka ke kahu hanai*, 'an ungrateful and unappreciative child, after all the care and attention had been given him' (Handy and Pukui 1958:72; Kenn 1939:47).

Indications are that adoption was quite frequent among Hawaiians during the precontact and early postcontact periods, but we have no reliable estimates. The reasons for adoption are somewhat clearer, or at least they are more explicit, in the literature. *Ho 'okama*, for example, figured importantly in the rank system

> This form of relationship existed in order to retain the power in a ruling house, and, most important of all, to keep the blood undefiled and so to perpetuate this *mana* or psychic force in the clan. If a chief had no direct heir, he adopted one, but in doing so he had to choose from the closest of kin, children of his brother or sister only. In making a child *hookama*, he passed on to it all the prerogatives, rights, and privileges of his own high position, in order that it might succeed him to leadership. In the case of the *hanai* relationship, even in the same family, the rights of the [adopters] are not necessarily transmitted to the *keiki-hanai* ['adopted child'] *Hookama* is in essence, an elevating instrument. This form of adoption was also used in another way. For example, two brothers of royal birth might choose mates. The elder, designated as *haku* and therefore possessing the right of leadership in his own generation, let us say, married a woman of low caste. His son, if born before that of his brother, became the *haku* within the new generation. If the younger brother married a woman of high caste and his son were born after his brother's son, this child, being younger, paid respect to his cousin. But, his grandparents, in order to give this second boy a higher place in his generation, might adopt him and thus bestow upon him all the rights and privileges enjoyed by themselves. This act immediately placed the boy on the same social level as his father, becoming, as it were, his father's brother. Although the son of the older brother was still the *haku*, the son of the younger brother automatically became the leader of his generation. This is done to retain the blood purity (Kenn 1939:47-48).

A chief might also adopt a child if it wet or soiled him, for under such circumstances the child had either to be killed or adopted (Handy and Pukui 1958:48-49). Presumably this could happen only with the children of close relatives, since no others

were allowed to get close enough to a chief for the problem to arise.

The desire of older people to *hanai* children was frequently motivated by a wish to be provided for in their old age. This was voiced in the expression, *Hana a ka mea kama 'ole hele kuewa i ke alanui* 'What a childless person will eventually do is to wander about uncared for on the highway', while another expression advises that one should *Hanai kanaka, hiki ke ho'ounauna*, 'Feed human beings for they can be sent on errands' (Handy and Pukui 1958:173, 168). Other economic motives were the desire to pass on wealth to the adopted relative and the desire to relieve close relatives of hardship if they had more children than they could adequately provide for.

The most frequently cited motive for adoption, however, was simply a fondness for children and a desire always to have some in the household. People without children seem to have felt that something very vital was missing in their lives, so they tried to remedy the situation. In contradiction to this presumed motivation, the alleged prevalence of infanticide in early Hawaii might be cited. Thus Ellis claimed that two-thirds of all children were destroyed (1828:325), and Dibble, citing the same frequency, stated that parents had no desire for children and that if children could not be given away they were killed (1909:108). Nevertheless, there are very few documented cases of infanticide among Hawaiians. Ellis mentioned only one, and the weight of evidence clearly suggests a desire for children.

The motives for giving children in adoption seem to have included the following:

1 The desire to create a bond between one's family and that of the adopting parents. This was especially important for chiefs who were thus assured alliances with other *ali'i* (Horn 1948:24; Goo 1958:17).

2. The belief that twins must be reared apart lest one or both of them die (Hormann n.d.).

3. The belief in *'uha kapu* 'taboo lap' According to this belief some women were so *kapu* that they could not raise their own children. *Uha kapu* was believed to result from the fondness of an *aumakua* 'a personal or family god' for a woman. The *aumakua*

did not want the woman who was dear to it to be soiled by the urine and feces of an infant; if such a woman attempted to raise her own children, it was thought that the children would die or become crippled (Handy and Pukui 1958:48-49). The children of such a woman had to be raised by others.

4. *Ali'i* siblings of opposite sex might be raised apart in order that they might marry later in life without regarding each other as brother and sister. Such unions would produce offspring who were *ali'i niau pio* 'chiefs who were higher in rank than either of their parents' (Green and Beckwith 1924:246).

5. The belief that to refuse a request to *hanai* a child was to risk the death or sickness of the child from the sorcery of the jealous would-be adopter (Yamamura 1941 137-138; Forster 1960: 98).

6. A desire to have a child learn skills not possessed by his parents. In such a case, the child might be apprenticed to an expert, into whose home he was taken, becoming for all practical purposes an adoptive member of the family (Handy and Pukui 1958:258).

The role of a *hanai* child in his adoptive family depended to some extent on the conditions under which he was adopted.

> The 'feeding child' may be a mere waif taken in out of kindness, who in the course of time automatically assumes a tacitly accepted role of servant in relation to the family and to the true children of its 'feeding parents' This is said to be *hanai 'ai i kanaka,* or reared to serve the true children of the family. It may be, on the other hand, an orphan or the child of a relative or dear friend, formally adopted and for whom the 'feeding parent' comes to have affection that may be as great as that for the biological offspring. Under such circumstances the 'feeding child' comes to feel more active affection for the family that raises it and in whose home it spends its childhood than for its true parents; consequently, in later years, when the 'feeding child' is grown and the 'feeding parents' are ageing, the deepest devotion is ofttimes felt and shown on both sides in this relationship (Handy and Pukui 1958:71).

In some cases the *hanai* child was held to be so precious that he was not allowed to work, or even to feed himself:

> Sometimes boys thus taken as (*hanai*) were not allowed to do any work, or to carry anything in the hand, or to plant, or to carry anything on the shoulders, or to fish. This was in accordance with a vow taken by the [adopt-

ers] never to see the child perform any kind of labor as long as they were alive. It was the same with some girls; the grandparents or [adopters] made great pets of them, and they were not allowed to carry anything in their hands, nor were they taught to beat or to print tapa because that was work that soiled the hands. Such children would be seated on piles of mats or tapa, or on the chest or lap of their attendant (*kahu*), to be fed poi by dropping it into their mouths (*e kau ai ka ai*), and fish by mouth (*ka i'a a o ka pu-'a*), lest they choke on lumps in the poi or on fishbones; and they would be given water from the mouth *(mumu i ka wai i ka waha)* lest they choke and the precious ones come to harm (Kamakau 1964:26-27).

There was also a temporary form of fosterage, usually involving older children rather than infants. When parents became ill or had to be away from their home for a period of time, they sometimes asked one of their relatives to care for their children. These children were referred to as their adopters' *luhi* 'burden' and it was understood that they would be returned to their natural parents upon request.

Finally, relations were sometimes established between families which, though not formalized, were modeled on kinship:

Household guests not related to the family proper, were referred to as *ohana makamaka*. They were allowed to share with the family whatever it had to offer, and were different from the *ohua* in that they were not compelled to do any work. They became the *aialo*, privileged to eat at the same eating place as the *ohana*. This was a high honor bestowed upon the guest in ancient Hawaii. The outgrowth of this practice has come to be called "calabash" relationship, in which one family claims relationship to another because in the past, their common ancestors ate together out of the same calabash of poi (Kenn 1939:47).

## MODERN PRACTICES

Adoption still has a high incidence among the Hawaiian population.[2] For a people whose customs have otherwise changed so drastically, the persistence of adoption is dramatic, not only because of its frequency, but because it is so often a focus of concern and powerful expressions of emotion. Indeed, on the basis of our current field research, we would assert that the importance of adoption is one of the characteristics which distinguish contemporary Hawaiians from other American ethnic groups.

Through the auspices of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, we

distributed household questionnaires to four Hawaiian Homestead communities on Oahu. In order to lease homestead land a person has to be able to demonstrate that he is at least half Hawaiian by genealogical ancestry Included in the questionnaire were items pertaining to legally adopted and *hanai* children in the household. Forms were received from 681 households out of a total of 1022 to whom they were sent, representing a 66.6 percent return. Either a legally adopted or *hanai* child in the household was reported on 132 or 19.4 percent of the forms. An additional 56 households contained children under eighteen years of age who were living in a condition of fosterage, i.e., neither of their legal parents were present in the household. If we consider all these children as "adopted," the total number of households containing adopted children was 188, or 27.6 percent of the total number responding. All together, 334 adopted children were included in these 188 households, for a mean of 1.8 per household. A breakdown of the figures by type of adoption in the four communities appears in Table 1

The figures obtained for the homestead communities are consistent with those obtained by Forster in a study of two rural communities on Maui. He found that 17 out of a total of 73 Hawaiian households, or 23.2 percent, contained adopted members. The 17 households contained a total of 39 children who were considered *hanai* but were not legally adopted and three who were legally adopted, for a mean of 2.5 per household (1960:97).

Although adoption remains prevalent, the form that it takes, the terminology used to describe it, its functions, and the motives behind it have all been modified. This is particularly true of the *hoʻokama* and *hoʻokane-hoʻowahine* types of adoption. These terms are understood only by the older folks, many of whom are vague as to the exact meanings. Today *hoʻokama* usually refers to legal adoption. The only modern usage of *hoʻokane* and *hoʻowahine* that has come to our attention is in reference to the taking of a sweetheart or spouse. The term *luhi* is also used infrequently nowadays. Instead, Hawaiians simply say that they are taking care of a child for a time. As a matter of fact, Hawaiian terms are rarely used when talking about adoption. When speaking about the subject, our informants usually say something like "I took him when he was two weeks old," or "She was taken by her grandmother."

TABLE 1 Frequency of Adoption by Types in Four Hawaiian Homestead Communities

| Households Reporting and No. of Children | Nanakuli | Waimanalo | Kewalo | Papakolea | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Households reporting legal adoption | 30 | 11 | 18 | 6 | 65 |
| No. of children | 40 | 11 | 30 | 7 | 88 |
| Households reporting *hanai* | 44 | 13 | 12 | 4 | 73 |
| No. of children | 60 | 18 | 15 | 9 | 102 |
| Households reporting fosterage | 34 | 18 | 20 | 4 | 76 |
| No. of children | 58 | 33 | 48 | 5 | 144 |
| Total households reporting all types of adoption | 108 | 42 | 50 | 14 | 214 |
| Total no. of children | 158 | 62 | 93 | 21 | 334 |
| Total households responding | 265 | 210 | 155 | 51 | 681 |
| Total households with adopted children (all types)[a] | 86 | 40 | 49 | 13 | 188 |
| % households with adopted children | 32.5 | 19.1[b] | 31.6 | 25.5 | 27.6 |

[a]Not equal to the total of households with legal adoption, *hanai*, or fosterage, since some households contained children of more than one category: 3 contained legally adopted and *hanai* children, 8 legally adopted and foster children, 9 *hanai* and foster children, and 3 legally adopted, *hanai*, and foster children.

[b]The probable reason that the Waimanalo rate is significantly lower than the other three homesteads is because it is a newer community and has a lower proportion of women over thirty-five years old (see Table 6).

The term *hanai* is still used on occasion, but its definition varies. Some people use it to refer to any permanent or temporary fosterage of a child or adult that involves the assumption of economic responsibility for more than a few weeks. Others restrict it to relatively permanent arrangements involving the full assumption of

parental rights and obligations. When pressed, most of our informants distinguished between adoption and *hanai*, with the former referring to a legal and the latter to a non-legal assumption of parental rights and obligations.

Despite the assertion by Kenn that today "there is often indiscriminate adoption without knowing the background of the child" (1939:47), our evidence suggests a strong preference among modern Hawaiians for adopting the children of relatives or close friends. Thus Forster found that 37 of the 39 *hanai* children in his communities had come from the family of a relative. The two exceptions were cases involving close friends (1960:97). In our homestead sample of 334 adopted children, 269 (80.5 percent) were known to have come from relatives, for 17 (5.1 percent) there was no information, and 48 (14.4 percent) came from non-relatives. Of the latter, 24 were said to have been obtained from friends, and for 13 no additional information was available; only 11 had come from institutions (see Table 2). Significantly, the Liliuokalani Trust, whose child welfare section is concerned with the placement of orphaned Hawaiian children, reports that in 1965 only 4 of the 17 children they placed in foster homes were taken by Hawaiian families. Only as a last resort do Hawaiians rely upon adoption agencies.

Several considerations seem to be involved in the desire to adopt only from relatives or close friends. One is rooted in the widespread belief that a child's character is largely inherited; not knowing the parents of a foster child means that "you don't know what you're getting." Secondly, it is easier to deal with people with whom one already has an established "account" of reciprocal rights and obligations. Hawaiians feel that conflict is less likely with such people and that any problems which do arise can be more easily mediated. If the natural parents are neither relatives nor friends, there is a lingering fear that the contract will be broken either by them or the child. This fear is implicit in the remarks of a young mother: "I would rather take care of someone in the family. You feel closer to them. I feel if children are adopted from outside the family, they will ask about their parents when they grow up and will go to find out who their parents are; I wouldn't keep it from them. If they're from within the family, they know who their parents are."

In contrast to the ideal, middle class, mainland pattern, which stresses the severance of ties between an adopted child and his natural parents, Hawaiian ideology stresses the reverse. It is regarded as not only desirable for the child to know his natural parents but for him to maintain intimate contact with them as well, as the following case illustrates.

The M's have a *hanai* child, Danny, who has lived with them since he was a few days old. His natural father is a friend of Mr. M's. He and his wife live a few miles away and occasionally visit the M family. On these occasions Danny is made to kiss his natural parents and is instructed to call them "mommy" and "daddy." Periodically, at his natural parents' request, he is sent to visit them. All these activities are imposed on Danny against his will. The M's do this partly because they wish to remain in the favor of Danny's natural parents in order to forestall any attempt on their part to take the child back, and also because the M's feel that it is right for Danny to know who his parents are and for him to maintain contact with them.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it appears that Hawaiians adopt from relatives and friends because they are accustomed to fulfilling their needs through personalized transactions rather than through formal Western institutions.

The rule that Hawaiians adopt only from relatives or close friends is sometimes broken when no children are available or in situations in which a child has been abandoned or is otherwise in desperate circumstances. Such children will often be taken into a household, even if it is already very large and poverty-stricken.

A family with eleven children took in an unmarried girl who was about to have a child. They were having a difficult time supporting the large family, but did not refuse aid. The father worked for the WPA earning about forty dollars a month. This amount was supplemented by fishing and by taro planted in the mountains. The young lady was allowed to stay in the home as long as she wanted to, and she left the child in the care of the family when she departed. The child is treated as one of the family and no discriminations are made (Yamamura 1941:43).

However, despite a great show of compassion for children who need a home, objections are sometimes made by relatives who disapprove of adopting unrelated children, as can be seen in the account of an elderly Hawaiian informant who was recounting the adoption of her foster daughter: "In 1920 the Spanish influenza

TABLE 2 Relationship of Adopters to Adoptees

| Relationship | Nanakuli | | | Waimanalo | | | Kewalo | | | Papakolea | | | Total No. | | | | Total % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | legal adoption | *hanai* | fosterage | legal adoption | *hanai* | fosterage | legal adoption | *hanai* | fosterage | legal adoption | *hanai* | fosterage | legal adoption | *hanai* | fosterage | All Types | |
| GRANDPARENTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SoCh | 2 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 11 | 14 | 28 | |
| DaCh | 4 | 19 | 31 | 2 | 13 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 38 | 52 | 101 | |
| ChCh* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 29 | 41 | |
| Total | **6** | **29** | **40** | **3** | **15** | **13** | **9** | **6** | **38** | **3** | **4** | **4** | **21** | **54** | **95** | **170** | 50.9 |
| MATRILATERAL KIN OF CHILD | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SiCh | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 21 | |
| BrCh | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 | |
| MoSiCh | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| MoBrCh | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| FaSiCh | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| *Exact Relationship Unspecified:* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ego's generation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 8 | |
| −1 generation | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 15 | |
| −2 generation | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 8 | |
| Total | **8** | **13** | **5** | **3** | **0** | **16** | **5** | **3** | **7** | **1** | **3** | **1** | **17** | **19** | **29** | **65** | 19.5 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *PATRILATERAL KIN OF CHILD* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SiCh | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 | |
| BrCh | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 7 | |
| FaSiCh | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| *Exact Relationship Unspecified:* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| −1 generation | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | |
| −2 generation | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| Total | **3** | **4** | 2 | **1** | **1** | **0** | **4** | **1** | **0** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **10** | **7** | **2** | **19** | 5.7 |
| 'RELATIVE' (linkage unknown) | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 15 | 4.5 |
| NON-KINSMAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| friend | 8 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 24 | |
| institution | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 11 | |
| unknown | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 13 | |
| Total | **12** | **12** | 7 | **1** | **2** | **4** | **4** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **18** | **17** | **13** | **48** | 14.4 |
| NO INFORMATION | 8 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 17 | 5.1 |
| TOTAL | 40 | 60 | 58 | 11 | 18 | 33 | 30 | 15 | 48 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 88 | 102 | 144 | 334 | 100.0 |

*Exact linkage unknown.

came to Hawaii in the wake of World War I. Many all over the islands died of it. Some families were wiped out entirely. At this time, a Japanese woman on Kauai died in giving birth to a baby girl. A month later, the infant's father also died, and she was brought here with the hope that a Japanese family would adopt her; but that hope did not materialize. I wanted her. My husband objected strenuously, and my relatives voiced their shocked complaints—*auwe*, an unrelated child!"

The emphasis on kinship seniority has also remained significant among modern Hawaiians. Grandparents in particular assert pressure to *hanai* their children's children. In our homestead sample, grandparents were the adopters of 170 of the 334 children (50.9 percent). If only those children adopted by relatives of known generation are considered, 70.9 percent were taken from the grandchild generation, 24.0 percent from the child generation, and 5.1 percent from the adopter's generation (see Table 2). While demands from grandparents are potent, they are not always acceded to by the younger generation, however. Many young parents refuse to give their children to anyone as long as they can adequately care for them, especially since acculturation has lessened the fear of supernatural sanctions for denying a request. This has resulted in overt conflict in many instances:

Mrs. K, who is herself a *hanai*, is now living with her husband and three children in the same house with her *hanai* parents. The latter want to adopt her youngest son, but she, dissatisfied with her own experience as a foster child, refuses to let them. She says that they can "take care" of the boy if they want to (since they are living in the same house), but they cannot *hanai* him.

Mr. A had an older son who had been a *hanai*. This boy was now married and the father of a son. Mr. A asked for the child to raise as his own, and his *hanai* son refused. Mr. A says that he dearly loves his small grandson and that, according to the old Hawaiian way, the child belongs to him. He says that his son now believes in the *haole* ('Caucasian') way. Mr. A thinks that this is wrong, but can do nothing. He insists that the grandchild should be his to raise and love as he grows old.

Seniority also continues to operate within the parental generation, as can be seen in the case of Mr. B:

Mr. B's first son is a *hanai* from his eldest brother. It came about this way: Mr. B and his wife had been married for two years but did not yet have a

child. His eldest brother, whose wife was then pregnant, hinted that Mr. B would be welcome to *hanai* the coming child; finally Mr. B asked. His brother promised the child if Mr. B would come and get it before it was a week old.

Mr. B said that any sibling could *hanai* a child from any other, but, whereas elder siblings could ask for a younger sibling's child outright, it was usual for younger siblings to wait for hints from older ones before requesting one of the latter's children. He also said than an older sibling might force a younger one to take a child, and that his second oldest brother asked him to *hanai* an illegitimate son. Mr. B tried to refuse, but finally had to take the child.

Within the children's generation the concept of responsibility of older siblings for younger ones is likewise retained to a marked degree among modern Hawaiians. The H family provides an example:

In the H family there are thirteen children who range in age from two to thirty years old. The family is very cohesive and each of the older siblings takes considerable responsibility in caring for the younger ones. The older males, for example, contribute a large portion of their income to the expense of raising the youngsters. They also take pride in playing a quasi-paternal role. After work they come home and play with the smaller children—"sing, play cards, but mostly talk story with them." They listen to a younger sibling's problems, advise him, and act as disciplinarians when it is called for. Mrs. H said that she wanted her oldest boy to inherit the property so that he could stay and care for the small ones.

The older females are expected to assume the responsibility of "bringing up" one or more of their younger siblings. Mrs. H said, "It's good for the girls. They learn to be mothers before they have their own." The older girls have almost complete jurisdiction over the younger children who are assigned as their wards, with parental interference only under unusual circumstances. The strength of this responsibility is manifest in the comment of one of the older girls who said, "If I get married and have to leave home, Suzie will come to live with me because she is my *hanai*." Kathy, a child of five, became emotionally upset when her older sister Joan, who had raised her, got married and went to the mainland. Mrs. H said that she couldn't do a thing with Kathy. "She keeps asking where Joan is and when she's coming home. All she does is cry when I tell her Joan is on the mainland. I guess we'll have to send her to the mainland for a while." This responsibility extends to situations outside the household as well. The older siblings are expected to look after their juniors at all times, and negligence is met with severe disapproval by Mr. and Mrs. H and the rest of the older siblings.

An examination of Table 2 reveals that adoption transactions are usually carried out between matrilateral kin. In the grandchild

category, for example, daughters' children outnumber sons' children by 101 to 28, while in the other categories matrilateral kin outnumber patrilateral kin by 65 to 19. If we assume that the degree of formality in relationships is inversely correlated to the strength of kinship ties, the weakness of patrilateral links is revealed by the types of adoption represented in the matrilateral and patrilateral categories. Among patrilateral kin, 10 out of 19 children (52.6 percent) were legally adopted, while among matrilateral kin 17 out of 65 (26.2 percent) fell into this category. In the grandchild category, where one would expect relationship ties to be strongest, only 21 out of 170 adoptions (11.8 percent) were legalized. The data also show a tendency for individuals, when adopting in the child generation, to take children from a sibling of the same sex. Thus female adopters took 21 children from their sisters and only 9 from their brothers, while male adopters took 7 children from their brothers and 5 from their sisters.

The preference for adopting children at birth or shortly thereafter is still pronounced among our contemporary informants. The comments of Mrs. P are typical: "A friend of mine separated from her husband and wanted to give me her first boy I didn't want to because he was already five years old, and at five he understood the ways of his mother. If she had given him to me at one year it would have been all right, but at five he would cry and get sick thinking of the mother."

Although this sentiment is widely shared, there are cases in which older children are taken as *hanai* without hesitation, particularly if the child is willing. An example is provided by Mrs. S: Valerie is Mrs. S's brother's daughter. She is now six years old. Her mother and father were divorced, and Mrs. S's mother came and took all the children to Hilo. Then about two years ago she came to Honolulu and brought Valerie with her. "She was a shy child she didn't talk too much, but you became attached to her after a while." Valerie did not want to go back to Hilo because she was afraid of airplanes. "We asked her if she wanted to stay and she said yes, so we kept her."

Mrs. S is also taking care of her sister's son, whom she discovered sleeping on the beach after he had run away from home. Nevertheless, it is clear from the data in Table 3 that the large

TABLE 3 Ages of Children Taken into Household

| | Nanakuli | Waimanalo | Kewalo | Papakolea | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Legal adoption | | | | | | |
| birth | 13 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 21 | 25.6 |
| 1 wk. to 6 mos. | 19 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 37 | 45.1 |
| 6 mos. to 1 yr. | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 9.8 |
| more than 1 yr. | 6 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 16 | 19.5 |
| Total | 40 | 8 | 27 | 7 | 82 | 100 |
| *Hanai* | | | | | | |
| birth | 20 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 31 | 32.3 |
| 1 wk. to 6 mos. | 19 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 37 | 38.5 |
| 6 mos. to 1 yr. | 9 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 11.5 |
| more than 1 yr. | 7 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 17 | 17 7 |
| Total | 55 | 18 | 15 | 8 | 96 | 100 |
| TOTAL* | | | | | | |
| birth | 33 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 52 | 29.2 |
| 1 wk. to 6 mos. | 38 | 10 | 22 | 4 | 74 | 41.6 |
| 6 mos. to 1 yr. | 11 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 19 | 10.7 |
| more than 1 yr. | 13 | 4 | 12 | 4 | 33 | 18.5 |
| TOTAL | 95 | 26 | 42 | 15 | 178 | 100 |

*Information was not available as to when foster children entered these households.

majority of *hanai* cases involve infants. In our homestead sample 29.2 percent of the children who had been legally adopted or taken in *hanai* were taken at birth, and an additional 41.6 percent were taken before the child was six months old. Only 18.5 percent were taken after the age of one year.

The principle that the first-born male child belongs to the father's side and the first female child to the mother's side is less in evidence among modern Hawaiians. Perhaps this is because the rule of alternate sexes was highly specific. It may well have been lost, therefore, in the breakdown of Hawaiian custom, that is, the failure to transmit specific decision-making principles from generation to generation. The remarks of Mr. H are indicative: Mr. H

TABLE 4 Sex of Adopted Children

| | Legal Adoption | | *Hanai* | | Fosterage | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Nanakuli | 26 | 14 | 33 | 27 | 27 | 31 | 86 | 72 |
| Waimanalo | 7 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 18 | 15 | 32 | 29 |
| Kewalo | 14 | 16 | 7 | 8 | 23 | 25 | 44 | 49 |
| Papakolea | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 51 | 36 | 52 | 50 | 70 | 74 | 173 | 160 |
| % | 58.6 | 41.4 | 51.0 | 49.0 | 48.6 | 51.4 | 52.0 | 48.0 |

said that a grandchild he wanted belonged to him, no matter what sex it was. The wife's parents had no rights to the first child. He said that he did not know if it was old tradition, but he thought the males of the family were supposed to determine who had the rights to adoption.

Our data in Table 4 on the sex of adopted children indicate only a slight preponderance of males (52.0 percent). It should be noted, however, that in the category of legal adoptions males are more strongly represented (58.6 percent). This may be a reflection of the importance attached by most Hawaiians to "passing on the name."

One very noticeable trend stands out in our investigations into modern Hawaiian adoption practices, namely, an increasing concern for legalizing adoptions. Of the 334 adopted children in our homestead sample 88 (26.3 percent) were legally adopted. While this tendency is most pronounced when the foster child is unrelated (37.5 percent), even close relatives are apt to ask, or in some cases demand, permission to legally adopt *hanai* children. This is sometimes motivated by a desire for legal protection of the child with regard to inheritance, but by far the most frequent reason given is a fear that the natural parents will take back the child. Our informants have provided us with numerous instances in which such conflicts have arisen, and they invariably reported them with great emotion. Here are some examples:

Mrs. N said that her *hanai* son is part Negro. His father used to work with Mrs. N. When the boy was born his parents came to her and asked her to be his godmother. Shortly after the child was baptized his parents left for Japan, and they left him in Mrs. N's care. She took care of him for four years, without receiving any support from the baby's parents. At the end of four years the parents returned to Hawaii and asked for the child back. She told them that she loved him and wanted to keep him; that, after all, they had not even provided support for their own baby. The parents did not agree and brought the case to court. Although it cost her five hundred dollars for an attorney, Mrs. N fought the case and won.

Mrs. A and Mrs. B were neighbors. Both had inherited their homesteads from their parents, who were close friends. When Mrs. A was married, at about age twenty-one, Mrs. B was already middle-aged. Her children were all grown, and she wanted more in her home. Mrs. A and her husband were just starting their family and were experiencing financial difficulty. When Mrs. A had a child she gave it to Mrs. B to care for, at Mrs. B's request, but when the next one came along Mrs. A took back the first child and gave the baby to Mrs. B. This was repeated with the next child, but following that Mrs. B refused to do it again. "Three times my heart was broken." She is now considering taking a *hanai* from another family.

Mr. S's sister has taken two of his children as *hanai*. First she took at birth one of his twins, now age sixteen. She had one child of her own at the time, but it was Mr. S's seventh child. She asked S for the baby when his wife got pregnant, and he told her that it was all right with him but that she had to ask his wife. She did, and his wife agreed. When the day of birth came, there were twins and his sister wanted both, but S refused. He said, "God must have meant one for each of us." His sister went to a lawyer without S knowing it and started procedures for legal adoption, but when she brought back the papers he refused to sign. She said that S might try to take back the child after he had grown up, but S told her he would not—she did not have to worry about that. Then he asked her what would happen if she and her husband died or were incapacitated—"I've got insurance for them, but you don't. What if you get sick and can't support them? I love my children and want to be sure they will always be taken care of," he told her.

In 1946 Mrs. C took two children as *hanai*, a two-year-old girl who was her namesake and the girl's brother who was still an infant. The children's mother died shortly after the boy was born. According to Mrs. C, the mother had suspected that she was going to die and wanted the children to go to Mrs. C, who had not seen the woman for some time and was told about her death by the girl's godfather. He asked Mrs. C to take the girl. Shortly after that the children's father came to Mrs. C and asked her to take the boy also, and she agreed. She said that for the first year their father contributed twenty-five dollars per month for their support, after that ten dollars per month for an-

other three or four years, and then he refused to contribute anything. As a result, Mrs. C filed for legal adoption and the father fought it, so they brought the case to court, where Mrs. C won after a four-hour hearing.

These cases illustrate the great attachment to *hanai* children that is characteristic of Hawaiian parents. Our data indicate that under most circumstances *hanai* children are treated with somewhat more indulgence than natural children. When there are both *hanai* and natural children in the household, however, a pronounced egalitarianism is usually espoused. All those informants who had assumed full parental rights insisted that they loved all their children equally and that *hanai* children were entitled to their share of the inheritance. Thus far we have insufficient evidence to either support or repudiate this claim to equality of inheritance, but "playing favorites" is considered a very bad thing for parents to do, and, although emotional commitments to different children within a household may vary, most parents make a strong effort to see that no one child gets substantially more or less material benefits than any other.

The strength of adoptive ties, even under rather grave economic hardship, is illustrated by two cases reported by Beaglehole (1939:64).

One case recorded is that of a crippled husband, seventy-two years old, and his wife, seventy-one. With the old couple live two *hanai* children, female siblings aged six and five respectively, daughters of the husband's niece. This niece has a family of 11 children. She is a school teacher. She refuses to support her uncle because of a quarrel. The uncle, because of his desire for children, refuses to allow the two girls to return to their blood parents. The family is living in great poverty and the two girls have health problems. The old woman owns a small property of doubtful economic value. She could obtain a government pension if she would allow the territory to take out a lien on this property. She refuses to do this because of her desire to save the property and pass it on to her two foster children when she dies.

Another case is that of a very old pure-Hawaiian woman who has adopted as a *hanai* her great grandchild. a boy of mixed Hawaiian, Chinese and Caucasian blood, 14 years old. The old woman receives a pension of fifteen dollars per month of which five dollars are paid out in rent. The boy is clever, but beyond the control of the woman. He shines shoes, sells newspapers, but is rapidly becoming a social misfit, having already appeared several times in the juvenile court for being a truant. The old woman feels that she must have this boy or other children with her to be happy even though she has no means to support children.

The terminology used by adopted children to refer to their foster parents varies with the circumstances. If the adoption took place at birth or shortly after, the common English parental terms –'ma', 'mom', 'mama', 'dad', 'daddy', etc.–are applied, although if the adopters are grandparents they are still usually called 'grandma' and 'grandpa' When adults speak about relatives by adoption they most often use the same terms as they use for consanguineal relatives, although they may qualify relations at times by saying such things as, "my *hanai* mother" or "my uncle on my *hanai* father's side." Such qualifications are likely to be used only if the person speaking has maintained relations with his natural parents or their relatives. The degree to which this occurs generally depends upon residential proximity more than any other factor. When the natural parents live near the adopters, the foster children may have nearly equal contact with both family groups. Both sets of parents sometimes exercise parental rights, feeding the child and disciplining him. This is known to have become a source of conflict between such families, as one might expect. When both sets of parents are socially present the child often uses two sets of contrasting terms to refer to them, perhaps calling one set something like 'mom' and 'dad' and the other 'mama' and 'papa' When the natural parents live far away or otherwise do not maintain their ties with the adopting family, they are likely to become no more than genealogical shadows for whom the child has little regard. What is important under most circumstances is the social and emotional ties between individuals, rather than the specific nature of kinship links (natural or adoptive) between them. In fact considerable confusion about the nature of their kinship ties to one another often arises in the minds of individuals involved in adoptive relationships. This can be seen in the attempt of a woman to describe her relationship to her *hanai* daughter:

> Kealoha is my brother's child. Of course my brother isn't really my brother as both he and I are *hanai* children of my father. I guess my father isn't really my father, is he? I know who my real mother is but I didn't like her and I never see her. My *hanai* brother is half-Hawaiian and I am pure Hawaiian. We aren't really any blood relation I guess, but I always think of him as my brother and I always think of my father as my father. I think maybe Papa is my grandfather's brother; I am not sure as we never asked such things. So I don't know what relationship Kealoha really is though I call her my child (Hormann 1960:13-14).

We have thus far discovered few consistencies in the attitudes toward their natural and foster parents of adults who grew up as *hanai* children. The whole range is represented, from people who as adults are very close to their foster parents and completely alien to their natural parents to the reverse. Much depends upon the vicissitudes of residential proximity, economic circumstances, and interpersonal conflicts and crises. A tentative generalization, however, is that whereas Hawaiians do not seem to feel compelled to honor biological relationships for their own sake they usually do feel a sense of obligation toward their foster parents for having raised them. An illustration of this is the case of Jane, who, in spite of a deep-felt desire for a home of her own, continues to live, along with her husband and four children, with her *hanai* parents and to provide a large part of their support. She remains there, she says, because she has a binding sense of obligation to take care of them, since they took care of her when she was young.

Several motives seem to affect the decisions of present-day parents to allow their children to be adopted by others. These include some of the traditional reasons plus a few new ones. The fear of harm to the child through sorcery if a request to adopt is refused is not as strong or as prevalent a motive as it once was, but it is still present. Thus some of our informants have indicated that would-be adopters, if refused, might bring harm to the child through sorcery as a result of their envy or jealousy Beaglehole noted such a case:

> The old man P is indigent. He has quarrelled with his daughter who has refused him economic support and has also refused to allow the old man to take his eldest grandchild as a *hanai*. The granddaughter became sickly and the daughter firmly believed that her father was a *kahuna* 'sorcerer' who had bewitched her small child and was making it impossible for her husband to obtain work. Some months later the sickly child died. The daughter became unbalanced mentally through fear of her father's power and consequent worry, and her children had to be removed from the household for their own safety (1939:67-68).

Related to this concept is the idea that harm may come to a child over whom there is ill feeling, not as a result of intentional sorcery, but from the presence of the hostile feeling itself. The same sanctions also operate against attempts to take back a child

who has been taken in *hanai*. Evidently it is not the regaining of the child that threatens disaster, but the act of taking him from the foster parents. Once the foster parents die, or the child has been taken from the foster parents by a third party, the natural parents may take their child back without fear of harm.

An old indigent grandmother was physically neglecting her two young adopted granddaughters. The mother of the two children refused to take them back and give them proper care for fear of the old lady's magic powers. The mother related that the old lady took as an adopted child one of her girl children. Later she asked for a boy when it was born. The mother refused the old lady telling her that she neglected the first child. The old lady argued that the mother had both boys and girls while she had only a girl. She also wanted a boy. The boy became ill when it was six months old. The mother knew that there was nothing physically wrong with the infant but that its sickness was caused by outside influence. She went to see the old lady, explained that she should have given over the boy and now she would give away her next boy if the old lady would see to it that the ailing infant got well. The infant recovered immediately and the old lady received the next boy as her child. Since then no one has been sick in the mother's family. The mother wished she could take back her children and give them proper care. Under the circumstances, however, she did not dare to do this. She felt that if a social worker removed the children from the old lady and then later turned them over to her, their own mother, this would give the old lady no excuse to bewitch the mother or her family (Beaglehole 1939:58).

A second form of sanction, more secular in nature, is the expressed feeling that anyone with many children, especially many young children, has an obligation to "share the wealth" by giving children to those relatives without children who want to *hanai* them. In talking about attempts to adopt, remarks like "She has six children," or "This is her eighth child," are frequently made with reference to the natural mother, carrying the implication that anyone so blessed can certainly afford to give away one child. A family with many children which refused to give one to a close relative without any would be accused of being stingy Related to this is the belief that the adoption of a child by a childless couple promotes fertility and thereby permits them to produce children of their own:

Mrs. N said that she gave her six-month-old daughter to one of her sisters. Her sister had no children at the time. At first it was *hanai* but the sister's hus-

band wanted to adopt the child "in black and white," so they let him. Then the sister started to have her own children, and now she has four boys. In response to a question about the relationship between the adoption and the sister's fertility, Mrs. N broke in and said, "That's what did it. It's an old legend, called *ho'opili*" (literally, 'To bring together, stick; to attach oneself to a person'[Pukui and Elbert 1957:303]).

## CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most interesting question that emerges from the data is why, among a people whose culture seems to have been otherwise completely shattered, has the prevalence of adoption so dramatically survived? If there were political reasons they are gone now, and it does not seem to make much sense to search for social systemic explanations when the majority of Hawaiians now live in American-type communities. Economic explanations are likewise unconvincing. The value of children for old-age insurance is as questionable today for Hawaiians as it is for other Americans. On the other hand the economic burden of raising children has been vastly increased in a wage economy Furthermore, the willingness to pay adoption costs, often by people who could be classified as indigent, suggests that economics is not a primary consideration in most instances. This is not to deny that economics plays a role in particular cases. Thus a person may offer to take a relative's child in order to relieve the weight of poverty rather than from a strong desire for the child, or a child of at least half-Hawaiian ancestry might be adopted by someone wishing to pass on his homestead land to someone in the family;[3] but our evidence strongly suggests that most adoptions occur in spite of economic considerations rather than because of them. What then is the explanation?

The answer appears to lie in the continued significance of nurturance as a motivational force among Hawaiians. Within the traditional culture nurturance was an institutionalized value around which a substantial body of custom was built. People were expected to take care of those in need, and the strong were expected to assist the weak. Prestige accrued to the generous. Today the value is still expressed in the guise of the commercially exploited "Aloha Spirit." Our thesis is that, despite the elimination of supportive custom, nurturant behavior has been perpetuated among

the Hawaiian population by virtue of a widely shared child-rearing pattern. The key features of this pattern and its motivational consequences are presented below.

During the first two or three years of life, Hawaiian children are greatly indulged. They are continually fondled, their needs are instantaneously responded to, and they are rarely disciplined. As children become more mobile and more verbal, however, or when a subsequent infant enters the household, their demands for attention are increasingly rebuked and their intrusions are rejected. Parental pressure toward independent behavior begins early;[4] but skills are not purposely taught, and there is little positive reinforcement for correct behavior. Instead, an older child's activities are virtually ignored unless they irritate adults, in which case punishment—spontaneous and unpredictable—is likely to be the only response. The most salient feature of this training sequence is the early withdrawal of nurturance coupled with punishment for dependency This early indulgence and subsequent rejection is very much like the patterns described by Ritchie for New Zealand Maori (1963:127-141) and Levy for the Tahitians (Levy 1968). It results in powerful dependency needs which are inhibited as a consequence of the punitive training. The maturing child discovers that dependency overtures frequently provoke punitive responses, and he becomes increasingly anxious in situations where the gratification of his needs is controlled by others. He learns to avoid interpersonal involvements in which dependency strategies are required.

As boys grow older they spend an increasing amount of time away from the household and in the company of peers. They may eat and sleep at home but otherwise have only marginal contact with the adult members of their household. Their relationship with peers is, as one would expect, intense and unstable. That is, they tend to form very tight friendships that are easily broken when one of the parties fails to meet the other's dependency demands. Girls, on the other hand, spend a great deal of time at home assisting with housework. They are socialized into the housewife role at a very early age, and it is the *only* role in which they are consistently encouraged. Their responsibilities include caring for younger siblings, a role in which they control the precious resources of nurturance. Reinforcement of nurturant be-

havior comes not only from the parents, but from the infants as well. It is the responsiveness of their wards at a time when they get so little from adults that provides the major source of interpersonal gratification for young Hawaiian girls. Babies—dependent and responsive—therefore become identified as the only human objects that provide an unthreatening opportunity for intimate emotional exposure. With adults, or even with older children, the expectations of punishment so exceed those of reward that it is risky to become involved; with them one must always be on guard, ready to disengage.

It is, therefore, not surprising that as adults Hawaiian women are highly motivated to have children, particularly very young children, in their homes.[5] We would suggest that the social psychological dynamics are as follows: as a result of the reinforcements in childhood for playing the nurturant maternal role, Hawaiian women develop a strong need for babies, both as a source of personal gratification of intimacy needs and as a means of validating their adult roles. As babies grow into children the dependency behavior which adults have nurtured by their indulgence, and which is now reflected in whining, clinging, willfullness, etc., becomes increasingly burdensome. Much of this behavior is regarded as disrespectful and disobedient, and it is severely punished. In addition, as children begin to develop autonomy and assume a capacity to reject overtures of nurturance and affection, their parents' intimacy anxieties are activated, and emotional disengagement from the child is a frequent response. Parents begin to ignore the child, become increasingly punitive, and avoid praise or other overt expressions of affective commitment which would increase their vulnerability This in turn leads young girls to derive their major interpersonal gratifications from younger children with whom they can be nurturant, and so the cycle is repeated. It also leads mothers to seek new infants to replace maturing children; and if a woman does not give birth to another baby by the time her youngest child ceases to be a source of fulfillment for her nurturance needs she will often seek a replacement through adoption. Although men are not so directly socialized into the nurturant role, they, too, find babies to be the safest creatures in an unpredictable world and are motivated to have some in their households.

The Hawaiian subculture still emphasizes cooperation rather

TABLE 5 Age Positions of Adopted Children in Household at Time of Adoption*

| Community | Legal Adoption | | *Hanai* | | Fosterage | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Youngest | Other | Youngest | Other | Youngest | Other | Youngest | Other |
| Nanakuli | 26 | 14 | 44 | 13 | 38 | 20 | 108 | 47 |
| Waimanalo | 7 | 3 | 16 | 0 | 21 | 12 | 44 | 15 |
| Kewalo | 28 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 37 | 11 | 75 | 14 |
| Papakolea | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 66 | 20 | 74 | 15 | 99 | 45 | 239 | 80 |
| % | 77.2 | 22.8 | 83.1 | 16.9 | 68.8 | 31.2 | 74.9 | 25.1 |

*It was assumed that *each* adopted child who was younger than any natural child in the same household was the youngest child in the household at the time of his adoption. For example, if a household contained two adopted children, ages 8 and 10, and three natural children, ages 12, 15, and 17, then the adopted children were *both* counted as "youngest."

than competition, and it is within such a value structure that the above developmental pattern lies embedded. Generosity and nurturance remain uppermost in the hierarchy of desirable personal attributes, and a person still gains status for taking care of dependent others, whether infant, child, or adult. It seems evident, therefore, that the act of adopting combines personal gratification with social reward in a compelling fashion for most Hawaiians. Since love for children is also highly valued in the dominant American culture, a further impetus is no doubt given to the practice.

This general interpretation is lent support by the homestead data presented in Tables 5 and 6. They show that 74.9 percent of the adopted children occupy the position of youngest child in the household, and that 78.4 percent of the female adopters were

TABLE 6 Female Adopter's Age at Time of Adoption

| Type of Adoption and Age of Adopter | Nanakuli | Waimanalo | Kewalo | Papakolea | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Legal adoption | | | | | | |
| less than 25 yrs. | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 16.4 |
| 25 through 35 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 18.2 |
| more than 35 | 18 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 36 | 65.5 |
| *Hanai* | | | | | | |
| less than 25 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 8.1 |
| 25 through 35 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 16.1 |
| more than 35 | 27 | 11 | 8 | 1 | 47 | 75.8 |
| Fosterage | | | | | | |
| less than 25 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2.7 |
| 25 through 35 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6.8 |
| more than 35 | 29 | 13 | 20 | 4 | 66 | 90.4 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | |
| less than 25 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 16 | 8.4 |
| 25 through 35 | 18 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 25 | 13.2 |
| more than 35 | 74 | 30 | 37 | 8 | 149 | 78.4 |

older than thirty-five years of age when they took adoptees into their households. It is also supported by a great deal of psychological data that we have collected by observation, interviews, and social psychological experimentation during the past two years. We suggest that such an explanation may also hold for the New Zealand Maori and the Tahitians, both of whom have high adoption rates, and perhaps for other Polynesian and Micronesian populations with a similar social-psychological syndrome.

NOTES

1 This appears to have been only one of several meanings for the concepts. The term *ho'okane* is translated by Pukui and Elbert 'to behave as a male'; 'masculine' (1957:119) and *ho'owahine* 'to behave like a woman', 'to imitate the ways of a woman'; 'to grow into womanhood'; 'to have the manners and ways of a lady'; 'to become a wife'; 'to obtain a wife' (rare); 'to take as wife'; 'feminine' (1957:349).

2 In this chapter the term "Hawaiian" is applied to that segment of the population of the State of Hawaii that traces some ancestry to Polynesian Hawaiians and who identify themselves ethnically either as Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian.

3 In order to inherit homestead land through the offices of the Hawaiian Homes Commission a person has to be able to demonstrate that he is at least half Hawaiian by genealogical ancestry. Some of the lessees, while they themselves claim to be half or more than half Hawaiian, are married to non-Hawaiians, and their children are ineligible to inherit the property. Upon the death of the lessee, his family would have to move off the homestead land. One way around this is for such a couple to legally adopt an eligible child from a close relative, with the purpose of keeping the property in the family. When the foster child inherits title to the homestead land, he is expected to allow his adopted siblings and other members of the household to remain there, and thus they do not have to give up their home.

4 A sample of 31 Hawaiian mothers was interviewed to determine the ages at which they expect or allow children to act in certain independent ways. The median ages at which the Hawaiian mothers expect independent behavior from their children on 17 out of 22 items are from one to two years younger than a mainland Caucasian sample.

5 The median age at which Hawaiian mothers considered children "most enjoyable" was six months. They frequently state that when children are older they start going off by themselves and "don't need you as much."