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**Hawai'i is NOT your Escapist Fantasy: Varying Perspectives Surrounding Misconceptions
and Representations of Hawai'i in the Tourism Industry**

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SOAN 491: Honors Thesis

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Introduction

“Welcome to Paradise,” are the words often uttered as visitors are welcomed into the islands of Hawai'i, a state of aloha and a place where one can get away and admire the beautiful scenery often promoted in travel brochures and websites. Individuals' thoughts of Hawai'i are often drawn to the stereotypical tropical vacation of tanning on the beach, admiring the sunset, and basking in the “Hawaiian” sun. Regardless of such imagery, Hawai'i is more than just a place. It is a people and a culture. Yet, Hawai'i continues to symbolize this ideology of paradise defined primarily through the lens of visitors, travel agencies, and hotels. With tourism being the number one industry for Hawai'i, it is no surprise that Hawai'i continues to be constructed by idealized representations that adhere to the visitors' fantasies and expectations.

Historically, Hawai'i has been influenced by Western values predating tourism in 1907 through countless historical events such as the militarization of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, and dating back to Captain Cook's arrival to Hawai'i in 1778. Western influences have impacted Hawai'i in more ways than one, including Hawai'i's status as a prize or an object to claim. In more modern times, Hawai'i continues to be seen as a primary location for leisure consumption. Hawai'i is known to be ranked as a top destination across several travel news sites, with the island of Maui as #4 in the World's Best Place to Visit and O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i receiving recognition on the Travelers' Choice Awards on Trip Advisor. (U.S. & World News Report, 2022; Trip Advisor, 2022). Hawai'i is often rated as one of the top destinations for visitors, furthering emphasizing the need to deliver on the expectations of a popularized vacation spot that travel sites often convey.

The existence of hotels and resorts began in 1901 with the Moana Hotel. Now in the year 2022, Hawai'i has surpassed 200 current hotels, not including Air B&Bs and vacation condos. In

December of 2019, over 952, 441 people visited the islands, while in December 2020, 235,793 visitors traveled predominantly by air service (*Hawai'i Tourism Authority, 2019 - 2020*). With the introduction of more visitors, this led to an increase in urbanization to support the tourism industry. The tourism and hotel industry are favorable for the economy due to the provision of jobs to local residents, in addition to revenue generated from visitors directly (*Hawai'i Tourism Impact Plan, 1972*). While tourism continues to be a dominant industry for the economy of Hawai'i, it has also led to tourists projecting their expectations of paradise onto Hawai'i. Tourism essentially acts as a means of representation of place and adheres to satisfying a demand for “unfamiliar or conventional” experiences (Edensor, 1998).

For most Americans, the word vacation is aligned with terms such as “escape” and “relaxation”. For many visitors, they escape to Hawai'i as a tropical paradise and get away from the chaos of work, school, or family life. To exploit the desire for escape, the tourism industry promotes various forms of media that seeks to deliver on a promise of paradise and luxury, which include travel commercials, hotel advertisements, airlines guides, magazines, and other forms of publicity (Edensor, 1998). The perpetuation of predictable images may lead to more stereotypical portrayals of Hawai'i that do not always correspond to the place as understood by locals and native residents. These forms of media may then create an understanding of how Hawai'i “should” look, rather than the Hawai'i that Native Hawaiians and local residents represent.

In this thesis, I argue that Hawai'i Tourism is dominated by idealized representations of paradise that are portrayed in hotels and resort advertising, selling an “authentic Hawaiian experience” that ignores significant parts of Hawaiian culture and the oppression of Native Hawaiians and local residents. The promotion of these exotified themes and images are

seemingly used as a marketing scheme to attract consumers to view Hawai'i as merely a "tropical paradise" further adhering to individuals' "escapist fantasy." In delivering on this experience, the tourist industry reinforces and reifies the stereotypical images that are portrayed in the media. The systematic promotion of Hawai'i as an escapist paradise leads to certain aspects of Hawai'i and Hawaiian culture being removed from the picture that tourists see, both before, during, and after their visit. This study aims to acknowledge the usage of popularized images of Hawai'i as a paradise and how these symbols and images convey an incomplete and romanticized representation of Hawai'i.

Literature Review

Several studies and theorists have examined the world of symbolism surrounding the tourism industry, primarily focusing on the creation of space and place through the usage of images and symbols. Prior studies and theories concentrate on the purpose and meanings of tourism, the creation of themed environments surrounding the "tourist bubble", and the constructions of authenticity surrounding tourism. These perspectives will be used to further examine the popularization of escapist images and how it influences the identity of Hawai'i.

A Time of Play and Escapism:

Humans often have a desire for leisure, especially in the sense of experiencing a place that differs radically from their own daily experiences and routines. In the world of tourism, the tourist industry creates an idealized experience that is deemed as desirable; it is an industry that "enables tourist experiences to occur" (Edensor, 1998, p. 12). The industry's organization of tourist experience facilitates the consumption of set attractions that adheres to the tourists' fantasies and expectations about a travel destination. Tourism activities surrounding popular tourist destinations often strive to deliver on the experience in ways that are known to attract visitors (Grazian, 2003). The success of tourism is dependent on the extent of commercialization

and the popularity of specific travel locations that stems from the mass media (Edensor, 1998). Part of its enduring appeal is that tourism allows for the the consumption of places and experiences outside an individuals' normal life. Edensor (1998) found that, "Tourism is understood as a time of play, as opposed to work" (p. 62). A form of escapism of everyday routines, tourism encourages a longing for pleasure and relaxation unattainable anywhere else. Visitors' understanding of place may often be dependent on what images are showcased in popularized media: television, film, online forums, social media, etc. By circulating a consistent stock of stereotypical images, popular media often creates the tourists' expectations, which the tourism industry aims to deliver on (Gottdiener, 2001). In the delivery of the tourists' experience, the workers themselves tend to emulate visitors' idealized expectations during their stay such as the promotion of hospitality, professionalism, respectfulness, and responsiveness to customer needs. Edensor's (1998) observations of the Taj Mahal suggest that workers are essentially trained by the structure of the tourist experience to enact roles that fit a form of desirability of "pleasure and friendliness" to ensure visitors' satisfaction (p. 63). By representing and structuring tourist conceptions of and interactions with place, the tourist industry undoubtedly strives to deliver on the consumers' attraction and desirability that it has helped to construct.

The tourism industry often promotes experiences of relaxation, adventure, cultural entertainment, fun, and escapism. For many vacationers, the regularity of routine in everyday life becomes a product of dissatisfaction, leading them to pursue satisfaction elsewhere. Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor examined humans' "escape attempts" as a means of finding satisfaction when they are dissatisfied with routine. The high degree of normality experienced in daily routines lead to individuals to seek out traveling as a way of escaping (Cohen & Taylor, 1992). If life becomes too "repetitive and determined", it becomes ideal to take a break from routine and

finding a place that creates this sense of relaxation that individuals may often not have the privilege of obtaining in their daily lives due to other responsibilities (i.e., work, school, family commitments). In the tourism industry, popular destinations deemed as exotic are often the location of choice for those looking to experience something new (Edensor, 1998). The term exotic is often used to describe tropical locations within the tourism industry. According to Edward Said's, "Orientalism," The promotion specific images and fantasies perpetuates the oversimplification of people and culture through stereotypical ideologies (Garner & Hancock, 2014). Many tourist destinations have capitalized on symbolic associations with "exotic" or "glamorous" locations, cultures, or resort amenities as to further feed tourists' fantasy of luxury and relaxation. Hotels, resorts, and other tourist industries' promise to deliver on this desired environment leads to the creation of intentionally curated themes that are pitched as representative of the average visitors' experience.

Organization of Experience:

The industry of tourism creates built environments that adhere to the consumers' desires. Gottdiener (2001) examined the way individuals often understand a space based on the symbols and meanings that have been assigned to it. In the commercialization of place, locations often try to adhere to the label they are given. In reference to exotic destinations, many have been labeled as a "tropical paradise" (Gottdiener, 2001). With this label, it is necessary that this image is then delivered on in their consumer's experience. In the theming of the tourist environment, it often reduces the place to the image that is expected, rather than the lived reality of the location itself for local residence. Selling an experience that will create more economic capital for property owners becomes the main focus of the tourism industry. In order to attract customers, it becomes necessary to adhere to the wants and desires of those who are willing to pay the price (Gottdiener, 2001). Consumers' satisfaction within the tourism industry becomes top priority.

Within hotels and resorts, surrounding “overseas tourism”, “decoration and architecture are used to tie their environments symbolically” (Gottdiener, 2001, p. 137). The organization of experience in previous studies of the tourism industry acknowledges the promotion of “simulated culture” where exoticism, luxury, and paradise are heavily portrayed. Consumers’ wants and desires are represented in the creation of these themed environments, in which popularized images become the environment itself. Gottdiener (2001) recognizes the way popularized mass media has influenced the way destinations are viewed, further creating idealized representations of other cultures in order to adhere the expectations of the tourist experience (i.e., entertainment, relaxation, escapism, cultural learning).

Across case studies by Gottdiener and Edensor which examined themed tourist environments, it’s recognizable that the popularization of particular images highlights certain features as the exclusion of others. Themed environments tend to regulate the tourist space, where set images (i.e., scenic views) dominate over others (Edensor, 1998). Many consumer environments are dominated by popularized images that romanticize the reality of place by only focusing on what is attractive, downplaying things like crime, poverty, social conflict, or indigenous ways of life. As Gottdiener (2001) discusses, “Despite the freedom to fantasize and simulate, themes that are used seem to be limited to a disappointing range of ideas” (p. 189). Sociologists have found that the popularization of dominant images about a location contributes to tourists’ understanding of authenticity in their perceived experience. The tourism industry strives to sell a particular experience through themed images which then initiate sets of expectations to deliver on what is presented. Environments created predominantly for consumers results in the perpetuation of stereotypes associated with a place when visiting a destination.

The Role of Media in Delivering on the Tourist Experience:

Marketing is influential in the world of tourism, in which advertisements often create an idealized representation that tourists then expect to experience. Social media marketing has acknowledged that the creation of idealized images is used as a means of attracting the consumers to a product. As studied by Minazzi (2015), her concept of storytelling acknowledged the way the media utilizes specific elements and images to stimulate the “listener’s imagination”. Advertisements are “inescapable” within life and have become a means of consumption for everyone, regardless of whether they are actively being sought out. Williamson (1978) defines advertisements as creating the structure of the way humans assign meaning to various products, experiences, individuals, and groups. Oftentimes, what is presented is up for interpretation by the consumer. Essentially, advertisements are used as a tactic of holding meaning and translating that into a product that consumers want to buy. Within the tourism industry, advertisements are created for consumers to want to experience a place that meets their level of desirability (i.e., beauty, fantasy). Williamson (1978) acknowledges the way meaning and symbolism within the media inherently influence us by providing a structure for interpreting advertised experiences, products or services.

In her study of “Deconstructing the Tourist Bubble”, Mroczek (2009) argues that individuals often have a preconceived definition of their experience that is already formed prior to their vacation. In the construction of the tourist experience, tropical locations such as Hawai’i, Tahiti, Fiji, The Caribbean are often viewed as an ideal vacation destination. For many tropical locations, oftentimes paradise or beauty is expected. These idealized tourist expectations often lead to the reinforcement of unrealistic images in advertisements that aim to deliver on a set experience. The Hawai’i Tourism Authority (HTA) has held a role in the perpetuation of certain images that seemingly display Hawai’i as paradise. HTA refers to their responsibility of Hawai’i

as a means of “protecting the iconic brand of the Hawaiian Islands” (HTA Annual Report, 2020, p. 3). As HTA mentions, Hawai‘i is in high demand for travelers across the world because of the way it is ultimately branded by the tourist industry. Digital marketing has enhanced the advertisements of Hawai‘i to “maintain Hawai‘i as a top destination amongst consumers’ minds” (HTA Annual Report, 2020, p. 24). Predictable, descriptive words are often used as a way of representing Hawai‘i within the tourism industry. The HTA Annual Report (2020) is an example of the way the tourist industry aims to promote particular aspects of Hawai‘i that emphasize natural landscapes and scenery. Hawai‘i tourism strives to recognize the importance of maintaining a brand, but at what cost? Delivering on the tourist experience has been deemed as the most important factor within the tourism industry and what is presented essentially playing a role in constructing the consumers’ idealization.

While previous research has examined the creation of themed spaces and the usage of advertisements to maintain a curated image, this research will further examine the portrayal of Hawai‘i within the hotel and resort industry and examine how images and language are framed to adhere to the “authentic Hawaiian experience” as promised amongst these online forums. In the expansion of this content analysis (Sample 1), sample 2 utilized varying perspectives from Native and Non-Natives to understand how the tourist industry actively effects visitors, Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiians. Hawai‘i is often presented in a romanticized and exoticized way, but this framing continues to leave out the lived realities of local residents and Native Hawaiians in order to cater to the tourists’ expectations.

Methodology

This study utilized two methodologies to examine what is being presented of Hawai‘i on hotel and resort online forums through a content analysis and analyzing the varying perspectives of how visitors, Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiians view Hawai‘i and its relationship with

the tourism industry through a qualitative-based survey. In Fall 2021, a content analysis was conducted across thirty hotel and resort websites across four Hawaiian Islands: O‘ahu, Maui, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i Island. Across all websites, images were randomly selected (i.e. every four photos) from their gallery and their usage of language was coded based on the frequency of descriptive words being used to illustrate what visitors should expect on their vacation. Specific descriptors included: paradise, escape, relax/relaxation, exotic (as more of an umbrella term, which included “romantic”, “beautiful”, “enchanted”), and authentic. These words were used to examine whether there is a particular framing of Hawai‘i and how the tourism industry chooses to represent and deliver an “authentic Hawaiian experience”.

In the continuing research of the study, the second methodology incorporated a qualitative-based survey to examine varying perspectives from Native and Non-Native individuals. A completely anonymous, 19-question survey was utilized to capture the narrative of the individuals who have been visitors to Hawai‘i and from the vantage point of those who are Hawai‘i Residents or Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islander. All respondents are college students at a small liberal arts university in the Pacific Northwest. Convenience sampling methods were chosen due to the author’s specific ties with the Hui o Lōkahi Club (Hawai‘i Club) and Pacific Islander students on campus. The demographics of the study included participants from various race/ethnicity (i.e. White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander). Not all participants of the study are Native Hawaiian, which is an important factor to examine the varying perspectives of how Hawai‘i is understood and viewed.

The usage of two separate methodologies incorporates both the researchers interpretation of Hawai‘i representations on hotel and resort online forums through a content analysis, while

further expanding on the research by incorporating the voice of Hawai‘i residents and Pacific Islanders who are often left out of their own story. The incorporation of these methodologies ensures that there is recognition for the way media and advertising represents Hawai‘i, while acknowledging whether these idealized tourist experiences and perspectives in the media accurately portray a realistic range of experiences and meanings of Hawai‘i as a place.

Theory

Many theorists have examined the usage of symbols and meanings to convey an individual's desirability. Symbolic Interactionism is the dominant theoretical approach of this research, stemming from Erving Goffman, David Grazian, and Kenneth Burke to those based in cultural and environment studies, Tim Edensor and Mark Gottdiener. In the discussion of theoretical approaches, these individuals have contributed to similar studies and theories surrounding the meanings and symbols we assign to products, in addition to the representations behind tourism. The current research is based on these theoretical approaches to gain a better understanding of the power behind symbols and the message often conveyed. In addition to how this can then contribute to the influence of advertisements within the tourism industry and its creation of Hawai‘i as a “tropical paradise”. First and foremost, to begin to understand each theorist's contribution, each theoretical approach will be explained from the direct theory that the current research will draw from.

Framing and Terministic Screens

Goffman (1974) and Burke (1989) draw from the symbolic interactionist perspective to examine the usage of symbols and meanings within language and human interaction. Erving Goffman’s theoretical approach of framing theory will be the primary approach within this research. In Goffman’s (1974) framing theory, he discusses the concept of “primary frameworks” that are used to describe an event and the way the descriptor then creates an

expectation for the event itself (p.24). If an individual creates a description of an event, it becomes necessary that this description is then delivered on to maintain the event's image. In the case of Hawai'i tourism, the framing of the tourist experience in Hawai'i suggests a particular set of expectations that the tourist company, hotel, or resort will be expected to deliver. Specifically, Goffman's "Theatrical Frame" will be utilized to critically analyze the performative nature of the tourism industry to portray idealized representations of Hawai'i. As Goffman (1974) mentions, "The stage presents to those whom they can get to listen" (p.559). Here, the "Theatrical Frame" acknowledges humans' means of performative action in presenting idealized roles and situations to adhere to the audiences' desires. Goffman also recognizes the way humans are essentially vulnerable within the framing experience. Depending on the framing of a product or experience, it often leads the audience to have a selective perspective regarding the reality of a given situation. In association with the tourist experience, they may often be exposed to idealized or unrealistic representations of Hawai'i due to the tourism industry being dependent on maintaining a specific brand of Hawai'i (i.e., paradise).

In Kenneth Burke's, *On Symbols and Society*, he introduced the concept of "terministic screens" to highlight how language functions to filter our perceptions and interpretations. Perceiving "language as action", Burke explains how terminologies function, metaphorically, like the photographers use of colored filters to highlight certain aspects of an event or experience. Using particular words over others shapes audience perceptions and understandings of what is being described by highlighting certain features while down playing or "filtering out" others. The main theory that will be used is the metaphorical passage of color filters and photographs. Burke described his metaphor as "a photograph of the same object that is then given a different color filter" (p.116). Through the use of particular terms to describe and frame

an experience, the meanings and symbols conveyed will then vary based on the “color filter given to them”. Within the Hawaiian tourist industry, through the use of language and imagery, each hotel and resort website may provide a particular “color filter” or perspective, which then “frames” or reinforces the way Hawai’i is perceived by potential visitors. In this way, terministic screens and theatrical frames staged by the tourist industry suggest that humans are vulnerable to the language and imagery used to frame their experience. Through the strategic use of language and tourism frames, they shape visitor understandings and expectations of the Hawaiian experience.

Themed Environments

Gottdiener (2001) and Edensor (1998) focus on a cultural and environmental approach regarding the creation of space and place within the tourism industry. They help to explain how Hawai’i Tourism creates an environment predominantly for the consumers. Gottdiener uses his approach of urban semiotics and the symbolic meanings applied to a sense of space. His theoretical approach refers to themed environments as “socially constructed, built environments ... and the products of cultural process” that are then used to create a sense of symbolism behind a place (Gottdiener, 2001, p. 5). Gottdiener’s “themed environments” aligns with the way hotels and resorts often construct their own environment to adhere to the tourists’ expectations of what Hawai’i “should” look like. Gottdiener examines the way theming “reduces the product to its image” which then becomes an expectation of the consumer’s experience. The application of theming applies within hotels and resorts’ creation of a themed space and environment by promoting specific images and themes that then attract and draw individuals in. As Gottdiener (2001) mentions, consumption becomes “the value of image over substance” (p. 75). The tourism industry sells a particular experience, utilizing symbols, images, and themes to ensure the

consumers' expectations are then reinforced and met. In association with the creation of space, Tim Edensor, examined the 'environmental bubble' of the tourist experience.

Linking this theming of space to the experience within them, Tim Edensor, examined the 'environmental bubble' of the tourist experience. Tim Edensor conducted his research at the Taj Mahal to analyze the tourist sites as a "stage" in which the tourism industry produces a cultural site as a performance. Recognizing the Western influence shaping dominant cultural symbols, Edensor (1998) mentions that, non-western tourist destinations are often framed to "the themes of exotic, suggestions of sexual adventure, the 'sublime' and 'beautiful', 'exploration' and 'discovery'" (p.14). Tourist sites utilize the term 'exotic' as a means to draw tourists in, while also taking away from the value of the local culture itself. Edensor's tourism research found that the tourism industry often plays a role in perpetuating unrealistic or stereotypical idealizations of place that may be harmful to the local residents and culture of the destination. Additionally, Edensor's (1998) analysis of tourist sites recognizes the way in which symbols and meanings have often been created to adhere to an "ego-centered landscape" and remove the local culture from the picture in order to promote a sense of desirability (p. 16). Incorporating Edensor's perspective of place is beneficial to analyze Hawai'i tourism as a means of influencing consumers' standards based on the themes and images that are reinforced and interpreted as "authentic."

Authenticity

Grazian (2003) contributes to the current research surrounding hotels and resorts, as he recognizes the way authenticity is often manufactured to fit the desirability of consumers. Grazian's theory of manufactured authenticity is represented by his study of urban blues clubs in the city of Chicago. He defines authenticity as "a place or event that conforms to an idealized representation of reality" (Grazian, 2003, p. 10). The tourism industry utilizes this desire for

things that are real, different, unique, off the beaten path, and a departure from the routine to convince the audience that what is being showcased is truly authentic. Grazian's (2003) study examines the usage of popularized images that then creates tourist expectations of a certain experience, who are then disappointed if it "fails to conform to our expectations" (p. 12). Grazian observed that tourists often rely on images to guide them in the proper or expected way to perceive a place. This theoretical approach of authenticity is necessary to further acknowledge the power of images and how it can then influence the consumers' expectations. Additionally, Grazian's concept of a *sliding scale of authenticity*, acknowledges the way each individual creates their own version of authenticity; this is often adaptable based on the audience's perspective and expectations. As Grazian (2003) discusses, "authenticity is rarely absolute" (p. 13) because it hinges on the dynamic symbolic exchange of meanings between audience members, performers, club owners, and tour promoters. His contribution to the current study is representative of the way culture may become a "romanticized reality" for those involved (Grazian, 2003, p. 24). In the romanticization and the portrayal of an idealized representation of Hawai'i, it leads to tourists believing that Hawai'i is only what is presented in vacation brochures, resort websites, and tourist guides.

Grazian's definition of authenticity exemplifies the expectations of consumers and the way the tourism industry continues to shape and cater to their desires, regardless of whether it problematically displaces the local culture in the process. Additionally, Grazian's study brings light to the gentrification of tourist spaces as themed consumption of local culture leads to a higher cost of living for local residents. While this is not the predominant focus of the research of this study, it demonstrated what is being left out of the dominant frames within the tourism industry. Taken as a whole, these theoretical perspectives provide a useful framework to

understand the symbolic processes that generate meaning within the Hawaiian tourist industry and frame visitor experiences.

Results/Analysis

The results of this study stemmed from both the authors’ interpretation of images and language in hotel and resort advertisements and the narrative of Natives and Non-Natives. In the analysis of this research, common themes such as Representations of Hawai‘i as Merely a Paradise, “Overrun by Tourists”: Perceptions of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i Residents, and “I thought it was just for vacation”: Recognition of Privilege in Visiting Hawai‘i were utilized to explain whether the tourist industry contributes to the creation of idealized and unrealistic representations and acknowledging the way tourism may shape individuals’ relationship to Hawai‘i.

Representations of Hawai‘i as Merely a Paradise:

In the promotion of Hawai‘i as a popular vacation spot, the hotel and resort websites displayed a high number of images and descriptive words that were dominated by stereotypical aspects of paradise (see Appendix A). Across all thirty hotel and resort websites, the description of Hawai‘i often portrayed similar sentiments of “enjoying the beautiful scenery”, “experiencing an authentic Hawaiian vacation”, “filling your days in paradise with enchantment”, and other characteristics that contribute to tourists’ expectations of a typical Hawai‘i vacation. While the hotels and resorts in this study varied in location and amenities, each website branded Hawai‘i as a paradise. Kenneth Burke’s, *On Symbols and Society*, discussed the metaphorical application of the photographers’ color filter. This metaphor is associated with the way the industry is selective with what experience they want to convey. The usage of the color filter metaphor is important in acknowledging the way presenting a particular experience can influence the audience’s understanding of place. Throughout the content analysis it was found that the hotel and resort

websites were selective in how they presented Hawai‘i. An example of this is the high frequency of two-hundred and thirty-eight images out of three hundred being predominantly focused on nature and the environment. Ten images were randomly selected from each hotel and resort website, averaging eight in ten pictures being scenic based. While the hotels and resorts utilize images that portray Hawai‘i as a paradise, language was also examined as an important factor in influencing the tourists’ perceptions and expectations. All thirty hotel and resort websites described Hawai‘i as a “fantasy”, “dream”, “oasis of tranquility”, “bliss,” or “escape.” The majority of descriptive words were dominated by themes of relaxation and escapism by drawing into the audiences’ desire to avoid their daily routine. After further analysis, the tourist industry uses imagery and language as a ploy to frame visitors’ expectations of Hawai‘i by only showcasing the aspects that are desirable.

While hotel and resort advertisements exemplified the way the tourist industry presents idealized representations of Hawai‘i, it is important to acknowledge the perceptions of place from Native and Non-Native individuals. Drawing from the results of the qualitative-based survey, participants were asked to describe Hawai‘i using at least five different words. In this qualitative approach, it was significant to understand whether individuals would view Hawai‘i with the same connotation as presented in the content analysis. While participants stemmed from varying demographics, the specific variables that contributed to the research was whether or not they were Native Hawaiian, a Hawai‘i Resident, or none of the two (i.e. Non-Native Hawaiian, Non-Hawai‘i resident). The majority of participants were not Native Hawaiian or a Hawai‘i resident, however this is an important aspect in understanding how outsiders’ may view Hawai‘i (See Demographic Table 1). Regardless of not all participants having experience in visiting Hawai‘i, they all had responses when describing Hawai‘i. In the participants responses to

describing Hawai‘i, many utilized descriptive words that were portrayed on the hotel and resort websites (i.e., beautiful, tropical, paradise, authentic, serene, oasis). The word, tourism was also present amongst responses as a descriptor for Hawai‘i.

Demographic Table 1:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I am Native Hawaiian	5.71% 6
I am not Native Hawaiian	71.43% 75
I have lived in Hawai‘i	17.14% 18
I currently reside in Hawai‘i	14.29% 15
I have visited Hawai‘i for vacation	51.43% 54
I have not visited Hawai‘i for vacation	23.81% 25
Total Respondents: 105	

The majority of participants’ responses revolved around the beauty and relaxation aspects of paradise, while also incorporating other adjectives such as “exciting”, “unique”, “welcoming”, “friendly”, and “warm” (See Appendix B for survey results). While not all participants had visited Hawai‘i, each individual had their own perception of what Hawai‘i is about. Based on participants’ answers, many of their descriptive words were dependent on being a current Hawai‘i resident, their experience when visiting the islands for vacation, or what participants may have been told or heard about Hawai‘i through various sources (i.e., mass media, school, friends, family). Although the responses exhibited varying understandings of Hawai‘i, the majority showcased descriptive language that focused on attraction or desirability.

In the application of theory, these results exemplified theorists, Gottdiener and Edensor in the usage of exoticism and adherence to consumers’ expectations and perceptions. Gottdiener (2001) examines the way products can be reduced to an image, in the usage of his approach participants’ responses may have been dependent on how Hawai‘i has historically been presented as a tropical destination. This reinforcement of Hawai‘i as a paradise as produced by the mass

media is representative in the results of the survey. Regardless of participants' relationship to Hawai'i, it was acknowledged as a destination that is known for its idealized connotations. The content analysis of hotel and resort advertisements recognized the way the view of Hawai'i is perpetuated by popularized images in mass media. Hawai'i advertisements promise an experience of relaxation, adventure, and escapism which seems to be prevalent in many of the participants responses regarding their experience in visiting Hawai'i. Responses often touched upon their satisfaction with the beauty and adventure of their trip. For example, participant 25 mentioned, "I had an amazing trip in Hawaii, my favorite part was snorkeling in the ocean with the beautiful sea life." Many other responses provided similar sentiments in which they used phrases such as: "Super enjoyable", "I would definitely go back again", "It was a great vacation where we could take really cool hikes," or "It was an amazing experience and I felt very welcomed." Visitors, as presented in the examples above, tend to focus on the attraction aspect of Hawai'i. In association with Tim Edensor's approach of tourist sites, Hawai'i is one of many non-western destinations that are expected to deliver the experiences that hotel and resort websites tend to promote (i.e., adventure, exploration, relaxation). Online forums perpetuate the experiences that tourists' often expect, leading to further perpetuation of unrealistic and stereotypical views of Hawai'i.

“Overrun by Tourists”: Perceptions of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i Residents

The results of qualitative-based survey found that the Native Hawaiian and Hawai'i resident participants displayed feelings of frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction when discussing the way tourism has impacted the cultural life of their community. While participants discussed their personal views of the tourism industry, there were common themes of the lack of sustainability, gentrification, frustration of the way the media doesn't fully portray the culture and Native people, and disappointment in Hawai'i being advertised as a tourist destination.

Participant 25 displayed concern with how the tourism industry showcases selective aspect of Hawai‘i:

It’s over romanticized. It’s overpriced. We have tried to teach visitors on what not to do when visiting but they still do it and they either get in danger or lose their life. I dislike how they portray our home like it’s some playground for the rich.

Other participants had similar feelings of frustration with how the Hawai‘i tourist industry often depicts Hawai‘i as a place for visitors’ consumption. Many responses disclosed that Hawai‘i should be presented as more than a vacation destination, however it feels as if they have no say in how their home is displayed. Sentiments such as “playground for the rich” is symbolic of the way tourist destinations are promoted for consumers, while displacing the local culture and people. Gottdiener (2001) mentions, “The paradise that is offered excludes local residents, who must contend with crushing conditions of life...for this reason, the ‘tropical paradise’ vacation motif is commonly transparent” (pg.177). The tourism industry’s stereotypical simulations of a tropical paradise contributes to the identity of Hawai‘i being understood as a tourist destination.

Participant 21 deconstructs the role of tourism in Hawai‘i by recognizing the Hawai‘i is so much more than what is presented in the media:

In advertising, people love to portray Hawaii as perfect and show the pretty parts of island living. Advertising loves to show hotels and the tourist beaches. As someone who was born and raised on Oahu, I know there is so much more to the state. No amount of media and advertising could ever fully capture the culture and people of Hawaii.

Hawai‘i is more than just a paradise. The Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents demonstrated disappointment in how their home is taken advantage of in order to satisfy visitors’ expectations. As Gottdiener (2001) mentions, “Despite the freedom to fantasize and simulate, themes that are used seem to be limited to a disappointing range of ideas” (p. 189). The tourism industry creates simulated environments that continue to perpetuate the idea that Hawai‘i is nothing more than a

tourist destination. Additionally, Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents expressed dissatisfaction with how the tourist industry doesn’t actively consider the culture and people of Hawai‘i. From their perspective, Hawai‘i is being used as a product for business, leading to individuals viewing tourism as the only way for Hawai‘i to survive. Participant 52 conversed about the way non-local or non-native individuals often provide comments such as “you need our money to keep your lifestyle”. According to participants, outsiders make assumptions that Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents should be grateful for the tourism industry because it supports the economy, while disregarding the issues that arise in Hawai‘i due to its existence: difficulty in obtaining proper housing, higher cost of living, and the displacement of Native culture and people. Participant 23 discussed the presence of gentrification that they’ve experienced as a result of the tourism industry:

More recently, we see too many native Hawaiians unable to live in their own homeland. Because many tourists visit Hawai‘i and then wish to reside here, they take away potential homes for the people who were born & raised here. This also contributes to the rise in housing prices, making it even more difficult for natives to obtain proper housing. As a result, a lot of our people are homeless in the land that they belong in.

Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents collectively expressed their views on how the tourism industry has negatively affected their way of living. Oftentimes what is presented of Hawai‘i leaves out aspects that are deemed as undesirable. From their perspective, it feels as if visitors assume that Hawai‘i is just a destination that people visit, but to Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents, it is home. Many participants recognized the tourism industry’s role in influencing visitors’ perceptions of Hawai‘i, while also discussing how tourists often downplay the problems that occur for local residents as a means to reinforce their idealized Hawai‘i vacation. As participant 5 mentions, “...although I am blessed to live there, I am also given the burden of living in poverty there. People don’t realize it’s a struggle and isn’t at all paradise”. Many

participants who visited Hawai‘i described Hawai‘i as a “beautiful, tropical paradise”, however Native Hawaiian and local resident participants utilized words such as “culture” and “family”. This is an example how visitors’ experiences tend to differ from those of the local culture. While Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents also view their home as beautiful, they wished that the tourist industry presented more of what Hawai‘i has to offer: culture, diversity, and community.

Many participants showed their disdain with how the presence of gentrification has been overwhelming due to the tourism industry having a strong hold on the economy of Hawai‘i. Some responses expressed feelings that Hawai‘i no longer feels like home because of the tourism industry. While many Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents conveyed dissatisfaction with the tourism industry, there were a few participants that presented a contrasting view. Several participants viewed the tourism industry as important in the contribution of wealth for the economy. For example, participant 8 commented, “It is the biggest source of income for the State of Hawai‘i. Without tourism, Hawai‘i would not survive economically.” Due to western influence, Hawai‘i is often depicted as dependent on tourism, leading to further perpetuation of Hawai‘i as a tourist location. Edensor’s research of the Taj Mahal can be applied in the way tourist sites strive to maintain a particular brand by viewing a destination as a performance. With this, the tourism industry aims to satisfy visitors, while actively displacing the native inhabitants of their land.

“I thought it was just for vacation”: Recognition of Privilege in Visiting Hawai‘i

Visitors of Hawai‘i, despite viewing Hawai‘i as a paradise, also understood how tourism has negatively impacted its culture and people. Participants were asked to describe their experience in Hawai‘i and elaborate on how the tourism industry shaped their relationship to Hawai‘i. Many participants admitted that in their experience it was disheartening that their trip felt “touristy”. From visitors’ perspectives they had hoped for an idealized paradise but instead

they were met with disappointment due to the high volume of people also present for vacation. Several participants exclaimed their frustration with the overwhelming amount of tourists which made them feel that they did not receive an “authentic Hawaiian experience”. Some participants described their vacation as “white-washed” or “not natural”. This depiction of the visitors’ experience is relative to the way there are expectations of how they feel their vacation should be. Grazian’s theory of authenticity discusses the way consumers may often be disappointed when their experience fails to meet their expectations. Advertisements of Hawai‘i use selective images to depict natural landscapes, while removing the aspects that can be deemed as undesirable (i.e., crowded beaches, overpopulation, urbanization). Some participants described characteristics of their vacation as “busy cities”, “tourist-oriented,” “crowded”, “expensive”, and “too many tourists”. Several participants displayed the desire to experience the culture of Hawai‘i, however they felt as if the Hawaiian culture aspect they wanted to engage with was absent. Although visitors showed much adoration for Hawai‘i, their disdain and disappointment stemmed from their dissatisfaction with how Hawai‘i appeared “lost in tourism”. Participant 6 discussed their discontent with the tourism industry:

I don't like the tourist industry in Hawai'i, I think they paint an unfair picture for outside people of the culture and the history, and I wish there was a way for the culture to be more true, and less commercialized.

Many responses discussed wishing that Hawai‘i was treated better by the tourism industry. With this, many participants considered both their role in contributing to the issues that arise from tourism, in addition to their frustration with how tourism often depreciates Hawaiian culture as a show for others as depicted by participant 14:

Personally, as a tourist, I think that the tourism industry made a show out of a culture that wasn't really necessary. I think it's important to educate people about cultures they don't understand but I hate to think that Hawaiian culture is treated as a source of income. To

me it seems kind of sacrilegious, but again, I’m not a Native Hawaiian or someone who grew up there.

The majority of participants who were visitors of Hawai‘i were aware of the problematic nature of depicting Hawai‘i as an attraction. These findings were unexpected due to Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents’ viewpoint that tourists are often oblivious to the issues that arise with tourism. However, the nature of these findings may have been influenced by the population of the sample being college students. While education level may have impacted the participants’ current views of Hawai‘i tourism, it is important to recognize that education plays a role in spreading awareness of the issues that arise from the tourism industry. Several participants exclaimed that at first, they had viewed Hawai‘i as a tourist destination but after further education on the displacement of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents they’ve been able to recognize how the tourism industry can be problematic. For example, participant 18 discussed their hesitations in visiting Hawai‘i again:

It was great at first but now I see how much tourism and catering to the wealthy and big business have unequivocally altered Hawaiian life culturally, economically, and environmentally. So now I don't really want to go back and participate in tourist industry and am reserving myself for if I'm invited by friends or family that are native/local Hawaiians.

Many participants recognized the way tourism can contribute to the displacement of Native people, while also discussing that Hawai‘i deserves to be treated with respect. Similar to the sentiments of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents, visitors were conscious of how the tourism industry has led to the overdevelopment of native land and the overcommercialization of Hawaiian culture. In many instances, tourists focus on experiencing their dream Hawaiian vacation, however based on these findings there is still hope to educate individuals on how a simple vacation may contribute to the gentrification of indigenous people. Additionally, tourists also recognized how Hawai‘i is often inappropriately depicted in mass media (i.e., travel

brochures, commercials, television). Participants alluded to representations of Hawai‘i as “almost too perfect,” “unrealistic”, or “catered to tourists”. Many of the college students who visited Hawai‘i discussed that the individuals they met in their college career contributed to them being aware of the issues in Hawai‘i. Due to the liberal arts college of the study having a large community of Pacific islanders, it is representative of the many participants who were aware that Hawai‘i should be viewed as more than a paradise.

While the lū‘au and polynesian dance aspect of the tourism industry were not commonly discussed in participants’ responses, one individual acknowledged how experiences have been devalued through the glamorization and sexualization of lū‘au performers. As the participant reflected on their time attending a lū‘au in Hawai‘i, they discussed the implications that cultural appropriation seemed normalized by the tourist industry. With the incorporation of local culture as entertainment and Hawaiian culture being presented as a product to be sold, many visitors or those who are non-native Hawaiian/non-Hawai‘i residents may assume that Hawaiian culture is merely entertainment. The participant discussed that the lū‘au they attended promoted the exoticification of Hawaiian culture. In the tourism industry, the lū‘au, while holding cultural significance has been morphed into entertainment for the consumer. Gottdiener (2001) criticizes the theory of themed environments produced by the tourism industry for utilizing select symbols and themes that appear to “replace traditional culture” (p. 170). The tourist industry according to participants, benefits from the exploitation of culture at the expense of the indigneous people involved. In the discussion of visitors’ being aware of the consequences of tourism, individuals who have never visited Hawai‘i expressed similar sentiments of the tourism industry leading to high poverty rates for local residents. While both groups were aware of the ramification of tourism, they disclosed that they still want to experience Hawai‘i but only if it was representative

of the local culture rather than the unrealistic and stereotypical “tourist traps.” In the analysis of these results, the negative associations individuals formed of the tourism industry is essentially a product of the idealized and unrealistic representations of Hawai‘i.

The Hawai‘i tourism industry strives to maintain the brand of Hawai‘i (i.e., paradise), but at what cost? It is visible that the emphasis on producing Hawai‘i as predominantly a vacation destination has contributed to the displacement of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents. Although the intent of tourism is to promote the economy, while encouraging cultural exchange, there is a disconnect from Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents, where they feel that their voice is silenced. Based on the findings of this study, Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents are seemingly forced to take the back-seat in their own home. Oftentimes, when participants described Hawai‘i, tourism was present in their list of words. This goes to show how dominant tourism is in Hawai‘i. While the tourism industry itself can be beneficial to the economy, their strategies in presenting unrealistic representations of paradise are harmful to the local culture involved. The feelings of frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction from Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents is justifiable due to the way popularized media fabricates their home and culture as entertainment for others.

Conclusion

Hawai‘i tourism claims to perpetuate Hawaiian culture and exemplify the beauty of the islands, while only presenting the version of Hawai‘i that is desirable. This paper investigated the role of advertisements in framing unrealistic and romanticized representations of Hawai‘i, while examining varying perspectives to understand the relationship between the tourism industry, Native Hawaiians, Hawai‘i residents, and tourists. To do this, symbolic interactionism theorists such as Goffman, Burke, Goffman, Edensor, and Grazian were incorporated to provide a

critical sociological lens for understanding the way the tourist industry contributes to a misleading image of the identity of Hawai'i.

In the grand scheme of the tourism industry, this research unveiled the truth behind the ramifications of minimizing a place as a vacation destination. In the broader context of the tourism industry, indigenous peoples' homes should not be advertised as a product for consumption. This research is important to observe the damage that can be done towards a culture when the popularization of images and language exoticify a group that has historically been oppressed. While the focus of this research discusses how Hawai'i is misrepresented, this is also applicable to any locations that have been romanticized or labeled as nothing more than a "tropical paradise".

The findings of this study identified the problematic nature of the tourism industry in recognizing only the aspects of a culture or place that are deemed as attractive or a form of entertainment for visitors. With the incorporation of varying perspectives, the frustration, anger, and disappointment displayed by Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i residents on the tourism industry did not go unnoticed. With this acknowledgement it's significant for the tourism industry and visitors to understand that Hawai'i is not just a paradise, it is a people, a culture, and it is history.

In order to create change in the Hawai'i tourism industry, it should be recognized that Hawai'i is not a product for sale. The consumption of place should be approached with care and used as a means of consumers being educated on the people and culture of the destination before visiting someone's home. From this study, tourists should recognize their own privilege of visiting Hawai'i and understand what their vacation might be contributing to.

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Appendix A: Method 1



Figure 1.1 Hilton Waikoloa

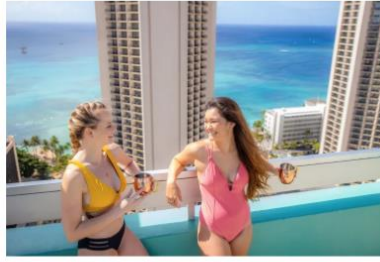


Figure 1.2 Pacific Monarch



Figure 1.3 Hilton Hawaiian



Figure 2.1 Luau performance



Figure 2.2 Hotel Worker



Figure 2.3 Polynesian Dancer



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2



Figure 3.3

Frequency Table 1

Of Selective Words Over 30 Hotels and Resorts of Hawai‘i

Language Usage	Frequency (<i>f</i>)
Paradise	32
Escape	15
Relax/Relaxation	21
Exotic (“Romantic” “Beautiful” “Enchanted)	26
Authentic	15

Frequency Table 2**# of Environment-based Imagery Over 30 Hotels and Resorts of Hawai'i**

Imagery of the Environment	Frequency (<i>f</i>)
Scenic Setting	238
	Mean: 7.9

See here for the image data collection:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16rP1i6BnCuLbpziq1KnUiB-Pxp43EDUe?usp=sharing>

Appendix B: Method 2

Participant 1 Beautiful, cultured, organized, unique, exciting. 4/18/2022 3:09 PM
Participant 2 Rich History, Culture, Hula, 4/8/2022 8:56 PM
Participant 3 Warm, beautiful, beaches, food, touristy 4/8/2022 9:26 AM
Participant 4 It has an appearance of a great vacation destination and not a place where real people live. I feel like the people who live in Hawaii don't have their home respected 4/7/2022 3:37 PM
Participant 5 Hawai'i is beautiful, cultural, strong, inspiring and home. 4/7/2022 2:39 PM
Participant 6 Warm, ocean, palm trees, island, paradise 4/7/2022 7:53 AM
Participant 7 Expensive, beautiful, waves, surfing, spear fishing 4/6/2022 10:23 PM
Participant 8 It has strong communities that center around shared ideals. People there look out for each other. 4/6/2022 8:50 PM
Participant 9 Lush, tropical, friendly, exciting, delicious food, immersive experience, beautiful, expensive commodities, touristy on the main islands, culturally rich 4/6/2022 7:15 PM
Participant 10 Historical Beautiful Scenic Warm but rainy Special 4/6/2022 4:32 PM
Participant 11 Tropical , culturally diverse, biodiversity , beaches, colonized 4/6/2022 10:52 AM
Participant 12 Home, family, culture, love, struggle 4/6/2022 10:50 AM
Participant 13 Warm, cultural, humid, beach, sand, tourist 4/6/2022 10:44 AM
Participant 14 beautiful, culturally rich, environmentally diverse, hurt 4/6/2022 8:33 AM
Participant 15 Beautiful, diverse, authentic, Expensive, Sunny 4/6/2022 12:23 AM
Participant 16 Beautiful, diverse, cultural, volcanic, rainy (?) 4/5/2022 11:23 PM
Participant 17 Beautiful, touristy, exploited, expensive, colonized 4/5/2022 10:49 PM
Participant 18 an island, rich culture, taken over by the US 4/5/2022 6:10 PM
Participant 19 A beautiful state with an amazing culture 4/5/2022 6:03 PM
Participant 20 Beautiful, paradise, island, beaches, relaxing 4/5/2022 5:47 PM
Participant 21 Diverse, beautiful, escape, tourism, amazing 4/5/2022 5:08 PM
Participant 22 Beautiful, cultural, protective of nature 4/5/2022 4:48 PM
Participant 23 Paradise but suffering from tourism 4/5/2022 4:28 PM
Participant 24 Tourism, Expensive, Breathtaking, Easygoing, Paradise 4/5/2022 4:27 PM
Participant 25 Beautiful, persevering, strong, vulnerable, changing 4/5/2022 4:22 PM
Participant 26 community, small, native, warm, nature 4/5/2022 4:04 PM
Participant 27 beautiful, tropical, relaxing, magical, healing 4/5/2022 4:02 PM
Participant 28 Tropical, Lush, Vibrant, wild, diverse 4/5/2022 4:02 PM
Participant 29 Casual, traditionalistic, environmental, passionate, spirited 4/5/2022 3:56 PM
Participant 30 Warm, Humid, beautiful, disparity, touristy 4/5/2022 3:51 PM
Participant 31 Beautiful Unique Becoming in danger from tourism 4/5/2022 3:12 PM Perceptions of Hawai'i Survey 16 / 49
Participant 32 Beautiful Family Ties Culture Overvisited Tolerant (towards tourists) 4/5/2022 3:05 PM
Participant 33 Beautiful, Cultured, Family, Happy, Safe 4/5/2022 3:03 PM
Participant 34 Appreciative of life and nature 4/5/2022 3:02 PM
Participant 35 Paradise, Home, Roots, Aloha, Healthy 4/5/2022 3:01 PM

Participant 36 A place with a unique culture and gorgeous landscape that is a hot spot for many tourists 4/5/2022 3:00 PM
Participant 37 Islands, colonized, pacific, warm, nature 4/5/2022 2:54 PM
Participant 38 Tropical, busy, culturally rich, educational, mostly beautiful 4/5/2022 2:53 PM
Participant 39 Sunny Beautiful Hot Small Summer 4/5/2022 2:42 PM
Participant 40 Beautiful, Lāhui, Busy, Overrun by Tourism 4/5/2022 2:42 PM
Participant 41 cultured, beautiful, independent, stolen-land 4/5/2022 2:12 PM
Participant 42 Beautiful senary with the ocean, vegetation, sea animals and has deep history/legends 4/5/2022 2:11 PM
Participant 43 Tropical, Maritime, Isolated, Pacific-cultural hub, Tourism 4/5/2022 2:07 PM
Participant 44 Sunny, Warm, Beautiful, Relaxing, Nice 4/5/2022 1:56 PM
Participant 45 Tropical, Busy, Overrun, Eroding, Expensive 4/5/2022 1:26 PM
Participant 46 peaceful, beautiful, fun, exotic, cultured 4/5/2022 1:25 PM
Participant 47 Nature, cultural, beautiful, environmental, warm 4/5/2022 1:21 PM
Participant 48 Expensive, Earthy, Adventurous, Cliquey, Well-Known 4/5/2022 1:12 PM
Participant 49 warm, sunny, beach, rainy, island 4/5/2022 1:11 PM
Participant 50 Beautiful, expensive, warm, marketable, diverse 4/5/2022 1:09 PM
Participant 51 beautiful, laid back, nature, colorful, and relaxing 4/5/2022 1:07 PM
Participant 52 Expensive, warm, fun, home, loving 4/5/2022 1:03 PM
Participant 53 Beautiful, sacred, culture, diversity, tropical 4/5/2022 1:02 PM
Participant 54 Beautiful, geology, conservation, warm, sun 4/5/2022 1:02 PM
Participant 55 Beautiful, tropical, adventure, aesthetic, warm/humid 4/5/2022 12:58 PM
Participant 56 Oceanic, colonized, beautiful, colourful, small. 4/5/2022 12:57 PM
Participant 57 Stressed, beautiful, over-hyped, scarcity, indigenous 4/5/2022 12:53 PM
Participant 58 Beautiful Cultural Special Sacred On the verge of ruin 4/5/2022 12:47 PM
Participant 59 A beautiful place to enjoy and relax peacefully 4/5/2022 12:47 PM
Participant 60 Example of corporations' greedy expansion 4/5/2022 12:46 PM
Participant 61 Relaxed, sacred, pretty, welcoming 4/5/2022 12:42 PM
Participant 62 Beautiful, disrespected, welcoming, misunderstood, overcrowded 4/5/2022 12:40 PM
Participant 63 Colorful, Warm, beautiful, Aloha, Native 4/5/2022 12:39 PM
Participant 64 Warm, tropical, colorful, expensive, cultural 4/5/2022 12:36 PM
Participant 65 Warm, Upbeat, Relaxing, Colorful, Exploration 4/5/2022 12:34 PM
Participant 66 Island, tropical, tourism, culture, beaches, ocean 4/5/2022 12:34 PM
Participant 67 Warm, tropical, cultural, hospitality, crowded 4/5/2022 12:34 PM
Participant 68 Beautiful, cultured, calm, small, clean 4/5/2022 12:31 PM
Participant 69 Tropical, touristy, expensive, isolated, cultural 4/5/2022 12:30 PM Perceptions of Hawai'i Survey 17 / 49
Participant 70 Island, beautiful, sacred, historic, culture 4/5/2022 12:28 PM
Participant 71 Fun fresh touristic gorgeous pretty 4/5/2022 12:27 PM
Participant 72 Expensive, Tourist, Home, Diverse, Split 4/5/2022 12:27 PM
Participant 73 Family, culture, special, paradise, home 4/5/2022 12:26 PM
Participant 74 relaxed, clean, family, healthy, small 4/5/2022 12:26 PM
Participant 75 Magical, sacred, treasured, Invaded, life changing 4/5/2022 12:26 PM
Participant 76 tourists persecution independent famous misunderstood 4/5/2022 12:24 PM

Participant 77 Gorgeous, authentic, stars, natives, intimidating, tropical, vacation, oasis 4/2/2022 4:09 PM
Participant 78 Beautiful, cultural, small, touristy, kind 4/2/2022 2:23 PM
Participant 79 Aloha, welcoming, warm, chill, fake 4/2/2022 12:06 AM
Participant 80 the special, warm place, i call home. 4/1/2022 11:04 PM
Participant 81 Paradise unreal natural cultural fun 4/1/2022 9:42 PM
Participant 82 Beautiful, overcrowded, refreshing, struggling, mistreated 4/1/2022 8:45 PM
Participant 83 Relaxed, welcoming, windy, sunny, exciting, unique, variety 4/1/2022 7:37 PM
Participant 84 Tropical Island Tourist destination Overtaken land 4/1/2022 7:29 PM
Participant 85 Trees, water, luau, tattoos, islands 4/1/2022 7:15 PM
Participant 86 Beautiful, Diverse, Cultural, Unique, Spiritual 4/1/2022 7:14 PM
Participant 87 Island, beautiful, nature, exploited, tourism, tropical, friendly 4/1/2022 6:40 PM
Participant 88 Diverse, beautiful, islands, unique, 4/1/2022 6:15 PM
Participant 89 Diverse, beautiful, gorgeous, friendly, and welcoming 4/1/2022 6:03 PM
Participant 90 Beaches Volcanoes Humid Rainy Beautiful 4/1/2022 5:46 PM
Participant 91 Beautiful, touristy, warm, fun, green 4/1/2022 5:45 PM
Participant 92 Home, Touristy, Humid, My food heaven, and the sun and water! 4/1/2022 5:32 PM
Participant 93 I’ve always thought of Hawai’i as having beautiful terrain and loved learning about the Polynesian culture, as it is very different from the culture of the rest of the U.S states. 4/1/2022 5:26 PM
Participant 94 paradise, tropical, peaceful, tourism, beauty 4/1/2022 5:10 PM
Participant 95 Ocean, food, volcanoes, dancing, surf 4/1/2022 5:02 PM
Participant 96 Isolated, Expensive, Miscellaneous, Sociability, and Independent 4/1/2022 4:49 PM
Participant 97 Beautiful, passionate, corporate (Waikiki), historical, alive 4/1/2022 4:47 PM
Participant 98 Beautiful, crowded, overpopulated, too many buildings, unique 4/1/2022 4:42 PM
Participant 99 Diverse, connected, beautiful, cultural, overpopulated 4/1/2022 4:39 PM
Participant 100 Paradise Surfing Vacation Beaches Resort 4/1/2022 4:39 PM
Participant 101 Beautiful, Home, Love, Peaceful, serene 4/1/2022 4:38 PM
Participant 102 Peaceful, magical, touristy, traditional, adventurous 4/1/2022 4:37 PM
Participant 103 A beautiful and culturally and ethnically diverse community 4/1/2022 4:36 PM
Participant 104 Beautiful, warm, cultural, busy, and expensive

If you have lived or currently reside in Hawai‘i as a permanent resident, how do depictions of Hawai‘i in commercial advertising compare to your experience living in Hawai‘i? (34 responses)

Participant 4: In advertisements about Hawai‘i, it seems like everything is perfect. Even the thing they show on Hawaiian Airlines seems perfect; the flight attendants never stop smiling, and show all the most popular areas and beautiful sights to see.

Participant 5: Most of the time, when I tell people I’m from Hawai‘i they tell me that I am so lucky to be from such a beautiful place and that they want to move there. And although I am

blessed to live there, I am also given the burden of living in poverty there. People don't realize it's a struggle and isn't at all paradise.

Participant 13: I believe that the commercial advertising of Hawai'i is not an actual depiction of the true nature and communities which locals live in. Commercial advertisement is the fake perception of Hawai'i which attracts tourists.

Participant 21: In advertising, people love to portray Hawaii as perfect and show the pretty parts of island living. Advertising loves to show hotels and the tourist beaches. As someone who was born and raised on Oahu, I know there is so much more to the state. No amount of media and advertising could ever fully capture the culture and people of Hawaii. Personally, I never agreed with the fact tourists come so often to the islands. It angers me when they say "Hawaii needs our tourism to survive." In reality, we don't. Advertisements doesn't show the pollution, abuse, and traffic that these tourists bring. Advertisement doesn't know anything about Hawaii.

Participant 25: It's over romanticized. It's over priced. We can't sustain that many incoming people unless we fix the pipes, infrastructure, electricity and so many more. We don't have the money to spend to correct those issues yet we somehow magically have money to spend on things that don't give back to the people. We have tried to teach visitors what not to do when visiting but they still do it and they either get in danger or lose their life. I dislike how they portray our home like it's some playground for the rich.

Participant 30: I think it's great that they show some beautiful touristy spots, but that's not really what Hawaii offers to its residents! I think it's the community that makes Hawaii so special and such a home to me!

If you are Native Hawaiian, have lived, or currently reside in Hawai'i, how has tourism impacted the cultural life of your community?

Participant 4: It's made it nearly impossible to make a living and it's hard not just on our funds but also our hearts because I feel like locals are being driven out of their homes due to tourism.

Participant 18: Tourism I feel impacts everyone on all the islands, but living on Oahu, it makes the island very crowded and because of that, locals aren't able to enjoy our favorite spots to go around the island because it is also so crowded.

Participant 23: More recently, we see too many native Hawaiians unable to live in their own homeland. Because many tourists visit Hawai'i and then wish to reside here, they take away potential homes for the people who were born & raised here. This also contributes to the rise in housing prices, making it even more difficult for natives to obtain proper housing. As a result, a lot of our people are homeless in the land that they belong in. I also feel like there are a lot of

tourists who only see Hawai'i as a vacation destination and do not consider the culture and people of Hawai'i.

How has the tourist industry shaped your relationship to Hawai'i?

Participant 2: It is what allowed me to visit there, but I know that Hawai'i has a very rich culture that has been lost through tourism. That's disappointing because I feel like culture is a big aspect that you want to experience when you visit another place.

Participant 3: It allows you to over fantasize what you think about Hawaii allowing you to forget that its people's home and it is sensitive and needs protecting

Participant 7: I am sure the tourist industry has romanticized Hawai'i. I also think the tourist industry benefits at the expense of Native Hawai'ians and know that the poverty rate is high despite millions (if not billions) of tourist dollars pouring in yearly.

Participant 10: The tourist industry does provide a misconception of Hawaii and Native Hawaiians. If I hadn't conducted further research on this topic, I would say that the tourist industry has devalued the experience of attending a Luau by implying that anyone can wear a skirt, look "sexy", and do the dances that "hula girls" typically perform.

Participant 11: I don't like the tourist industry in Hawai'i, I think they paint an unfair picture for outside people of the culture and the history, and I wish there was a way for the culture to be more true, and less commercialized.

“Catered to tourists”

Participant 13: As a person not from Hawai'i and who has never been there, the tourist industry has made me think of Hawai'i as simply a tourist destination. I wish I knew more about it than that.

Participant 16: Hawaii is more than just a place to vacation, and the tourist industry has seemed to have framed it as mainly a tourist attraction.

Participant 23: Many people use Hawai'i as a getaway not realizing that this is home to many people and when it is overrun with tourists the natives essentially have to pay for tourists' fault

Participant 24: I think it's important to educate people about cultures they don't understand but I hate to think that Hawai'ian culture is treated as a source of income.

Participant 35: The tourism industry is the outlet through which I experienced Hawai'i. Although, for me, this just meant being led around by 3 Hawaiian 20-somethings, I know that

everything was catered towards us, as the visitors. I wonder how complete or accurate our experience was.

Participant 53: I think my perception of Hawaii was that it's a paradise and just a place to visit, but after meeting lots of people at school who are from Hawaii, I think it's much more of a home.

Participant 54: Hawai'i used to always seem like a tourist destination to me. However, through meeting native Hawaiian individuals at Linfield, and doing more research, I understand that it is indigenous land. Tourism has largely damaged and wrongfully taken over this land.

Participant 67: It makes it hard to go back sometimes because it doesn't feel like home due to the increase in tourist population