K. Malulani Castro

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Areas of Interest

Environmental Justice, Indigenous Politics, Land back, Conservation Finance

Education

University of Michigan — PhD, Resource Policy, and Behavior
Adviser: Kyle P. Whyte, Ph.D. — April 2026

Michigan State University — MA, Eco-Community Psychology
Adviser: Ignacio D. Acevedo-Polakovich, Ph.D. — October 2020

University of Maryland, Baltimore County — BA, Psychology
Adviser: Charissa S. L. Cheah, Ph.D. — May 2017

Research and Employment Positions

May 2026–Present — **Postdoctoral Fellow**
Supervisor: Kyle P. Whyte
Manage a community-based research project with Indigenous partners on land back planning, acquisition, and financing. Coordinate and oversee fieldwork trips for the research team. Write grant proposals to support Indigenous-led research in land back, food sovereignty, and public health. Develop curriculum on the practical and theoretical components of land back and Indigenous-led conservation. Curriculum includes intensive weekend workshops, team-based courses, and more didactic courses. Write and publish material on new research scholarship focused on land back, critical finance theory, and Indigenous politics. Develop a book project based on dissertation that examines the negotiation and financing of a major land back effort in Hawai'i.

Jan 2023–Present — **Community Research Coordinator**
Supervisor: Michelle Martinez
Coordinate the development of community-based environmental justice projects for Master's students at the University of Michigan's (UM) School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) with community partners and SEAS faculty. Facilitate the sourcing of students, faculty supervisors, and funding for projects through the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment. Develop and implement an environmental justice project management curriculum for students engaged in the previously mentioned projects. Manage the workflow, partner relations, and final deliverables of community-based projects.

Jan 2019 – 2022 — **Graduate Student Indigenous Evaluation and Research Collaborator**
Supervisor: Kyle P. Whyte
Collaborate with Tribal, national, and regional partners to design and

implement Indigenous evaluations. Evaluations have been primarily focused on programs at the nexus of Indigenous resurgence, Indigenous planning, climate adaptation, and climate science. Work from an Indigenous participatory framework to build reciprocity among stakeholders in the co-production of knowledge. Employs qualitative and quantitative methods informed by Indigenous and decolonizing research and evaluation frameworks.

Aug 2018 – Aug 2020 **Project Lead**
Community Academic Innovation and Dissemination Lab
Michigan State University, Lansing, MI
Supervisor: Ignacio D. Acevedo-Polakovich
Project: Anytown CTB Evaluation and Assessment
Manage the evaluations for the Community Tampa Bay (CTB) Anytown™ programs. Collect and analyze data for their two weeklong residential programs for high school students focused on developing youth competency around diversity, inclusivity, and social justice; their advanced youth advocacy training; and their volunteer program. Collaborate with CTB executive leadership to innovate program planning and evaluation. Lead team meetings, set agendas, and manage personnel.

Teaching Experience

Winter 2024 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice

Fall 2024 **Instructor of Record**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Fall 2023 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Metrics of Materiality

Winter 2023 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice

Fall 2022 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Winter 2022 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice

Fall 2021 **Graduate Student Instructor**
University of Michigan, MI
Course: Indigenous Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Summer 2021 **Teaching Assistant**

	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Introduction to Psychology
Spring 2021	**Teaching Assistant**
	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Introduction to Psychology
Fall 2020	**Teaching Assistant**
	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Introduction to Community Psychology
Summer 2020	**Teaching Assistant**
	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Internship in Human Services
Spring 2020	**Teaching Assistant**
	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Internship Training in Psychology
Fall 2019	**Teaching Assistant**
	Michigan State University, MI
	Course: Abnormal Psychology
Spring 2018	**Teaching Assistant**
	University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD
	Course: Social Science Research Methods II
Fall 2017	**Teaching Assistant**
	University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD
	Course: Social Science Research Methods II

Professional Service

2025 – Present	**Co-Founder and Board Member**
	Global Land Restoration Fund
2019 – 2020	**Publicity Officer**
	Indigenous Graduate Student Collective
2018 – 2021	**Department Steward**
	Graduate Employees Union
2018 – 2021	**Reviewer, Journal Articles**
	Journal of Latinx Psychology (1-2 articles per year)

Honors, Internships and Rewards

2023	Environmental Justice Award for Outstanding Scholarship Award, SEAS UM
2022	Outstanding Teacher Award, SEAS UM
2018	Fellow, MSU University Fellowship
2018	Fellow, MSU University Fellowship
2017	Intern, Institute for Recruitment of Teachers ($1,200)
2016	Recipient, UMBC Undergraduate Research Award ($1,500)
2015	Scholar, Ronald E. McNair Scholars

Publications

Castro, K. M. (2026). On the price of land back: The case of Molokai Ranch and the politics of liquidity. Out for review. *Environment and Planning F: Philosophy, Theory, Models, Methods and Practice*.

Castro, K. M., & Whyte, K. P. (2026). Climate change. In D. Rigney, A. Compton, S. Cornell, S. Bignall (Eds.), *The Indigenous Nation Building Glossary* (1st et., pp. 51-54). Bloomsbury Publishing. https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/indigenous-nation-building-glossary-9781350533721/

Castro, K. M. (2026). Indigenous rights. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Environmental Justice* (Volume 3). Sage Publishing. https://www.sagepub.com/shop/buy-a-book/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-environmental-justice-1-285437

Aikau, H., **Castro, K. M.,** Cook, K., Kalipi, K., & Johnston, G. (2024). Land back practicums: Piecing together the puzzle of Indigenous lands and lifeways through the rematriation of Molokaʻi Ranch lands. Manuscript accepted for publication. (*Landback Universities edited collection*).

Stacy, S. T., **Castro, K. M.,** & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2020). The cost of youth voices: Comparing the feasibility of *Youth Generate and Organize* against focus groups. *The Journal of Participatory Research Methods*. https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.13312

Vu, K. T. T., **Castro, K. M.,** Cheah, C. S. L., & Yu, J. (2019). Mediating and moderating processes in the associations between Chinese immigrant mothers' acculturation and parenting styles in the United States. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 10*(4), 307–315. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000150

Chang, E. C., Chang, O. D., Lee, J., Lucas, A. G., Li, M., **Castro, K. M.,** Pham, S., Cho, G. Y., Purmasir, Y. S., Yu, E. A., Wu, K., Lui, P. P., Rollock, D., Kwon, P., Chen, X., Hirsch, J. K., & Jeglic, E. L. (2018). Going beyond ethnoracial discrimination and social support in predicting psychological adjustment: Evidence for the importance of hope as a positive psychological construct in multiethnoracial adults. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 14*(5), 681-693. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1510023

Evaluation Reports

DeMott, N., Booth, E., **Castro, K. M.,** &, Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2020). *Pre/Post Data from Community Tampa Bay's 2020 Anytown TM Advocacy Academy Program.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Castro, K. M., Whyte, K. P., & Dhillon, C. (2019). *2019 Indigenous Planning Summer Institute Participant Feedback and Event Evaluation.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Castro, K. M., Dhillon, C. M., & Whyte, K. P. (2019). *7th Annual Rising Voices Workshop Participant Feedback and Event Evaluation.* Boulder, CO: National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Castro, K. M., Crisman, T. L., Booth, E.J., DeMott, N.T. & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2019). *Community Tampa Bay's 2018 Anytown® Advocacy Academy; A Summary of Evaluation Data.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Castro, K. M., Crisman, T. A., Al-Zoughbi, L. A., Stacy, S. T., & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2019). *Community Tampa Bay's 2019 Anytown™ Program: Pre/Post Comparisons.*

East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Crisman, T. L., **Castro, K. M.,** Al-Zoughbi, L., Stacy, S. T., DeMott, N.T., Booth, E.J., & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2019). *Community Tampa Bay's 2019 Anytown® Volunteers: Pre/Post Comparisons.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Crisman, T. L., Al-Zoughbi, L., **Castro, K. M.,** Stacy, S. T., & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2019). *Community Tampa Bay's 2018 Anytown® Volunteers: Pre/Post Comparisons.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Crisman, T. L., Al-Zoughbi, L., **Castro, K. M.,** Stacy, S. T., & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2018). *Pre/Post Data from Community Tampa Bay's 2018 Anytown® Advocacy Academy Program.* East Lansing, MI: Community-Academic Innovation and Dissemination Laboratory at Michigan State University.

Professional Presentations

Panel Presentations

Castro, K. M., Mark, B., Pasternak, S., Carroll, C., & Steen, M. (2026). *The Why and How of Land Back: Visions and Complexities of Indigenous Land Return*. Panel presented at the American Association of Geographers Annual Convention, March, 2026.

Aikau, H., **Castro, K. M.,** Cook, K., Kalipi, K., & Johnston, G. (2024). *Land back practicums: Piecing together the puzzle of Indigenous lands and lifeways through the rematriation of Moloka'i Ranch lands.* Panel presented at the American Studies Association Annual Convention, November, 2024.

Poster Presentations

Lee, J., Li, M., **Castro, K. M.**, Lucas, A. G., Pham, S., Purmasir, Y. S., Cho, G. Y., Chang, O. D., Yu, E. A., Wu, K., Hirsch, J. K., Jeglic, E. L., & Chang, E. C. (2018). *A study of positive psychological adjustment in multiethnoracial adults: Examining the role of discrimination, social support, and dispositional hope.* Poster presented at the 30th Annual Convection of the Association of Psychological Science, San Francisco, CA.

Pham, S., Purmasir, Y. S., Cho, G. Y., Lucas, A. G., **Castro, K. M.**, Lee, J., Li, M., Chang, O. D., Yu, E. A., Wu, K., Hirsch, J. K., Jeglic, E. L., & Chang, E. C. (2018). *Examining perceived discrimination and social support as predictors of negative affective conditions in multiethnoracials: Does hope still matter?* Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA.

Castro, K. M., Hong, C. Y., Vu, K. T. T., & Cheah, C. S. L. *Mediating and Moderating Processes in the Association between Chinese-Immigrant Women's Acculturation and Depressive Symptoms.* Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA.

Vu, K. T. T., **Castro, K. M.**, Zong, X., & Cheah, C. S. L. *Environmental mastery as a predictor of Asian- and European- American emerging adults' suicidality.* Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA.

Castro, K. M., Vu, K. T. T., Seo, Y. J., Zong, X., & Cheah, C. S. L. *The mediating role of Asian-American mothers' acculturation in the longitudinal associations between their ethnic identity and psychological well-being.* Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of

the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Queensland, Australia, July, 2018.

Castro, K. M., Vu, K. T. T., Yu, J., & Cheah, C. S. L. *The effects of environmental mastery and parental promotion of independence on Asian- and European American emerging adults' suicidality.* Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Queensland, Australia, July, 2018.

Vu, K. T. T., **Castro, K. M.**, Seo, Y. J., Ren, H., & Cheah, C. S. L. *Autonomy and Asian cultural values moderate the relation between children's sadness and maternal emotion dismissing.* Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Queensland, Australia, July, 2018

Castro, K. M., Vu, K. T. T., Yu, J., & Cheah, C. S. L. *Mediating and moderating processes in the associations between Asian-American mothers' acculturation and parenting styles.* Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, PA, United States, April, 2017.

Professional References

Dr. Kyle Whyte
George Willis Pack Professor; Faculty Director, Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment; Principal Investigator, Energy Equity Project
Email: kwhyte@umich.edu
Note: *Dr. Kyle Whyte was my doctoral committee chair as an expert in Indigenous studies, Indigenous philosophy, and environmental justice. He is now my postdoctoral supervisor.*

Michelle Martinez
Lecturer and Inaugural Director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment
Phone: (313) 443-1046
Email: mamz@umich.edu
Note: *Michelle is my **c**urrent supervisor in my work as the community research coordinator for the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment.*

Dr. Malia Akutagawa
Associate Professor
Phone: (808) 956-0559
Email: maliaaku@hawaii.edu
Note: *Dr. Akutagawa was my doctoral committee as an expert on Hawaiian studies, Hawaiian ecological knowledge, and Indigenous law.*