

# The Filipino Community in Hawaii: Development and Change

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## Introduction

American social scientists and historians have abundantly documented the fact that ethnic communities and ethnicity are not only integral parts but salient features of the American social system and history (see Thomas, 1990; Jiobu, 1990; Schaeffer, 1988; Banks, 1984). They also agree that ethnicity and ethnic cultures, contrary to the popular notions of assimilation and the "melting pot" ideology, are exceedingly resistant to change or eradication. This article examines some of the factors that have contributed to the development and persistence of the ethnic Filipino community in Hawaii.

Like most ethnic communities in the United States, it is difficult to speak of a single Filipino community in America. Filipino communities in the U.S. are quite varied—in size, level of socio-cultural development, character of social structures (i.e. informal and formal community institutions, relationship to the local/city/state political economy, etc.). The development of the Filipino community in Hawaii was initially shaped by the needs of the plantation-based political economy. The community has developed from one largely based on the plantation and composed predominantly of single men who lacked the traditional Filipino family/kinship system and community institutions.

Today, the Filipino community is no longer predominantly plantation-based. The majority of Filipinos in Hawaii work and live in urban areas. The community enjoys a relatively balanced male-female sex ratio. More Filipino family and kinship networks exist today than ever before. Numerous Filipino community groups and organizations—social, cultural, religious, professional and entrepreneurial—exist throughout the state giving the ethnic Filipino community its dynamism and distinctiveness.

There are three identifiable historical periods in the development of the Filipino community in Hawaii: the period before World War II, the post-World War II period, and the post-1965 period to the present. A cursory examination of the community's history reveals two distinct and sometimes contradictory but interrelated social processes operating. The first involves the incorporation, gradual assimilation and amalgamation of the immigrants (i.e. those who arrived since 1906 until today) from the Philippines into the larger "American" nationality

or, as in the case of Hawaii, becoming "local" (see Okamura, 1980; Yamamoto, 1979).

An assimilation process occurs for all immigrants who come to settle permanently in the U.S. (see Glazer and Moynihan, 1975; Gordon, 1964; Park, 1950). The objective basis for assimilation is the immigrants' integration into the political economy and social structures of their adopted country. The requirements of economic survival make it necessary for the immigrant to acquire basic understanding of American cultural practices. Their objective participation in the American socio-economic system as producers and consumers sets the basis for the linguistic and cultural changes that mark the process of assimilation and amalgamation. By amalgamation, we mean the fusion or merging of distinct peoples into a new nationality.

Generally, within two or three generations, immigrants begin to lose touch with the "homeland." They become monolingual in English and thoroughly attuned to the national culture of the U.S. and self-identify as "American." The descendants of immigrants are effectively absorbed into the U.S. or American nationality.

The second process involves the social reproduction of the Filipino national minority or ethnic community in Hawaii. A number of factors have contributed to the development and continued existence of the ethnic Filipino community. The most important of these are the continuing large influx of immigrants from the Philippines, on the one hand, who replenish the Philippine nationality, ethnic culture and identity and, on the other hand, the continued subjection of Filipinos to anti-immigrant prejudices and institutional discrimination.

An important factor that has served as a powerful brake on the assimilation of non-white immigrants in the U.S. is racism. Essentially, the process of assimilation in the U.S. has been polarized along racial lines (see Jiobu, 1990; Geschwender, 1978; Bonacich, 1976; Daniels and Kitano, 1970; Cox, 1948). Whereas immigrants from Europe, with the exception of some eastern and southern Europeans, shed their ethnic minority status quickly and become in their own minds "true-blue Americans," the racial distinctiveness of non-white ethnics is reinforced generation after generation. The hyphenated designation (i.e. Filipino-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Mexican-Americans, etc.) which non-white ethnic Americans carry is a mark of their "imperfect" assimilation into the American nationality. Thus, distinct ethnic communities made up mainly of non-white Americans continue to be socially reproduced, while those of European descent experience the process of dispersion, assimilation, amalgamation and inclusion into the American social system and nationality.

The experience of the Filipino community in Hawaii supports the notion that ethnicity should not be considered a fixed cultural quotient that either simply persists, as in the pluralist version of America, or gradually diminishes, as with the assimilation thesis (Yancey et al., 1976). In reality, ethnicity ebbs and flows, depending upon the ecology or political economy of the cities or regions of the country in which ethnic groups find themselves. If people are commonly grouped by occupation and residence and share common institutions and services, then ethnic solidarity should flourish and persist. If these factors are absent, ethnicity should diminish.

### The Pre-World War II Filipino Community in Hawaii

The Filipino community has its roots in the plantation system dominated by the Hawaii Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) and the powerful Big Five companies (i.e. Alexander & Baldwin, Amfac, Theo H. Davies, C. Brewer, and Castle & Cooke). Between 1906 and 1935, approximately 120,000 Filipinos were enticed or recruited by HSPA labor agents to work on the plantations (Sharma, 1984; Teodoro, 1981; Dorita, 1954). Almost all who arrived, including a small number of families and women, emigrated under the auspices of the HSPA. By 1926, the HSPA had ceased its practice of recruiting Filipino workers and paying for their passage to and from Hawaii. Despite the ending of active labor recruitment, however, thousands of Filipinos continued to flow into Hawaii until 1934 when immigration from the Philippines was restricted by the U.S. Congress' passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act. The act, also called the Philippine Independence Act, was passed by Congress due to the lobbying pressure of American labor leaders on the West Coast and their anti-Filipino labor agitation as well as certain agricultural interests in the U.S. that sought to limit the entry of Philippine agricultural products into the country. With the act's passage, the migration of Filipinos to the U.S. and Hawaii from 1935 on virtually stopped (Dorita, 1967).

Upon arrival in Hawaii, Filipino contract laborers were assigned to the HSPA-affiliated plantations throughout the territory. Their lives would now come under the dictates of the plantation bosses. They had no choice as to which plantation or island they would be assigned. Men from the same families, the same towns or provinces were often broken up and separated. They became totally dependent on the plantation for housing, medical care, food supply and even recreation. This was the first phase of "proletarianization" of Filipinos in Hawaii as they were integrated into the territory's political economy (Takaki, 1983; Beechert, 1985).

A number of factors played a role in the forging of the Filipino community in this early period of their history in Hawaii. Among these was the policy of the HSPA of segregating and separating workers of different nationalities and races (Takaki, 1983; Beechert, 1985; Fuchs, 1961). Like the other immigrant laborers, Filipinos were assigned separate camps or housing on the plantations. This facilitated the spontaneous reproduction of Filipino communal and cultural practices, including the use of Philippine languages. Each Filipino plantation camp generally contained several hundred workers, including a few families and women. As more Filipinos were brought to work on the plantations, Filipinos gradually replaced Japanese as the backbone of the sugar and pineapple industries in the islands (Sharma, 1984; Fuchs, 1961).

While the planters generally placed all Filipinos in the same camp, they were also aware of the regional and linguistic differences among them and often took advantage of these differences to keep Filipinos disunified as an ethnic bloc. Thus even within the Filipino camp, there existed separate Ilokano camps and Visayan camps. Despite these nuances, however, the process of assimilation and amalgamation of Filipinos into Hawaii's plantation working class was set into motion.

The nascent Filipino community made adjustments and adapted to the difficult social conditions they found in Hawaii. Despite lacking normal family structures and women, Filipinos on the plantation were able to develop artificial family and kinship networks. Two types of informal social structures were created by the early Filipino migrant workers. The first dealt with problems related to individual housing collectives. The other dealt with problems faced by Filipinos in the camp as a whole.

Generally there were between 5 to 10 men assigned to a bunkhouse or housing collective. Following Filipino cultural tradition, the oldest member of the house often acted as the "authority figure," assuming the role of the older brother or father figure.

The orientation and goal of most Filipinos who came to work on the plantations in this period was to finish the term of their contract (3-5 years), save as much money as possible that could be sent home, and then return to the Philippines. Given the very low wages they earned at that time, it was not unusual for many Filipino plantation workers to have very little money left at the end of the month. In order for these men to meet their obligations to their families in the Philippines, they developed what has come to be called the *kumpang* system (see Cariaga, 1937). Each month, members of the housing collective or

bunkhouse would put a small amount of money into a pool. The men would then take turns in sending the large "pool" or pot of money to their families.

In some cases the *kumpang* was expanded to cover other members of the Filipino camp thus leading to the development of informal credit arrangements called the *amung* (Cariaga, 1937). These informal credit association later evolved into mutual aid associations called *saranays*. One of the main purposes of the *saranay* was to assist members in dire need (Alcantara, 1981). For example, members would provide assistance to workers who met tragic accidents or untimely death. The *saranay* took care of the funeral expenses or sent money home to the family of the deceased.

These informal social structures and networks were the building blocks of the early Filipino community in Hawaii. The *saranays* were often formed by people from the same town. The larger *saranays*, however, reflected the regional origins of its members. Among these were the Ilocos Norte Aid Association and the Bisaya Hinabangay Association.

As an emerging community institution, the *saranay* was based on the plantation camp or town. It was not until the mid-1930s that there were attempts by Filipinos, often with the assistance of the HSPA, to bring together the emerging organizations scattered throughout the territory to consolidate them under a single umbrella. The effort to unite these Filipino community groupings was part of the campaign hatched by the HSPA to neutralize the attempts of Pablo Manlapit to bring Filipino workers under his Filipino Labor Union (FLU) (see Beechert, 1985; Fuchs, 1961; Manlapit, 1924). At this time, the FLU was the only organization with a territorial-wide presence among Filipinos in Hawaii.

Besides the mutual aid associations and the attempts at forming a labor union to represent their interests, Filipinos organized masonic societies similar to those that existed in the Philippines (Okamura, 1981). Among those formed in Hawaii were the Legionarios del Trabajo, Caballeros de Dimasalang, and the Gran Oriente Filipino. These societies were openly nationalistic and actively supported the campaign for Philippine independence from the United States. One of the central activities of these associations was the observance of Rizal Day, an annual event in honor of the Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, that was once widely celebrated throughout the Filipino community on December 30. Rizal Day became an occasion for all Filipinos to express their collective national identity as Filipinos and continuing love for their Philippine cultural heritage. Rizal Day celebrations played an important role in the maintenance of Filipino ethnic identity in Hawaii.

Another Filipino organization which developed a territorial-wide following was the pseudo-religious Filipino Federation of America (FFA) (see San Buenaventura, 1990; Thompson, 1941). Originally formed by the messianic Hilario Moncado in the late 1920s in California, the Filipino Federation of America was largely based among Visayans. The FFA later expanded to Hawaii among Filipinos and continues to exist in both states until today. A deeply religious and politically conservative social formation, the Moncado-led FFA was viewed favorably by the HSPA. Moncado's image as "the leader of the Filipino" in Hawaii was supported by the ruling elite in Hawaii to counteract and downplay the influence of Manlapit among Filipino workers. The FFA discouraged its members from joining Manlapit's labor organizing activities.

Perhaps one of the most important and powerful institutions in the pre-World War II Filipino community was the Philippine Labor Commissioner in Honolulu. It was the predecessor of the Philippine Consul General, the representative of the Philippine government in Hawaii. While purportedly working in the interest of Filipino laborers in Hawaii and representing the colonial authorities in Manila, the Labor Commissioner actually functioned as an agent of the Big Five and HSPA within the Filipino community. Cayetano Ligot, the longtime Labor Commissioner in Hawaii in the 1920s and 1930s, was perhaps the most notorious among them and often counseled Filipino workers to "not bite the hand that 'fed' them" (Beechert, 1985; Fuchs, 1961; Manlapit, 1924).

#### *Early Filipino "Calabash" Family*

The few hundred Filipino women and children who arrived in the 1920s and early 1930s provided the initial foundation for the emergence of a more rounded community life on the plantations. With the presence of Filipino women and families, the Philippine cultural practice of observing "life cycle" celebrations or "rites of passage" such as weddings, baptisms and funerals became an important focal point for bringing together Filipinos on the plantations.

Fuchs observed that given the small number of school-age Filipino children before World War II, it was often a major community event whenever a Filipino youth graduated from high school (Fuchs, 1961). It was an even bigger cause for celebration when a Filipino graduated from college. These occasions were not only observed by the student's immediate family but by his entire *partido* or kinship network and community.

The events that centered on the Filipino family reinforced the social reproduction of Philippine cultural practices in Hawaii. The observance of "life

cycle" celebrations among Filipinos in Hawaii led to the development of artificial kinship networks especially among the single Filipino men with no families (Alcantara, 1981; Cariaga, 1937). Flowing from the practice of having multiple sponsors for baptisms and weddings, "calabash" family ties were established by single men and women who became *ninongs* (godfather) and *ninangs* (godmother). In this way, the *ninong* and *ninang* became "uncle" and "aunt", which enabled single men with no families to enter into the extended kinship or *partido* network. Many of these *partidos* often crossed or overlapped with the *saranays* or Filipino community associations on the plantations, particularly those based on regional or township levels.

Towards the end of the 1930s, a number of events led to a change in the orientation of Filipinos towards their view of their life and future in Hawaii. One was the great distance between Hawaii and the Philippines which made it difficult, especially for the single men, to maintain close ties with the families they had left behind. Another factor was the harsh economic conditions most Filipinos faced during the Depression years. Thousands of unemployed Filipinos in Hawaii and the mainland U.S. were "repatriated" (McWilliams, 1986/1944); Dorita, 1967). Many Filipinos were unable to send money home to their families in the Philippines. Others cut their ties with the families back home altogether and decided to stay in Hawaii for the rest of their lives or to move on to the mainland if the opportunity arose. The outbreak of World War II completely closed the flow of communication as well as migration between the Philippines and Hawaii. It forced Filipinos to begin thinking of permanently sinking their roots and building a future in Hawaii.

### Post-World War II to Pre-1965 Period

The period following WW II represents the second phase in the history of the Filipino community in Hawaii. The war and the events that followed consolidated the feeling that was building up among most Filipinos in Hawaii before the war to settle permanently in the islands. The years following WW II witnessed more and more Filipinos becoming U.S. citizens, especially those who had served in the armed services (McWilliams, 1986). Others returned home to the Philippines to get married or to bring their families to Hawaii.

Among the main highlights of this period was the successful drive to organize Hawaii's longshore and plantation workers led by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union or ILWU. These organizing drives, which resulted in a series of dramatic and sometimes bitterly fought

strikes, were able to mobilize Filipinos to support the ILWU. Under the slogan of "an injury to one is an injury to all," the ILWU succeeded in breaking down divisions among Hawaii's workers based on race and nationality and united them on the basis of working class solidarity.

A corollary aspect of the ILWU-led strikes was their success in winning Filipinos to struggle against narrow and sectarian "blood" or racial unionism (Beechert, 1985; Zalburg, 1979; Fuchs, 1960). A crucial test occurred in the 1946 sugar strike when the HSPA imported more than 6,000 Filipinos from the Philippines—freshly liberated from Japanese occupation—to help break the strike (Beechert, 1985; Zalburg, 1979; Fuchs, 1960). The planters hoped that the anti-Japanese sentiment among Filipinos resulting from their bitter war experience would help break the solidarity forged by the ILWU between Filipino and Japanese workers. The HSPA ploy failed, however, as the freshly imported Filipino workers refused to scab against the strikers and instead supported the ILWU-led strike.

The hardfought and lengthy strikes which marked the organizing drives of the ILWU became a central dynamic and focus in the life of the Filipino community on the plantations during this period. In the decade following the war, the ILWU fought four major strikes which drew Filipinos into the frontline of the main social movements in Hawaii—the 1946 sugar strike, the 1949 longshore strike, the 1952-53 pineapple strike, and the 1958 sugar strike. These strikes lasted between four to ten months. In the course of these struggles for basic trade union rights and for improved working and living conditions, Filipinos on the plantations were greatly politicized and made important contributions to the struggle of all working people in Hawaii for greater democratic rights. As the largest ethnic group in the agricultural industries—sugar and pineapple—Filipinos made tremendous sacrifices and played leading roles in ensuring the victory of the ILWU in these strikes. During this phase of the Filipino community's history in Hawaii, the ILWU became a central institution on all the plantation communities and was a great influence on the lives of Filipinos.

By the 1950s the pace of structural integration, acculturation and assimilation of Filipinos in Hawaii was proceeding steadily. The number of immigrants from the Philippines in this period was small. The bulk of the community was still made up of those those who came before World War II. The number of women and children, however, was slowly beginning to increase. The number of second generation Filipinos also was growing (Lind, 1967).

With the ILWU's influence in the plantation communities at its height, the number of Filipino mutual aid associations—and the need for them—began to decline. Most Filipino adult men and women on the plantations belonged to the ILWU and relied on the union to deal with their social problems, ranging from immigration to alcoholism. The ILWU throughout the territory (and later state-wide) set up a sophisticated system of organized social and recreational activities for its members—baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, bowling and golf leagues. Members actively participated in these activities. In the process, these social activities helped break down ethnic and racial divisions and fostered greater solidarity among the union's membership. Filipinos participated actively in these activities as a sizable part of the union's membership as well as of the communities on the plantations.

The 1950s saw the reorganization of the Filipino community with the active participation of Filipinos in the ILWU. Many of the smaller township or province-based groups were consolidated and brought under the umbrella of a single organization on the plantation. Thus, we see the establishment of a single plantation-wide organization such as the Filipino Community Association of Waialua, Waipahu, Ewa, Kekaha, etc. It was not unusual during this period for Filipino leaders in the ILWU also to serve as leaders in these associations. These associations continued to organize the main social activities in the Filipino community—the annual Rizal Day festivity, beauty contests, terno balls (the traditional Philippine dress worn by Filipino women for important social occasions), etc.

While helping to consolidate Filipino groups into unified plantation-wide associations, ILWU members also played an active role in developing community organizations on the plantation towns which crossed ethnic lines. For example, organizations such as the Waipahu Community Association and others like it in Ewa, Kahuku, Naalehu, Honokaa and elsewhere throughout Hawaii were formed during this period. These broader, community-wide organizations were open to anyone who wished to join and took up issues affecting the entire community. As in the Filipino community, the ILWU played an influential role within these local community associations.

Another key institution in the plantation communities in which the ILWU played a central role was the Democratic Party. The impressive victories won by the ILWU on the labor front in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s was matched by an even more dramatic series of electoral victories won by the Democratic Party over the Republicans in this period. The labor movement in general, and the ILWU in particular, played a major role in the emergence of

Democratic Party dominance in Hawaii's electoral scene. For the most part, Filipinos—who constituted the bulk of Hawaii's agricultural work force—identified with and supported Democratic candidates. A number of Filipino supporters of the ILWU ran under the Democratic Party banner and won (Fuchs, 1961).

While the campaign for Hawaii's statehood was reaching its climax, Filipino community leaders were seeking ways to maximize their participation in the political life of the broader society. Inspired by then Philippine Consul General in Honolulu, Juan Dionisio, Filipino community leaders began a drive to bring the scattered Filipino groups throughout the territory under one umbrella. Thus, with the help of Dionisio, the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH) was formed in 1959. The stated goal of the UFCH at its founding convention was "to further the political, economic and social aims of Filipinos in Hawaii... The Filipino here must first achieve unity through a common identification before they can be successfully integrated into the (larger) community..." (Okamura, 1982; Fuchs, 1961). Clearly, the statement of purpose of the UFCH speaks of the desire among Filipinos to become an integral part of Hawaii. Filipinos were no longer dreaming of returning to the Philippines but were now determined to enter the mainstream of society in Hawaii.

### The Post-1965 Period: Diversity, Growth and Change

The years following 1965 saw the beginning of the third major period in the history of Filipinos in Hawaii. As the era of the 1950s closed with Hawaii's statehood, the 1960s saw the introduction of major changes in Hawaii and on the national level which would have tremendous impact on the Filipino community in the islands. Locally the 1960s saw the decline of agriculture—the sugar and pineapple industries—as the main foundation upon which the economic life of the islands is built. Tourism began to emerge as the main source of livelihood for most people in Hawaii. At the national level, the passage of a more liberal immigration law by the U.S. Congress in 1965 would open the door wider for immigrants, particularly those from Asia, Latin America and southern and eastern Europe.

Ironically, these three events—the decline of agriculture, the rise of tourism, and Congress' passage of the 1965 U.S. immigration law—would contribute to contradictory but interrelated developments in Hawaii's Filipino community.

On the one hand, the decline of agriculture would lead to the "break-up" of the plantation-based Filipino community as sugar and pineapple companies closed or phased out their operations in many plantation towns throughout the

islands (see Kent, 1983; Matsuoka, 1990; Fujimoto and Seto, 1990; Miller, 1989; Smith, 1989). As the largest ethnic group in the sugar and pineapple industries, Filipinos were the most affected by the gradual decline of these industries. Thousands of Filipino workers were forced to look elsewhere for jobs in the emerging tourism industry—in the hotels, golf courses, restaurants, and construction sites. In the process, Filipinos were breaking out of occupations they “traditionally” held and were being employed in non-plantation jobs. Many others were forced out of their former plantation communities to relocate to urban centers where more job opportunities existed. Thus, the structural integration of Filipinos into wider sectors of Hawaii’s political economy was proceeding steadily.

While the phase-out of sugar and pineapple and the growth of tourism were introducing changes in the Filipino community, at the same time other developments were taking place. The Filipino community was rapidly growing in numbers. This time the increase was the result of the growth in number of Hawaii-born, second generation children (Okamura, 1982; Lind, 1969). The number of Filipino interracial marriages was also increasing. Immigration from the Philippines, which had practically ended in the years prior to and throughout World War II, resumed following the war. However, the number of Filipinos who arrived, with the exception of the so-called “1946 Boys,” was relatively small.

Entering the 1960s, assimilation and amalgamation of Filipinos into the broader “American” nationality or “local” society (in the case of Hawaii) had become the main trend. Ethnic minority reproduction, however, was still dominant within the community. This was due to the still considerable size of the “first wave” (pre-World War II) and “second wave” (post-WWII) immigrants which made up the overwhelming majority of Filipinos in Hawaii (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, 1982; State Immigrant Services Center, 1982; Carino, 1981).

On the other hand, the enactment of the 1965 immigration law by the U.S. Congress greatly contributed to the persistence and social reproduction of the ethnic Filipino community in Hawaii. The new U.S. immigration law precipitated a major new wave of immigration from the Philippines to the U.S. and Hawaii. Two of the main thrusts of the new immigration policy were family reunification and recruitment of more skilled workers (Alegado, 1988; Pido, 1986). Thus, between 1965 and 1985, approximately 670,000 Filipinos entered the U.S. Many of these Filipino immigrants came by way of the principle of family reunification or the so-called “family chain migration” (Caces, 1985). Thousands of highly skilled and educated Filipinos also made their way into the U.S. which often led to criticisms of the so-called “brain drain” from the Philippines.

Of an average of more than 40,000 Filipinos who arrive in the U.S. every year, ten per cent come to Hawaii (Operation Manong, 1985; Carino, 1981; State Immigrant Services Center, 1982). A large majority of the new immigrants come from the Ilocos region of the Philippines, which has continued the dominance of the Ilokano linguistic group in the Filipino community in Hawaii.

An important result of the large influx of the “third wave” immigrants (post-1965) is the reinvigoration and reinforcement of Filipino culture and ethnic identity in Hawaii. Thus, despite the fact that Hawaii-born and raised Filipinos continue to increase in large numbers, this important social grouping in the community is overshadowed by the continuing presence and growth of the immigrant sector composed of the “first wave,” “second wave” and the “third wave.”

At the same time, Filipinos in Hawaii continue to experience discrimination and anti-immigrant chauvinism (Alegado, 1990; Haas and Resurreccion, 1976). Employment discrimination in the work place serves to stratify systematically Filipinos into the lower and unstable sectors of the labor force—in the hotel and restaurant sectors of the visitor and agricultural industries (Okamura, 1990). Continued concentration in jobs associated with Hawaii’s “new plantations”—as housekeepers in the hotels, as busboys and kitchen help in food/restaurant services, and as janitors in airports, banks and other business establishments—sets the basis for the subjective reproduction of national culture and social relations among Filipinos. This stratification in the work place is reinforced by the re-emergence of ethnic enclaves—identifiable Filipino neighborhoods and districts in new and old urban areas of Hawaii.

In sum, the post-1965 period witnessed a number of trends in the Filipino community in Hawaii that were set into motion by several events. Foremost among these was the transformation of Hawaii’s economy in the 1960s, the decline of agriculture and the rise of tourism, which began to “break up” the Filipino community that was largely based on the plantations. Filipino workers laid off from the sugar and pineapple industries were absorbed into various occupations in the rising tourism and resort development industries. As the jobs “moved” from the rural, plantation areas of Hawaii to the urban centers and developing resort spots, so did the workers—including Filipinos.

A change in national immigration policy in Washington also ushered in new dynamic forces into the Filipino community. The thousands of new “third wave” Filipino immigrants who arrived in Hawaii under the 1965 immigration law reinvigorated Filipino ethnic identity and culture. Unlike the previous “waves”

of Filipino immigrants, the new arrivals viewed themselves as permanent residents of the islands. Thus, while the "local"-born second and third generation Filipinos were growing in numbers, their presence continued to be overshadowed by the predominance of Philippine-born Filipinos.

By the 1970s and 1980s, two contradictory but interrelated processes were occurring in the Filipino community. On the one hand, this period witnessed greater structural integration and assimilation of Filipinos into Hawaii's political economy. Filipinos were no longer isolated in their plantation enclave as the decline of agriculture forced many of them to find jobs in other sectors of the economy. Many moved off the plantation communities and established residences in new urban centers and towns. The size of second generation "local" as well as "hapa" or part-Filipinos grew. More Filipinos than ever before were going on to secondary and college education. In short, the children of Filipino immigrants were steadily and rapidly becoming assimilated into the "local" version of American culture and nationality.

On the other hand, the immigrant population in the Filipino community—those who came in the first and second "waves"—who were already the dominant influence within the community—were further strengthened and replenished with the arrival of thousands of new immigrants due to the passage of a more liberal U.S. immigration policy in 1965. This is manifested in the emergence of a variety of new social formations and community institutions whose purpose and functions are to meet the social, cultural and economic needs of the Filipino ethnic community. The following section will discuss the role of these community institutions in the social reproduction of the ethnic Filipino community in Hawaii.

### Filipino Community Institutions in Hawaii

Historically, the emergence of ethnic solidarity among Filipinos is defensive in nature, that is, defensive reactions to what they perceive to be injustices committed against them by employers or those holding political power. Like other ethnic groups such as the Hawaiians, Filipinos do not express their ethnic solidarity simply because they share common occupations, residential or ethnic enclaves, or common institutions, but because they feel they have been long ignored and receive little from government. Though less overt and intense, Filipinos continue to experience discrimination and anti-immigrant chauvinism.

The ethnic Filipino community in Hawaii contains a variety of formal and informal networks of structured or institutionalized activities which serve to

bring individual Filipinos into complex sets of social relations. A distinct Filipino ethnic community has evolved in Hawaii primarily in response to the particular social and economic environment that Filipinos confronted in Hawaii. Among the most important factors that shaped the development of the Filipino community were policies of social control implemented by the plantations. The ability of Filipino immigrants to respond and adapt to the social conditions they found in the islands was also shaped by the "cultural baggage" they brought with them to Hawaii.

The key social networks and community institutions include family/kinship networks (also called *partidos*); various types of social organizations (mutual aid associations, sectoral interest groups, township/regional associations, cultural organizations); Filipino residential "neighborhoods" or "districts"; the community media, and the Philippine Consulate. This complex of organizations make up the various components of the ethnic Filipino community social structure. They all play particular roles in the sometimes contradictory but interrelated social process the Filipino ethnic minority is undergoing: change (assimilation and amalgamation into the larger American nationality and Hawaii's "local" version) and continuity (social reproduction and maintenance of Filipino ethnicity in response to racial and ethnic discrimination and continued immigration from the Philippines).

#### *Community Organizations*

**Social club types.** These types of organizations are the most numerous in the Filipino community. The majority of social clubs are the township or regional-based organizations (i.e. Anak ti Batac, Marcos Town Association, La Union Circle, Cagayan Valley Association, etc.). The main purpose of these groups is to bring together Filipinos in Hawaii who originally came from the same town, province or region in the Philippines. These groups hold picnics, annual banquets and social dances, including the observance of town fiestas. Most of them are composed predominantly of third "wave" immigrants and have been formed only within the past 10 to 15 years. Social club type of organizations make up the bulk of the groups under the umbrella of various island-wide Filipino community councils.

There are still a number of organizations formed as community-wide Filipino associations. These are based on the plantation communities such as Kekaha, Waialua and Waipahu and are remnants of the Filipino community organizations initiated by the ILWU in the late 1940s and 1950s.

**Mutual aid societies.** These organizations were the most prominent in the Filipino community before World War II. As discussed earlier, these *saranays* were based on particular plantation communities with the goal of assisting the immediate needs of their members. There were (and are today) territorial or statewide mutual aid groups, such as the Ilocos Norte Aid Association of Hawaii, the Luzonian Aid Association of Hawaii, and the United Visayan Hinabangay Association of Hawaii. Besides helping their own members, these groups often provide aid to victims of natural calamities in their home provinces and regions in the Philippines.

Another type of mutual aid association that cuts across linguistic and regional lines are the masonic lodges or societies such as the Legionarios del Trabajo, Caballeros de Dimasalang, Gran Oriente Filipino, and the Knights of Rizal. These groups are among the oldest organizations in Hawaii's Filipino community and were established before World War II. Today, however, they no longer play as active and influential role in the community as they did 30 to 40 years ago. Very few among the younger generation of Filipinos join these masonic lodges and they are, therefore, in danger of going out of existence as many of their members are passing away.

**Sectoral interest groups.** There are a variety of sectoral interest groups that have emerged over the last 20 years. These groups are often among the more socially and politically active and community-minded among the various organizations in the Filipino community.

*Business and professional associations.* These groups include the Filipino Jaycees, the Filipino Chamber of Commerce, the Philippine Medical Association, the Filipino Nurses Association of Hawaii, the Fil-Am Lions Clubs, the Hawaii Association of Filipino Travel Agents, the Filipino Lawyers Association, the United Group of Care Home Operators and the Filipino Contractors Association of Hawaii. They represent the emerging business and professional sectors in the Filipino community.

*Cultural and recreational groups.* While a number of Filipino cultural groups have their roots in the post-World War II period, the overwhelming majority of cultural and recreational organizations have a recent history. These groups include the GUMIL Association of Hawaii, an organization of Ilokano writers, poets and producers of theater productions. Some of the best short stories written by GUMIL members are published in *Bannawag*, the most widely read Ilokano magazine in the Philippines which has a large circulation in Hawaii. Other cultural organizations in the Filipino community include various dance,

singing and martial arts clubs. A group dedicated to discovering and developing Filipino performing artists is the Hawaii Talent Searchers Club. There is also a Philippine Language Club at the University of Hawaii organized by students and faculty.

*Youth and student groups.* Since the 1970s with the influx of large numbers of immigrant Filipino students in Hawaii public schools and colleges, there has been a rapid growth in the number of Filipino student organizations. In schools with large concentrations of Filipino students, there now exist student clubs with names such as *Susi ng Pilipino* (The Key of the Filipino), *Bayanihan* (Association) and *Kaisahan* (Unity). Filipino student groups have also been established at the University of Hawaii campuses in Manoa, Hilo and the community colleges. The membership of these Filipino student groups is predominantly third wave immigrants and a few "local" Filipinos. The most important development within this sector was the formation of *Sariling Gawa* (Our Own Work) at a statewide conference of Filipino students in 1981. *Sariling Gawa* has now become an annual conference which brings together Filipino student leaders statewide to discuss issues and problems of concern to Filipino youth.

*Filipino religious organizations.* Among the most influential groups in the Filipino community in Hawaii are the Filipino religious organizations. The largest of these is the Filipino Catholic Clubs which have a network scattered throughout the state. Filipino Catholic Clubs exist in parishes with large Filipino concentrations. While constituting perhaps the biggest base of support of the Catholic faith in Hawaii—including a large percentage of students enrolled in Catholic-run schools—Filipinos, however, exercise very little influence or power in policy-making or day-to-day operations of the church and its institutions in the state.

Another important social force within the Filipino community is the *Iglesia ni Kristo* (Church of Christ) and its well organized and predominantly conservative followers. Members of the *Iglesia ni Kristo* have been known to constitute a reliable base of support for the late Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos and his widow, Imelda.

The Philippine Independent (or Aglipayan) Church, which has a large following among Ilokanos in Northern Luzon, has a presence in Honolulu. It holds services under the auspices of the Episcopalian Church. Smaller numbers of Filipinos belong to other religious communities including the Methodist Church, the Jehovah's Witness and the Seventh Day Adventists. The pseudo-religious group, the Filipino Federation of America, which attracted a fairly sizable

following before World War II, still exists today but its membership has dwindled considerably. Unlike during its pre-WWII heyday, the FFA exercises very little influence in the Filipino community today.

*Filipino civil rights and community advocacy groups.* The arrival of professional and college educated immigrant Filipinos in Hawaii and the increase in the number of Filipinos entering colleges and universities in the early 1970s saw the emergence of new political activism in the Filipino community. College age and younger Filipino professionals who had been exposed to student political activism in the Philippines or the civil rights and anti-war movement on campuses in the U.S. began to draw together the Filipino community to deal with social and political issues affecting the community: employment discrimination and lack of affirmative action programs in the state, the need for bilingual programs in state social services and educational system, under-representation of Filipino students in higher education to advocacy of immigrant rights. The younger community activists also addressed problems faced by Filipino youths and senior citizens, affordable housing (in Chinatown and Waipahu's Ota Camp) and support for the Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Hawaii. One of the most controversial issues taken up by Filipino community activists was opposition to the martial law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

As a whole these issues were brought by Filipino activists into the agendas of community organizations and councils for deliberation. Sometimes symbolic resolutions were passed which called on state and county governments to implement more equitable hiring and employment practices. On rare occasions the community activists were successful in getting the Filipino community councils to form task forces to deal with issues such as the youth gangs and affirmative action in employment and education.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Filipino community activists were involved in the following groups: Ota Camp/Makibaka Village Association, Ating Tao Conference/Kabataang Katipunan, Operation Manong, Union of Democratic Filipinos (or Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino/KDP), People Against Chinatown Eviction (PACE), Filipino Immigrant Rights Organization (FIRO), Movement for a Free Philippines (MFP), Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (CHRP), Friends of the Filipino People (FFP), and other issue-based community task forces organized under the Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC). While the community activists constituted a small minority in the Filipino community, their painstaking organizing and educational work throughout the 1970s and 1980s was critical in the gradual

political maturation of the community. Their efforts enabled hundreds of immigrant as well as "local" Filipinos to be drawn into political activism and the electoral arena. By the late 1980s, many of the issues that were once considered "radical" political positions advocated by the community activists in the 1970s were enjoying widespread support throughout the Filipino community. Their political organizing and educational work contributed to strengthening Filipino ethnic identity and community awareness.

**Filipino community media.** Like other American ethnic groups that felt an irresistible need to express and record their experiences, to share with fellow community members critically needed information, and to educate the larger public about the issues, problems and interests that concerned the ethnic community, Filipinos developed their own ethnic media. Since their arrival in Hawaii in large numbers approximately eighty-five years ago, Filipinos have established a number of community media—ethnic newspapers, newsletters, radio and television programs—which addressed the social, cultural, economic and political interests of the Filipino community. These community media often utilized Philippine languages, mainly Ilokano, Visayan and Tagalog, in addressing their predominantly immigrant audience. English, however, is the main medium of communication used in the Filipino ethnic media.

*Filipino community newspapers.* From the very beginning, Filipinos in Hawaii have struggled to develop their own ethnic newspaper. Many of these efforts were unsuccessful, however, largely due to financial instability and because of lack of support from a community which—until recently—has historically had a generally low level of education and literacy. Since the 1970s, however, as the community has grown in size and along with it the emergence of a sizable "ethnic Filipino market", a number of Filipino newspapers have succeeded in establishing fairly stable operations. The most prominent is the *Fil-Am Courier* which claims a circulation of 50,000. Like other ethnic newspapers, the contents of the Filipino community press are varied, but certain things are characteristic. The most important news articles are often those of events in the Philippines. But they also contain news about the Filipino community in Hawaii not available elsewhere—Filipino "success" stories, activities of Filipino organizations, social events (who got married to whom), Filipino short stories and poetry, and advertisements of Filipino business establishments. Ordinary readers as well as community leaders, professional writers and journalists contribute to Filipino community newspapers without pay. The Filipino community newspapers perform an important function as they enable members of the community to exchange ideas and information that would otherwise be un-

available. Overall, the Filipino ethnic press has historically stood as a guardian against unfair treatment of its constituency.

*Filipino radio and t.v. programs.* Like the Filipino community newspapers, Filipino radio programming has been around since the 1930s. Commercial radio stations in Honolulu, such as KGU, KPOI, KUMU, KAIM, KZOO, KORL and KDEO have had regular 30 minutes to one hour-long Filipino programs over the years. Other radio stations on the neighbor islands have also had programs catering to Filipino listening audiences. The most popular radio stations that carry extensive Filipino community-oriented programs are KISA and KDEO. These programs broadcast news from the Philippines and about events in the Filipino community. They play traditional and contemporary Filipino songs. Filipinos have also made use of television as a medium to popularize Filipino cultural entertainment, music, dances, and talents. One of the most popular and the longest running program on Hawaii television was Faustino Respicio's "Filipino Fiesta" which began in 1950 and lasted until 1986. Today, a number of weekly Filipino TV programs are on Hawaii television.

**Filipino neighborhoods/districts.** After the family/kinship network, the second most important building-block for the social reproduction and development of ethnic immigrant communities is the so-called ethnic neighborhood or district. These neighborhoods historically have been called "ghettoes" or "barrios" and the American ethnic mosaic has seen various immigrant groups build such communities (i.e. Little Italy, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Little Havana, etc.). The emergence of the ethnic neighborhood sets the basis for the development of informal and more formal community institutions beyond the family or kinship network. In the case of Filipinos in Hawaii, the early Filipino neighborhoods in the pre-World War II and pre-1965 era emerged in the plantation camps.

The process of concentrating Filipinos into separate and distinct "Filipino camps" on the plantations, as discussed earlier, was not the result of the spontaneous assertion or subjective desire of Filipinos to be clustered together. It was primarily due to the deliberate policy of the plantation bosses to keep the various racial and ethnic groups segregated in separate plantation camps and housing. Isolated as a group and, for the most part, sharing the same cultural attributes such as language and regional backgrounds in the Philippines, the plantation camps enabled Filipinos easily to maintain and socially reproduce Philippine cultural patterns.

Despite the decline of old plantation towns and the expansion of urban development into former rural communities, many Filipinos continue to live in

plantation communities throughout Hawaii. This is due to the fact that Filipinos continue to comprise a large bulk of the remaining agricultural workforce in the state. Until the mid-1970s, a majority of Filipinos in Hawaii lived in residential areas considered "rural Hawaii." By the late 1970s, however, more than half of all Filipinos in the state were residing in areas categorized as "urban" (see Carino, 1981). Among the "rural" towns on Oahu with large Filipino concentration are Waipahu, Ewa/Ewa Beach, Wahiawa/Whitmore Village, Kunia, Waialua, Haleiwa and Kahuku (U.S. Census, 1982; 1980). On Kauai, Filipinos make up a large percentage of the population in the towns of Kekaha, Waimea, Hanapepe, Hanamaulu and Kapaa. On Maui, large concentrations of Filipinos are found in Lahaina, Puunene and Paia. On Molokai, Filipinos make up the majority in the towns of Maunaloa and Kualapuu, and they constitute the overwhelming majority on Lanai. On the island of Hawaii, Filipinos form a large part of the rural communities in Naalehu, Pahala-Kau and Honokaa.

In urban Oahu, Honolulu's Kalihi-Palama district is widely identified as a "Filipino district" (see Okamura, 1982). Many Filipinos also reside in the Chinatown-Liliha district of Honolulu. Other "urban" areas in the state with sizable Filipino populations are Kahului on Maui, and Hilo and Kailua-Kona on Hawaii.

For the most part, the nature and function of the Filipino ethnic neighborhood, like those of other ethnic communities, were and are not signs of clannishness or unwillingness to assimilate into the mainstream society. Rather, they were and continue to be the first step toward Americanization. Many immigrants arrive with little or no money, no job, and little or no knowledge of English in an island society culturally and economically different from the ones they had left. In the Filipino ethnic community and neighborhoods, the immediate needs of the immigrant were met. Here they found information in their own language, familiar food, and lodging they could afford among people with whom they felt at ease. Here they got help in finding work, usually from relatives and ex-townmates who spoke their language and could help them find a new job. Here they found the sympathy and friendship of others who shared their values and life experiences. These factors helped ease the cultural shock of immigration and made new beginnings possible.

**The Philippine Consul General.** The Philippine Consulate in Honolulu has historically been one of the most important institutions in the Filipino community. Officially, as an arm and representative of the Philippine government, the mission of the Consul General is to look after the interests of Philippine nationals and immigrants in Hawaii. The Consulate maintains ties not

only with the key Filipino community organizations and leaders, but with major political forces in Hawaii as well including the governor, legislators, businessmen and corporations with interests in the Philippines, military commanders of the U.S. armed forces in the Pacific based in Camp Smith, and the local media.

The office of the Philippine Consul General in Honolulu, including its predecessor, the Philippine Labor Commissioner, has historically been a center of controversy among Filipinos in Hawaii. In the pre-World War II period, for example, many Filipinos viewed the Philippine Labor Commissioner with disdain since he was regarded as an agent of the Hawaii Sugar Planters' Association. The popular notion among Filipinos in Hawaii that the Labor Commissioner represented the interests of the plantation bosses and not those of the Filipino workers was supported by the fact that the Labor Commissioner's salary and housing were paid for by the HSPA (Dorita, 1967). Among the most controversial Philippine Labor Commissioners was Cayetano Ligot who actively exhorted Filipinos to maintain cordial and harmonious relations with their plantation employers. Ligot worked tirelessly to neutralize the efforts of Pablo Manlapit to organize Filipinos into joining his Filipino Labor Union.

The Philippine Consulate in Honolulu was established after the Philippines gained independence from the United States in 1946. One of the most popular and well-liked Consul Generals was Juan Dionisio. As discussed earlier, Dionisio played a prominent role in the effort to unify the various Filipino organizations scattered throughout the islands into a state-wide network under the umbrella of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH).

Because of its role and function as an arm of the Philippine government, the Consulate often plays an influential role in the internal political life of the Filipino community in Hawaii. The Consul General and members of its staff are almost always invited as guests or speakers to every important Filipino community function and event. During the long rule of the Marcos regime, the Philippine Consulate was at the center of political controversy as it carried out its function as the representative of the dictatorship in Hawaii. From 1972 until 1986 when the Marcos regime was deposed by Corazon Aquino and the People Power Revolution, the Philippine Consulate was the target of demonstrations by the opponents of the Marcos regime. In response, the Philippine Consulate carried out its well-known policy of "rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies" within the Filipino community. Thus, for more than a decade, the Filipino community was deeply divided, often along regional lines, between Ilokano and non-Ilokano supporters of the Marcos administration and its critics. In the present period, the division falls between the loyal supporters of the

Marcoses who are living in exile in Honolulu and the supporters of the Aquino government (see Ryan, 1989).

But regardless of the political loyalties of the Philippine Consulate or the character of the government it serves, it continues to be a formidable institution within the Filipino community in Hawaii. With a large immigrant base which maintains ties with relatives in the Philippines, it is almost impossible for Filipinos to ignore the office and services of the Philippine Consulate, particularly in matters regarding passport, immigration, taxes or any business transactions.

### Conclusion

The ethnic Filipino community in Hawaii is more than the sum of its institutional parts. It has its own values and priorities, its own social and political atmosphere determined by the cultural baggage its members brought from the Philippines and the circumstances of their lives in the new environment in Hawaii. Early Filipino immigrants, who were largely of peasant origins from the rural countryside of the Ilocos and the Visayas in the Philippines and accustomed to relating mainly to their own extended families, succeeded first in forming small localized institutions. However, they soon established plantation, island-wide, and even territorial or statewide organizations.

Some Filipino immigrants never affiliated with any Filipino community organization, either by choice or because none was available. The majority, however, did affiliate and reaped many benefits. Through the formal and informal networks of the ethnic Filipino community, they found companionship to ease the pain of loneliness and separation from their loved ones thousands of miles across the ocean. They received information in their own language to help them find jobs and establish artificial households. Mutual aid and other self-help societies mitigated their poverty, and social events alleviated their spiritual hunger. Recreational activities such as cockfights, *terno* balls and taxi dance halls helped overcome boredom and kept them in touch with townmates. Nationalist and civil rights organizations enhanced their self-respect. It is not surprising, therefore, that some social scientists view the participation of immigrants in the affairs of their ethnic communities as contributing to their rapid adjustment to their new environment in America (see Portes and Rumbaut, 1990; Dinnerstein and Reimers, 1988; Sellers, 1977).

There are other benefits, less tangible but equally important. The Filipino ethnic community offered status and recognition to people who otherwise might have attained neither. Outstanding Filipino entertainers, athletes and politicians

are acclaimed by the larger Hawaii public but individuals with less spectacular abilities go unnoticed. Most immigrants, with their "broken English" and "Filipino accent" and their menial jobs, had few opportunities to feel important. But within their ethnic community, as officers of their township association, mutual aid society or community council, these immigrants and "local" Filipinos received the recognition they needed and deserved. Through the Filipino ethnic community, thousands of talented men and women whose abilities might otherwise have been wasted are given opportunities to make significant contributions not only to the Filipino community but to the larger Hawaii society as well. Many Filipinos who received their "basic training" in their ethnic community organizations went on to positions of leadership in the larger mainstream society in Hawaii.

Finally, the Filipino ethnic community institutions—neighborhoods, newspapers, social organizations, civil rights advocacy groups, etc.—helped fill the moral vacuum in the lives of immigrants. These ethnic community institutions were in the past and are today a positive force in support of stable and responsible participation in the social and economic life of the larger society. In a bewildering new environment, they gave immigrants solid ground to stand on in determining what their priorities should be and how they should behave toward one another as well as to those "outside" of the community.

But there are negative sides to the Filipino ethnic community as well. Group pride sometimes can spill over into destructive chauvinism. Factionalism and narrow regionalism within the Filipino community, even within community institutions, can be a serious problem. Quarrels within Filipino community organizations and councils can be bitter, even degenerating on rare occasions into threats as well as actual physical violence (Ryan, 1990). But violence can be spiritual as well as physical. In their zeal to preserve traditional values and conservative political positions, Filipino community leaders can be cruel to nonconformists. New and sometimes controversial ideas have been sacrificed to tradition or, worse still, to pettiness or narrow-mindedness. Some Filipino community organizations have created bureaucracies with their attendant dangers of corruption and lack of responsiveness to the people they were meant to serve. Some community leaders sometimes become less interested in leading and serving than in maintaining their own positions and enhancing their own fortunes. It is not surprising that younger Filipinos—and mavericks of any age—often find the organized Filipino ethnic community more stifling than stimulating.

Like all human institutions, Filipino ethnic community institutions reflect both the strengths and positive aspects as well as the faults and weaknesses of the

people who comprised them. Their problems were magnified by the fact that they struggled to survive in a non-Filipino society that was often indifferent or even hostile. Yet, despite these difficulties, the Filipino ethnic community organizations served their members well enough that subsequent generations have continued to maintain at least some affiliation with them.

The survival of the Filipino ethnic community and its institutions in the second and third generation is largely determined by the role these institutions have on the lives of new Filipino generations. Despite increasing participation in the life of mainstream Hawaii society, most second and third generation Filipino-Americans maintain at least some ties with their ethnic community, and many have deep commitments to particular institutions within the Filipino ethnic community. There are several reasons for this. Like the first generation immigrants, they enjoy the companionship and recognition they receive in the Filipino community. Like the immigrants, they have problems that could be understood and handled best by people with backgrounds similar to their own. Finally, like immigrants, even second and third generation "locals" experience discrimination and anti-Filipino chauvinism from the dominant mainstream society in Hawaii.

Over the past eighty-five years, the Filipino ethnic community in Hawaii has persisted and evolved. The variety of community institutions that came into being and which responded successfully to the changing needs of the second and third generation Filipinos survived. Those that did not faded into insignificance. Changes in the character and nature of many Filipino community organizations and institutions reflect the changing needs and interests of the "Americanized" or "local" generations. Along with the idea of Filipino ethnicity as a cultural heritage, Filipino ethnic identity has persisted in an organizational or institutional form, in the context and reality of Hawaii's changing political economy.

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