Maunaloa, Moloka‘i: An Ilokano Community in Hawai‘i (1974-1976)

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This paper proposes to describe *as an Ilokano community* Maunaloa, Moloka‘i in the State of Hawai‘i, USA as it existed during our nearly two years of residence in 1974-76. Clearly this effort of ours at such description is problematical; how can some place not in the Ilokos, some place indeed many thousands of miles removed, some place in Hawai‘i where people from Ilokos often describe themselves as "foreigners" be construed as "Ilokano"? Fortunately this problem has already been faced by others on whom we can lean. H.T. Lewis (1971) has described two barrios in the Philippines—one in Ilokos Norte and one in the province of Isabela in the southern part of the Cagayan Valley, concluding that the latter is still validly considered an Ilokano barrio. Our paper attempts to extend the distance and maintain the same claim. We utilize some of the criteria employed by Lewis, focusing on the maintenance of an "alliance system" (Hollnsteiner, 1963) and the extent of Ilokano language usage. Our observations on the social organization of the town support Lewis's contention that, aside from language, Ilokano culture is not fundamentally different from that of lowland Philippines.

The second purpose of the paper is to describe social and economic conditions that, over the years, modified the Ilokano character of the town (again focusing on language usage and the "alliance system").

A crisis, the withdrawal of the pineapple plantation company, in combination with the development of a nearby resort area, has, we believe, created a situation in which the alliance system can no longer operate. We predicted that Maunaloa would very shortly cease to be an Ilokano town.

Maunaloa is situated at approximately 157° 13' W longitude and 21° 7' N latitude on the island of Moloka‘i. More specifically, it may be found at an elevation of 1,103 feet on the western slope of the extinct dome volcano Mauna Loa which reaches a height of 1,300 feet and forms the dry western end of the island.

The main county road that crosses the island and connects all the major communities ends at Maunaloa, which covers 200 acres of Moloka‘i Ranch land.

Most of the houses in Maunaloa were built in the early 1930s. Most of the homes, except a few on the paved county road and two other small paved roads, are connected by narrow dirt lanes. Many homes have small front and back yard vegetable gardens. Scattered vacant lots around the town are extensively used for growing bananas, sweet potatoes, eggplant, bitter melon and other popular Ilokano plants. The use of these vacant lots was controlled by a complex "inheritance" system devised by residents. An analogous system applied to the allocation of several rows of detached garage structures.

Politically, the village of Maunaloa may be described with respect to federal and state governmental systems. Maunaloa has a federal post office and its own zip code: 96770. It is under the jurisdiction of Maui County which includes the islands of Moloka‘i, Lana‘i and Maui. The county provides Maunaloans with police protection. The state, on the other hand, through its Department of Education, operates Maunaloa's elementary school. Students must attend intermediate and high school at Moloka‘i High in Ho‘olehua, which is some 12 miles distant from Maunaloa. Some parents, however, elect to send their children to schools away from Moloka‘i. During elections, villagers who are citizens may vote for county, state and national candidates.

Dole Company Office housing records in March 1975 showed the Maunaloa population to be approximately 850 persons with the following distribution of ethnic groups: Filipino (90%), Japanese (4%), Caucasian (3%), Hawai‘ian (1%) and Others (2%).

Of the Filipino population, approximately 86% was Ilokano, 10% Visayan and 4% Tagalog. Approximately 13% of the Filipino population were pre-school children, and 20% 5-18 years of age. Approximately 13% of the Filipino adult population were between the ages of 19-31, 20% between 32-41, 15% between 42-51, 20% between 52-61 and 32% over 62 years.

The pattern of Ilokano settlement in Maunaloa was almost identical to that described by Alcantara for the Waialua plantation (Alcantara, 1975). Well over half of the Ilokano population arrived prior to 1947, practically none (1%) between 1947 and 1965 (a period characterized by restrictive United States immigration policy) and 44% after 1965, as a result of the liberalized immigration policies enacted into law that year.

Family reunification, which was a primary objective of the 1965 Immigration Act, was as successful in Maunaloa as it was in Waialua. In 1965, 73% of the permanent male Filipino residents of the town did not have wives and families (Norbeck 1959: 62). In 1975 only 7% of the men were in the same situation. As in Waialua, the staggered arrival of Ilokanos at Maunaloa perpetuated the largely first generation nature of the town. Eighty percent of the adult Ilokano population in 1975 was born in the Philippines.

The Maunaloa of 1974-76 was different from Waialua in one very important respect. According to Alcantara, the decision of many Filipino employees to remain permanently in Waialua was clinched by the opportunity to buy plantation homes (Alcantara 1975: 10). "By 1974, almost two-thirds of the homes originally purchased by the Filipinos as old, existing plantation homes...had been replaced by newer pre-fabricated dwellings" (Alcantara 1975: 12). In contrast, that same year at Maunaloa, a local newsletter featured the following report:

> No More Maunaloa?
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> The May 9th Maunaloa Community Action Council Meeting produced some rather startling news for the already shocked west end town.
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> A Moloka'i ranch employee surprised the 65 people at the meeting by announcing that they would not be able to buy their homes...because Maunaloa would probably be relocated. This was due to plans being made by the Kaluakoi Corporation. "There is big money here" said (the manager) in reference to the decisions being made concerning the future of west Moloka'i (*Pukoo Examiner*, Vol. 1, No. 5).

Maunaloa residents did not accept the statements reported above as final. They organized to try to retain the town and buy their homes and lots. Their activities and statements during this crisis made explicit what it was that they valued about a town which many observers have labeled nondescript and even shabby. Above all, the residents made clear, they valued the "alliances" they had successfully established. The remainder of this section will detail the nature of these alliances as Ilokano residents of Maunaloa described them.

Features of the "Alliance System" in Maunaloa

Lewis (1975) described the basis of Ilokano social structure as a combination of several ego-centered systems: bilateral kin groups, affines, agemates and friends, neighbors, workmates and ritual or fictive kinsmen. The total network of interdependence involving these social relationships is similar to the "alliance system" described by Hollnsteiner (1963: 63) as "a network of reciprocal relationships whose members extend to one another and expect mutual assistance and loyalty." The degree to which relatives and neighbors exchange goods and services with one another is an important measure of the strength of mutual assistance networks.

Key informants in Maunaloa, when speaking of traditional values they wanted to preserve in the town, occasionally used the term *panagkakadua*, which translates broadly as 'feeling and behaving with responsibility towards one another'. This term is not normally applied to the whole village population, in everyday conversation, but is used for smaller networks of specific town residents whose day-to-day interactions demonstrate responsibility and good will.

In Maunaloa's networks, older men, including single men whether or not related, were explicitly recognized as integrated elements in the composition of the group. These men functioned as chief cooks for celebrations, as butchers, gardeners, fishermen, caretakers (for children) and so on.

These networks typically included six or seven families whose members were related to one another by consanguinity and/or ritual kinship ties. As with other descriptions of such networks in studies of Philippine social structure, it is not possible to define the boundaries between networks because they are in fact interlocking and overlapping and sometimes shifting as the result of the repatriation of members or major ritual events such as baptisms or marriages that introduce new ritual kin. We studied one such network closely and secondarily participated in the activities of another partially overlapping network.

The following are the most important and regularly shared goods and services within these networks:

1. shared services involving children, including watching each other's children, cooking for them and accepting general responsibilities to mediate in disputes among children;
2. shared food;
3. shared cooking activities;
4. shared gardening;
5. shared entertaining functions;
6. availability during emergencies;
7. helping newly arrived kin get started (with monetary donations being a typical form of help);

8. informing others about potentially dangerous situations;

9. looking after the needs of older members.

The few non-Ilokano Filipinos in town were also integrated into these networks.

In a survey we conducted of 146 Filipino residents, all the respondents said they had at least one fictive relative ("cumares", "cumpares" or ritual kin, and their children). Eighty-nine percent could name more than ten such fictive kin.

Maunaloans commented, during some of our earliest interviews, that the networks at Maunaloa were larger and more intact than the networks of other places they were familiar with in Hawai‘i. This, they explained, was what made the town a desirable place in which to live. Their convictions that, in this respect, the community was more integrated than other places they might be able to live are supported by data from Anderson et al. (1984). Table 1 presents these data which show that more Maunaloa residents stated that they shared consumer goods and services than did residents of either Kualapu‘u, the other Filipino community on Moloka‘i, or of Puhi, a predominantly Filipino formerly plantation community on Kaua‘i, or of a group of Filipino professionals mostly residents on O‘ahu. The latter group is not directly comparable to the first three since the professionals do not live in the same community. Anderson et al. were exploring differences on a rural-urban continuum, but their data are suggestive of the extent to which Maunaloans participate in networks of reciprocal relationships.

Lewis (1975: 14) cited cooperatively organized barrio fiestas as demonstrations of social cohesiveness. The frequency of such fiestas in Maunaloa and the number of residents actively involved in the months-long preparations for them impressed us a great deal during our residence in the town. By far the most elaborate and best attended of these fiestas was the Flores de Mayo, followed, roughly in order of importance or visibility, by Rizal Day, Parents' Night and Christmas. Besides these, there were also numerous large baptisms, weddings, "bienvenidas" (welcome parties) for new relatives, and "despedidas" for departing kin. Some Maunaloans adopted first birthday baby luaus as occasions for large celebrations. The biggest of these fiestas featured organized folk dances by several groups of children and adults. There were also speeches, contests, raffles, bands, singing and dancing, and plenty of Ilokano food. Activities were efficiently managed by the residents, underlining the extent of organization and communication within the town.

Table 1

Sharing Consumer Goods and Services

Community	Number	Percent of Sample
Maunaloa	32	53.3
Kualapu‘u	17	37.0
Puhi	17	20.0
Professionals	0	0.0
Consumer goods chi square significance .0001		
Maunaloa	39	65.0
Kualapu‘u	17	37.0
Puhi	25	29.4
Professionals	5	23.8
Services chi square significance .0001		

Language in Maunaloa

While Lewis has described Ilokanos as essentially like other lowland Christian Filipinos in culturally and socially significant ways, he recognized that at least one thing can reveal a particular Filipino community as Ilokano: "what clearly distinguishes Ilokanos from non-Ilokanos is language" (1971: 81).

Ilokanos are noticeable as Ilokanos by the way they speak, at least by the speaking of Ilokano. When we moved to Maunaloa we found from the first day that Ilokano was ubiquitous. Eventually we were to learn that the speaking of Ilokano was constrained in certain ways, but from the first we were scarcely ever out of earshot of someone speaking Ilokano.

The house which the plantation company rented to us, #333, was located in the middle of the third-lowest row of houses, facing the *bulangan*—the cockfight area—across two garden areas. These gardens were tended by a married couple who lived in the house at the south side of ours and by a single man, a camp barber, who lived in the house at the north side of ours. Paths which were in almost constant use by pedestrians cut through the spaces on either side of our house. We could hear Ilokano being spoken by the people traversing these paths even when they were not speaking to us, nor yet aware of our presence.

On our first day in Maunaloa we met a man and his two children, aged four and two, both children born on Moloka'i and never away from the island. They brought food to our house as we moved in. One of the early topics of the conversation between us—conducted in Ilokano, Tagalog and some other variety—perhaps a variety of English or Pidgin English, concerned the ages of our own children (then four, seven, eight and ten). The father's interest was to know the ages of his own children relative to ours; when he had the information, he made a considerable point of instructing both sets of children in the appropriate use of the Ilokano kinship terms *ading* 'younger sibling', *manang* 'older sister', and *manong* 'older brother'. This neighbor's two children used Ilokano extensively in their efforts to communicate with us.

The garden in front of our house had large fruit trees at its corners. These were near enough to our house that often we could overhear conversations between those elderly Ilokano speakers who owned the trees and the many children who stopped to ask them permission to take some fruit. Through such events, we were soon enough able to develop a sizeable list of children who did use Ilokano in these conversations. Also, our growing closeness to certain families permitted us to observe the use of Ilokano in homes. We noted that many children were spoken to in Ilokano, and they normally responded to the parents' satisfaction to what were frequently quite complex directives given wholly in Ilokano. It was possible, and not at all unusual, to note Ilokano being spoken to children outside of the home: at the post office and the store, at gatherings in the community clubhouse and at picnics at the beach. Often on such picnics, we would notice one or two women off in a quiet corner reading a copy of *Bannawag* magazine, an Ilokano weekly published in the Philippines. Such copies were normally passed around among a set of readers, and in a number of homes we frequented, piles of back issues would be seen in the salas or more often stacked beside a sewing machine. Women were the main readers; there were only a few men we ever saw reading *Bannawag*. We did find a copy of Hermon P. William's English-Ilocano, Ilocano-English dictionary which one man had brought from the Philippines and carefully preserved, rebinding it himself with sewn-on cardboard covers.

What were the numbers of Ilokano speakers in Maunaloa? What percentage of the population spoke Ilokano? According to Norbeck in 1959, "[n]ative speakers of Ilokano, principally from the provinces of Ilokos Norte and Ilokos Sur, comprise nearly 70 percent of the total Philippine-born population of approximately 350 people" (Norbeck 1959: 57). A decade later Peterson (1970: 117) told us that 74 percent of Maunaloans spoke, read and wrote a language other than English. Peterson did not say what language(s) were involved, but he was comparing Maunaloa's 74 percent to the 54 percent of Kualapu'u, the other predominantly Filipino plantation town on Moloka'i. His figures were taken from the 1969 State of Hawai'i State Planning System study. It is likely that Ilokano is most of what produced those statistics.

Table 2

Language Use as Reported by Residents

Named as language most used everyday in Maunaloa	Percent of Respondents born in Philippines	Percent of Respondents born in Hawai'i
Ilokano	42	2
(Combination)	13	9
English	8	10
No scorable answer	16	0
	79	21

Our own language survey in Maunaloa, conducted with the assistance of three Maunaloans, asked residents to say what was the language most used in everyday talk in Maunaloa. Forty-two percent named Ilokano. An additional 22 percent named Ilokano as one of a set of ways of speaking used, declining to exclude other varieties from their choice. Only 18 percent named English as the most used language. Even then, what "English" means in this context is problematic.

This language information on use and attitudes was not simple data to gather. The word "language," gave considerable difficulty because many use the word "dialect" for Ilokano, not "language," and are not sure what to call the varieties of English they use. Labels recorded include "mix-up" and "mix-mix," "halo-halo," "kapakahi" from Hawai'ian, meaning "askew, inside-out, backwards" (often pronounced "kapakay" by Maunaloans), "pidgin English," "bro-