

Co-Editors' Note

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Pacific Asia Inquiry Volume 15 includes contributions of breadth and depth, spanning disciplines and exploring topics from the past and present while pointing ways forward. Collectively, the papers of PAI 15 map better futures for our island community and the region. While always needed, in the current moment of uncertainty and fear, the manuscripts in this volume offer are especially welcome.

Two articles examine urgent public health issues facing the Marianas. In “Development of Psycho-Oncology Services for the Guam Community,” authors Iain K. B. Twaddle, Marie C. Benito, Angelica Rose B. Rico, Jeanine M. Quinto, Maree J. Saloma, Camille M. Maestrecampo, and Camarin G. Meno chronicle the first six months of an innovative, on-island, and much needed psycho-oncology and wellness program. Until recently, cancer patients in Guam did not have the option of on-island psycho-oncology services. This absence left patients and their families limited resources when making critical decisions about treatment and managing the stress a cancer diagnosis inevitably produces. The Circle of Car Cancer Support and Psycho-Oncology Services has done much to change this situation. In less than a year, the program has grown rapidly, and at the time the article was submitted, caregivers were assisting 150 patients. The program is providing patients and their families a wide range of services and support, along with a sustaining community.

Our second manuscript dealing with public health, “Dating Violence, Sexual Violence and Suicidality Among Adolescents in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,” by Jacklyn Garote, Yoshito Kawabata, and Debra T. Cabrera represents a much-needed analysis of a heretofore underused public resource. The authors have taken the annual form that teenage public-school students complete each year and utilized the data to examine the relationship between suicidality and dating

and sexual violence. The paper brings the public closer to appreciating the nature of one of the most severe dangers that young people in the CNMI face. The association between sexual violence and dating violence and suicidality has been understudied in the CNMI as has how gender can condition violence and suicide. This paper does much to close that gap in understanding.

Four historical papers examine different beginnings in Guam. First, Carlos Madrid's, "The Failed Capture of Guam in 1898, Through the Personal Narrative of Pedro Duarte" offers a snapshot of the chaotic birth of the United States rule in Guam following the arrival of Captain Glass in 1898 at the outbreak of the Spanish American War. Madrid, the Director of the Micronesian Area Research Center, has brought to light a fascinating document: the correspondence of the Secretary to the last Spanish Governor of the Marianas to his brother. Following a close analysis and contextualization of the letter, Madrid presents the full document in English translation. He suggests how the letter alters understanding of the first days of the U.S. Navy's seizure of Guam, while revealing how a Spanish liberal regarded the island's new would-be rulers. Among the many fascinating details present is the appearance of a turn-of-the-century Guam diaspora in California — as Duarte joins other family members in the Bay Area.

Next, Michael Clement, Sr. offers a provocative analysis of the "Betel Nut Song" and suggests that pre-colonial inhabitants of Guam may have had sustained connections to the Toraja people of Central Sulawesi, in contemporary Indonesia. Using music, history, DNA evidence, linguistics, and informed speculation, Clement makes a compelling case that the peoples of pre-contact Marianas and the Hindu culture of Southeast Asia may have had periods of sustained exchange, ones potentially that laid the foundation for the *Kostumbren* CHamoru of the Spanish colonial period. The paper opens many intriguing avenues for future researchers.

Andrew Gumataotao contributes a fascinating exploration of the historical and political meaning of music and sound in his comparison the musical traditions of the Mariana Islands and the Basque country of Europe. Gumataotao is intrigued by the presence and influence of Basque missionaries to the Mariana Islands. While seemingly agents of the Spanish Empire, Gumataotao contends that the Spanish state's "cultural ethnic, cultural and political repression" of the Basque culture "can create certain affinities" to the peoples of the Marianas." Gumataotao does not offer a simple story of cross-cultural solidarity but instead highlights the ways cultures intersect and transform in surprising and even contradictory ways. He accomplishes this through a sympathetic and original analysis of Basque Church songs that became the basis for CHamoru church hymns.

The fourth entry in the series the history articles is a legal analysis of how the United States federal government has used the Reconstruction Amendments of the immediate post-Civil War era to stop self-determination in Guam. Jessica Adams develops a provocative argument that goes against American historiographical conventions. American historians have long identified the Reconstruction amendments as liberating – a beginning of real democracy in the years following the Civil War. Afterall, the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments ended slavery, established civil rights for Black Americans, and voting rights for Black men. Through a careful reading of the intent of the Constitution, the history of the United States and sovereign Indian nations, and the founders understanding of sovereignty and citizenship, Adams contends that when the Reconstruction Amendments are applied outside of their continental context, they, along with the Insular Cases, transform into coercive legal tools against CHamorus and other nations under U.S. rule. In examining a key tool of American rule, Adams points to how a self-determined future might take shape.

PAI 15 includes three articles that, from different perspectives, explore contemporary geopolitics, self-determination, and post-colonialism Guam. Aaron Padgett's "Blue Hegemonies: Confluences of Geocultural Power in the Pacific" identifies a continental discourse of the Pacific that institutions serving Pacific states have internalized. Primarily expressions of continental power, in this case the United States, these discourses envision the Pacific Ocean as empty space to be made useful for resource extraction and the grease the wheels of global commerce. Provocatively, Padgett faults models like the Pacific Islands Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent as insufficient to meet the needs of the peoples of Micronesia. Instead, he points to competing "blue discourses" that leaders of Micronesia have for decades been developing that emphasize connections and diversity through the Pacific as metaphors on which to build sustainable geopolitics.

Hannah Rebadulla examines how the relationship between Filipinos and CHamorus in Guam interact to simultaneously support and resist the United States' military buildup in Guam. Rebadulla identifies a colonial mentality, long internalized by Filipinos in Guam, that tends to lead Filipinos in Guam to support for the US military as a way of repaying a "debt" to the colonizer. Rebadulla suggests that education may change what she sees as an unstable Filipino support to the military buildup. She argues that Filipinos who have greater exposure to the history of Guam, exhibit greater support for self-determination along with a more balanced understanding of the risks of the military buildup increase. Interestingly, she speculates that having more Filipino history, to counteract the US-centric curriculum in Guam Public Schools, would lead to greater understanding between Filipinos and CHamorus in Guam and future solidarity between the two groups on the shared colonial history.

Marshaley Baquiano and her co-authors look at how shared understandings of the military buildup in Guam are shaped by a traumatic colonial legacy. Using Social Representations Theory, the authors analyze local media sources and conclude that

residents of Guam exhibit a “polemic representation” of the military buildup that positions the military as a “savior” or “colonizing force.” Such polemic representations make difficult needed discussions regarding self-determination. Further many residents possess deep connections to the military and contain the polemic representations inside themselves.

Two articles from a group of scholars at the University of Guam explore the challenges social science researchers face in recruiting research participants from the region. Britney Joy B. Sisson is the lead author of “A Reflection of Guam Undergraduate Students in Recruiting Research Participants,” which details the results of a “multi-modal” approach to recruiting University of Guam and Guam Community College students to participate in mental health study during the COVID-19 pandemic. Niza C. Mian is the lead writer in the second article by the group, “Methods and Strategies Used to Recruit Betel Nut Chewers for Research in Micronesia.” This article examines why traditional methods of recruitment, as phone calls, presentations, and broadcast and print media, were less effective in finding subjects than incentivized referrals. The insights of these studies will be helpful for diverse scholars from across disciplines seeking to recruit participants in Guam and the region.

Closing PAI 15 is “Understanding and Sensemaking of Institutional Assessment: A Collaborative Autoethnography of Perceptions and Experiences with Assessment Work,” written by a group of scholars from UOG’s School Education. Led by Katherine Gutierrez, the authors use autoethnography to investigate how they approach assessment of students at the University of Guam. This searching piece has grown in urgency since January 20, 2025. It is critical that educators in Guam and region be able to be able to show that they are successfully teaching students and assessing student learning. Even more so, it should remain the mission of regional institutions to understand and serve the diverse student communities.