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Multidisciplinary Perspectives



Grating the Coconuts by Judy Flores

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Pacific Asia Inquiry

Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Volume 15, 2024/2025

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Co-Editors' Note

Manuel Lujan Cruz and Christopher Rasmussen

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 to 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.

Marshalee 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.

Unibetsedåt Guåhan / University of Guam

CALL FOR PAPERS

Pacific Asia Inquiry: Multidisciplinary Perspectives Volume 16, 2026

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: October 1, 2025

The Editorial Board of Pacific Asia Inquiry invites the submission of articles, critical essays, and case studies, as well as book, film, and other reviews for possible publication in Volume 14. Submissions from across the liberal arts and social sciences are welcome. Pacific Asia Inquiry is a peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal published online by the University of Guam, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. It features scholarly research relating to the Mariana Islands, Micronesia, and the wider Pacific; as well as Asia-oriented studies that make connections with Pacific Islands.

Submission Procedures

Submissions may employ any theoretical or methodological approach so long as they are written in a readable style accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike. When you submit a manuscript, please include the following as separate files in one email message:

1. A cover page, including authors' names, titles, affiliations, and addresses, including street and e-mail addresses;
2. The main text, with the title of the article, an abstract of the paper (the abstract should be no more than 150 words), including photos, tables, figures, media, and references.

Our blind peer review process requires that authors' names and addresses appear only on the cover page. No identifying information may appear in the abstract or text itself. Relevant publications, including those written by the author(s), may appear in the reference section, but nothing should be said to connect the reference with the author(s) of the submitted manuscript.

General Submission Guidelines

Submissions should not exceed 10,000 words, including tables and references. Please follow the conventions of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Ed., 2020) or the MLA Handbook (8th Ed., 2016). Other discipline-appropriate documentation styles are acceptable but should be discussed with the Editor(s). Indent the first word of a paragraph by one "tab" or half an inch (five spaces) and number all pages consecutively, putting numbers in the lower right-hand corner. Figures, tables, and photos should be inserted into the manuscript at the time of initial submittal, and they need to be appropriately titled, sourced, and numbered consecutively. Endnotes and/or footnotes may be used, and references should appear at the end of the paper. Do not insert automatic formatting anywhere in the manuscript. Additional guidelines apply. Please visit <http://www.uog.edu/pai> for full guidelines and for access to previous volumes of Pacific Asia Inquiry, which may be used as a general reference. Please be advised that this is a venue for scholarly articles. Fiction and poetry submissions will not be entertained. Fiction, poetry, art drawings and art photographs may be submitted to the *Storyboard* journal.

Please forward inquiries and submissions electronically to:

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Development of Psycho-Oncology Services for Cancer Patients, Survivors, and their Family Members in Guam

Iain K. B. Twaddle, Marie C. Benito, Angelica Rose B. Rico, Jeanine M. Quinto,
Maree J. Saloma, Camille M. Maestrecampo, and Camarin G. Meno

Payless Markets Community Foundation

Circle of Care Cancer Support and Psycho-Oncology Services¹

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be an extremely challenging event in one's life. While coping with the initial shock of being diagnosed with cancer, patients must quickly learn about their disease and how to navigate the available treatment options. In Guam, the stress of being diagnosed with cancer is compounded by the limited range of oncology services available on the island and the need to consider receiving medical treatment off-island, especially for rare, complex, or advanced cancers. Thus, many of our island's cancer patients have to negotiate the complexities of receiving diagnostic and treatment services both in Guam and elsewhere (e.g., the Philippines, the US mainland, Hawai'i). In the US mainland and throughout the international community, psycho-oncology services—including specialized counseling, therapy, and support groups—play an important role in helping patients make treatment decisions, manage

¹ **Author Note**

The program described in this article is supported by a grant from the Guam Cancer Trust Fund. The authors would like to thank the Guam Cancer Trust Fund, Payless Markets Community Foundation, and the Circle of Care participants for their assistance with developing the program. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Iain K. B. Twaddle (Email: psychology4785@triton.uog.edu)

symptoms and treatment side effects, and learn to cope with the emotional stress of living with cancer. Yet, these services were not available in Guam until recently. This article outlines the development of a psycho-oncology services program to meet the mental health needs of cancer patients, survivors, and their family members in Guam.

What Is Psycho-Oncology and Why Is It a Critical Component of Cancer Care?

Psycho-oncology is a branch of oncology that focuses on the psychological, emotional, and social needs of cancer patients and their caregivers. In the 1950s, oncologists began considering the psychological needs of patients diagnosed with advanced cancer. In the 1970s, psychiatrist Jimmie Holland founded the field of psycho-oncology after creating the first psychiatric service for cancer patients at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Since then, the discipline of psycho-oncology has grown substantially and is now an established component of many major medical centers worldwide (Breitbart et al., 2021).

Research has shown that psychological distress is highly prevalent among cancer patients, including depression, anxiety, anger, poor sleep, poor appetite, poor concentration, fear and worry about the future, concerns with treatment side effects, concerns about social roles, and preoccupation with thoughts of illness and death (National Comprehensive Cancer Network, 2024; Ostovar et al., 2022). These distress symptoms are associated with lower quality of life, impairment in social relationships, lower patient-reported quality of care, reduced treatment compliance, and lower survival rates (Abdelhadi, 2023; Grassi, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Due to these concerns, the International Psycho-Oncology Society has called for the recognition of psychosocial cancer care as a critical component of oncology services (Grassi, 2020).

Psycho-oncology helps patients to cope with the psychological distress they may experience at various stages of their cancer journey, including the initial shock of

receiving a cancer diagnosis, emotional challenges faced during treatment, concerns about treatment side effects, and fear of recurrence. Furthermore, psycho-oncology can help cancer patients manage the socio-economic aspects of cancer such as accessing cancer treatment services, navigating insurance eligibility and coverage, and coping with financial and housing instability. As family members often experience distress themselves when their loved one is diagnosed with cancer, psycho-oncology also addresses the needs of family members and caregivers. Psycho-oncology interventions for cancer patients and their families include: screening and assessment for distress, anxiety, depression, and cognitive problems; behavioral management of physical symptoms such as pain, nausea, fatigue, disrupted sleep, and poor appetite; treatment of comorbid psychiatric disorders such as adjustment disorders, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and substance use disorders; individual psychological counseling and psychotherapy (e.g., supportive therapies, cognitive and behavioral therapies, mindfulness-based therapies); play therapy and creative arts therapies for children and adolescents; family and couples therapies; support groups and group psychotherapy; integrative oncology (e.g., mind-body practices, natural products, lifestyle modifications); and meaning-centered interventions for advanced cancer and end-of-life care (Breitbart et al., 2021; Witt et al., 2017).

The Need for Psycho-Oncology Services in Guam

The incidence of cancer in Guam is significant, with an average of 381 new diagnoses and 161 cancer-related deaths annually (UOG Guam Cancer Registry, 2020). Yet, Guam has a shortage of cancer care specialists and treatment services due to its remote location and relatively small population. While access to oncology treatment services (e.g., surgery, chemotherapy, radiation) has improved in recent years, the critical need for programs addressing the psychological distress cancer patients and their families experience is still largely unmet. As previously mentioned, this gap in psychosocial care can adversely affect treatment compliance and overall health

outcomes. It is therefore important to establish psycho-oncology services in Guam to help cancer patients navigate treatment decisions, manage symptoms and treatment side effects, develop coping strategies for psychological distress, and reduce caregiver burnout. Investing in these services is essential not only for improving patient well-being but also for enhancing the overall efficacy of cancer treatment on the island.

Program Development

In 2024, to meet the need for specialized psychological support services for cancer patients, survivors, and their family members in Guam, the authors established a comprehensive psycho-oncology program, including both in-person and telehealth services. The program is provided by Payless Markets Community Foundation through a grant from the Guam Cancer Trust Fund and is named *Circle of Care Cancer Support and Psycho-Oncology Services*. Both the name of the program and its vision were adopted from the second author's *Circle of Care Mind, Body, Spirit Wellness Program*, which provided support services to cancer patients, their families, and caregivers in Guam from 2016 to 2019.

The current program has seven components: (1) weekly online cancer support groups; (2) bimonthly in-person cancer support groups; (3) specialized support groups for specific types of cancer; (4) individual and family psycho-oncology counseling; (5) integrative oncology health and wellness services; (6) psycho-oncology services for children and adolescents; and (7) peer support services. These services are facilitated by a licensed clinical psychologist, a community educator, a clinical psychology associate, and four assistant facilitators. All services are provided free of charge. Participants are referred to the program from cancer treatment centers and other medical clinics across the island. Each service is explained below.

Weekly Online Cancer Support Groups

Weekly online cancer support groups are held every Tuesday evening for two hours on Zoom. The online format ensures easy access for a wide range of cancer patients, survivors, and their family members living in Guam. Cancer care specialists from the community are invited to give presentations on cancer support services available in Guam during the first hour of each online group session, including oncologists, other healthcare professionals involved in cancer care, social service professionals who provide assistance to cancer patients, and cancer survivors. In the second hour, the facilitators integrate peer support with behavioral health interventions and psychoeducation to provide psycho-oncology care in a support group format addressing: (a) challenges associated with adjusting to the illness; (b) managing cancer symptoms such as pain and fatigue; (c) making diagnostic and treatment decisions; (d) learning how to access available services; (e) coping with the stress of medical treatment; (f) managing treatment side effects; and (g) learning to cope with the emotional stress of living with cancer.

Bimonthly In-Person Cancer Support Groups

In-person cancer support groups are held in a community-based setting in Hagåtña for three and a half hours on the first and third Saturday of each month. The in-person format provides an opportunity for participants to meet face-to-face with the group facilitators and the other participants, thus strengthening key aspects of communication and social connection that are central to effective support groups. Like the online groups, the in-person groups provide psycho-oncology care through a combination of peer support, behavioral health interventions, and psychoeducation addressing the various challenges faced by cancer patients (as outlined in the previous section). The first 90 minutes of each in-person session focus on group sharing, followed by an hour of restorative yoga, and a final hour featuring art therapy or oncology nutrition education. A light lunch and snacks utilizing foods known to reduce the risk of cancer are served to create a healthy, supportive, and patient-centered environment.

Specialized Support Groups for Specific Types of Cancer

In addition to the online and in-person cancer support groups, the Circle of Care program plans to provide specialized support groups focusing on specific types of cancer (e.g., breast, lung, prostate, colorectal) and stages of cancer (e.g., early, advanced) in 2025. These dedicated support groups will bring together cancer patients with similar diagnoses to provide support services that are tailored to their unique needs.

Individual and Family Psycho-Oncology Counseling

The Circle of Care program also provides individual and family psycho-oncology counseling for cancer patients and their family members who need personalized support as they go through their cancer journey. Initial sessions focus on learning about the patient's type and stage of cancer, treatment options, psychological adjustment, coping strengths, and support needs, as well as the experiences of any family members attending the session. Subsequent sessions concentrate on providing specialized care tailored to meet each participant's unique needs based on the initial assessment. Several therapeutic approaches are used including cognitive-behavioral, humanistic-existential, narrative, family systems, and psychoeducation. Sessions are conducted both in-person and through telehealth.

Integrative Oncology Health and Wellness Services

Circle of Care offers a holistic approach to healing and stress reduction through integrative oncology health and wellness services conducted by cancer care specialists from the community. The program currently provides restorative yoga, art therapy, and oncology nutrition education as part of the Saturday in-person support group sessions. Tai chi and qi gong sessions are also offered on weekday mornings. These services are designed to bring persons with cancer together, foster community, educate, and offer effective coping tools to help navigate the disease process. Future session topics may

include mindfulness meditation, music therapy, massage therapy, therapeutic journaling, stress management, and sleep hygiene.

Psycho-Oncology Services for Children and Adolescents

Circle of Care currently offers support services to help children and adolescents cope with a family member's struggle with cancer. In 2025, the program also plans to add psycho-oncology services addressing the needs of children and adolescents diagnosed with pediatric cancer. These services will include pediatric cancer support groups, child and adolescent psycho-oncology counseling, family psycho-oncology counseling, and integrative oncology health and wellness services focused on the needs of children and adolescents with cancer and their families.

Peer Support Services

Circle of Care's peer support services connect cancer patients with a volunteer who has completed treatment for a similar type of cancer. Peer support volunteers provide confidential assistance by sharing their own experiences with cancer treatment, offering information and guidance, and being available for emotional support by phone, online, or in person. To ensure the effectiveness of these services, a peer support training program is being developed focused on psychoeducation, active listening, and communication skills.

Conclusion

In its first six months, Circle of Care Cancer Support and Psycho-Oncology Services has quickly grown into a thriving support community with approximately 150 cancer patients, survivors, and their family members. The program has brought together participants struggling with a wide range of cancers, providing a sense of community and support as they go through their cancer journey. While emphasis is placed on helping current cancer patients to cope with the challenges associated with ongoing cancer treatment, the program also assists cancer survivors seeking support as they

Development of Psycho-Oncology Services

struggle with long-term side effects and strive to prevent recurrence. In addition, family members regularly participate in the program, accompanying their loved ones to support group sessions and seeking support themselves as they learn to cope with the challenges that come with caring for a loved one with cancer. Circle of Care's high participation rate demonstrates the value and effectiveness of the program's services.

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Dating Violence, Sexual Violence, and Suicidality Among Adolescents in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationship between physical dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality (ideation, plan, and attempt) among adolescents in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Data, which were retrieved from the 2019 CNMI Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System (YRBSS), included a self-report survey of forms of violence and suicidality. A two-stage cluster sampling was conducted for territories to produce a representative sample of CNMI students in grades 9-12. Participants were 2,308 racially diverse high school students aged 12–18. The results showed significant gender differences for all study variables, and the relationship between sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality was significant for girls only. The findings suggest that girls are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence and suicidality in the CNMI. Limitations, suggestions for future research, and theoretical and clinical implications are discussed.

Keywords: physical violence, sexual violence, suicidality, gender, the Pacific Islander youth

Suicide is death caused by self-injurious behavior that includes the intent to die (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Suicidality is also used as an umbrella term to cover related concepts, including suicide ideation (the thought of wanting to kill oneself, but with no plans), suicide plans (the thought/act of preparing to kill oneself), suicide attempts (fatal or non-fatal self-directed injurious behavior with the intent to die from the behavior), and completed suicide (the stage where one has died from their suicide attempt) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Suicide

is one of the main causes that lead to death among adolescents (ages ranging from 10 to 19) in the United States (Ruch & Bridge, 2022). According to Ruch et al. (2022), suicide rates increase with age, and boys are more likely to commit suicide than girls.

Specifically, boys died by suicide three times more often than girls, based on the statistics provided by YRBS between 2000 and 2019. The recent suicide rate of youth (15–19 years old) in the United States is 17.72 (27.84 boys and 7.2 girls) per 100,000 (World Health Organization, 2022). Research further shows that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander adolescents are more likely to develop severe levels of risk factors for suicide as compared to other ethnic groups (Wong et al., 2012), which may lead to higher suicide rates for Pacific Islander youth. The statistics about the youth suicide rates for the Pacific, such as Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), are not available from WHO. However, the statistics about the neighboring Pacific islands—the Federated States of Micronesia—show relatively higher rates of suicide for the youth in the Pacific (30.03 per total, 38.85 for boys, and 20.05 for girls per 100,000; WHO). Analyzing trends in suicide attempts, Arisoyin et al. (2023) found higher rates in some territories and freely associated states compared to the continental United States. Palau reported a higher attempted suicide rate of 25.2%, followed by the Northern Mariana Islands (17.6% in 2021) and Puerto Rico, Guam (9.9% in 2021).

Socio-Historical Context

The history of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) reflects a sequence of colonial transitions, beginning with the settlement by Southeast Asians over 3,500 years ago, resulting in a matrilineal Chamorro society. Following the arrival of the Spanish in 1521, the islands were subjected to forced religious conversion and colonization, with most Chamorros relocated to Guam by 1710. Subsequent German control (1899–1914) brought limited interaction with the indigenous population. During the Japanese period (1914–1944), significant demographic changes occurred,

including the introduction of Japanese labor. After World War II, the islands became part of the U.S.-administered Trust Territory, and by 1986, U.S. citizenship was granted. (Farrel,1991).

In 2020, the CNMI's total population decreased from 53,883 in 2010 to 47,329 as of April 1, 2020, which was 12.2% drop (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Males comprised 53% of the population, while females accounted for 47% of the population. Those 18 years and older comprised 71% of the population. Approximately 25% of the population were Chamorro, 5% Carolinian (*Refaluwasch*), and 33% Filipinos. The population is diverse, with mostly other Asian (i.e., Chinese, Korean, Bangladeshi) and Pacific (i.e., Chuukese, Palauan) ethnic groups represented in the population. In this ethnically diverse population, about 86% obtained a high school education or higher, and 21% earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Accessible data on suicide rates in the CNMI is scarce. However, what has been published suggests a pattern of high prevalence of suicide among youth. The suicide rate was 20 per 100,000 in 1992, which increased to 35 per 100,000 in 2001 (Saipan Tribune, 2001). The populations with the highest suicide rates were primarily males of Chamorro descent and within the 15-24 age group (Saipan Tribune, 2001). The prevalence of youth suicidality continues today, with a local suicide prevention grant program reporting 65 youth suicide attempts between 2019-2020 (Garrett Lee Smith State & Tribal Suicide Prevention Annual Report, 2021). Changes in the demographics of attempted suicides are noted. However, since the program recorded females and Filipinos as the highest category of consumers for suicide prevention, these shifts in demographics warrant closer attention. Despite these occurrences, there remains a gap in research regarding suicide among all populations in the CNMI.

Existing sociocultural factors may contribute to the persistence of physical dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality in the CNMI. For example, a culture of silence, or the passive acceptability of risky behaviors due to their being taboo, has also been

discussed in local CNMI news as a contributor to continued suicide rates (Maurin, 2019) and sexual/interpersonal violence (Encinares, 2016). This choice to be silent on abuse is also prevalent, depending on the situation. For example, threats or other tactics perpetrated by perpetrators known to the victim to keep victims from reporting (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002) can also increase negative emotions, including suicide (Edwards et al., 2012). This culture of silence may perpetuate an "acceptable climate for violence," an environment characterized by silence and inhibition by perpetrators of abuse, victim-blaming attitudes, and tolerance of abuse. This environment can lead girls to develop fear and not practice help-seeking behaviors (World Health Organization, 2002). Even further, the stigma and shame associated with receiving mental health services can lead individuals to seek other forms of care. This finding was presented by Buettner and colleagues (2013), who found that CNMI citizens who wanted to avoid stigma sought treatment from traditional healers, who aided individuals with their mental health problems. Kwan and colleagues (2020) included this stigma in the discourse of and treatment for mental health support in their identification of possible barriers to mental health services unique to Asian and Pacific Islanders. Aguon and Kawabata (2023) also found that high public stigma can lower the intent to seek mental health treatment for Chamorros through self-stigma and attitudes about mental health treatment. The alarming aspect of these problems further stresses the need for investigation. The present study examined the association between dating and sexual violence and suicidality among CNMI youths and whether this association differed for boys and girls. Given these sociocultural backgrounds, it is developmentally crucial to examine whether physical dating violence and sexual violence are linked to suicidality and whether gender matters in this link among CNMI adolescents.

Dating Violence, Sexual Violence, and Suicidality

A recent systematic review by Wyatt et al. (2015) summarizes risk factors for suicide in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth, using an ecological theory as a

benchmark (i.e., suicide in context). The authors identified risk factors, including demographic characteristics – age, gender, ethnic group, and sexual orientation – as well as social and relational factors – violence, substance use, family discord, and negative peer relationships or bullying. Among these risk factors, the present study focused on dating and sexual violence as a predictor for suicide among Pacific Islander youth.

Physical dating violence involves any form of violence perpetrated by an individual within a romantic relationship and occurs among millions of young people ("Preventing Intimate Partner Violence," 2021). Dating violence has negative physical, social, and emotional consequences, such as depression and substance abuse, which may be predictably associated with suicidality (Barker et al., 2018). A large body of research indicates a strong link between dating violence and suicide risk among adolescents. For example, Belshaw et al. (2012) examined relationship violence and suicidal behaviors utilizing the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) ($n = 11,781$) among racially/ethnically diverse youth in the United States. Results showed that individuals who reported relationship violence had a higher risk of planning and attempting suicide, compared to individuals who did not report relationship violence. With a similar intent, Baiden et al. (2019) investigated physical teen dating violence (TDV), suicide ideation, suicide plan, and suicide attempt through an analysis of the 2015 National YRBS ($n = 9,693$) in the United States. Racially/ethnically diverse adolescents who experienced physical TDV were approximately two times more likely to experience suicidal ideation and make a suicide plan, and almost three times more likely to have attempted suicide, compared to their counterparts who did not experience physical TDV. Furthermore, in a sample of 16,410 students, experiences of more than one type of relationship violence (dating and fighting) were associated with higher suicidality rates (50.6%) compared to students who only experienced one type of dating violence (26%) in the United States (Joyal, 2013).

Sexual violence refers to any non-consensual sexual activity, including situations when victims are unable to refuse (Breiding et al., 2015). It also includes behaviors such as penetration (forced, non-physically pressured, and unwanted, or alcohol/drug facilitated, by another person towards the perpetrator), intentional sexual touching, or non-contact acts of sexual nature (Breiding et al., 2015). Extant studies have examined the role of sexual violence in exacerbating co-occurring mental health problems and suicide risk. For example, Mondin et al. (2016) focused on the association between sexual violence, manic and depressive episodes, and suicidality among diverse youth. The results showed that young people with a history of sexual violence were more likely to experience changes in mood and suicide risk, compared to individuals with no history of sexual violence. Choi et al. (2017) also investigated the role of adverse childhood experiences on suicide attempts and found that for both genders, the experience of sexual abuse, in addition to having parents/ other family members with mental illness, was associated with increased odds of suicide attempt; additionally, histories of sexual abuse and more adverse childhood experiences were associated with repeated suicide attempts among youth. Furthermore, Else et al. (2009) showed that interpersonal violence, including dating and sexual violence, predicted higher rates of suicide among youth, particularly the victims of interpersonal violence, in Hawaii, suggesting the negative influence of violence on suicide ideation, suicide plan, and suicide attempt among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth.

Despite the limited number of studies on risk factors for suicide in the CNMI, several factors that have consistently been associated with suicide in other regions of the world are occurring in the CNMI. Buettner et al. (2013) referred to results from the 2008 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance of Pacific Island United States Territories, which found that interpersonal violence (having carried a weapon to school, having been injured in a physical fight, having experienced dating and sexual violence) and substance use (of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drugs) have been prevalent among high

school students. The prevalence of these risk factors was also found in the study by Sakamoto et al. (2020), which showed that being involved in a physical fight, forced sexual intercourse, and substance use were associated with depressed mood and suicidality.

Gender Differences in the Association Between Dating and Sexual Violence and Suicidality

Several studies have looked at gender differences in the association with dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality among racially/ ethnically diverse youth in the United States. In one study, Tomasula et al. (2012) examined the association between sexual assault and suicidal ideation by utilizing the 2007 YRBS ($n = 14,103$). While male students with a history of sexual assault were found to be ten times more likely to have attempted suicide than male students without a history of assault, they were also found to be five times more likely to have medically serious suicide attempts than both male and female suicide attempters (Tomasula et al., 2012). In addition, Baiden et al. (2020), in an analysis of the 2017 YRBS ($n = 10,475$), showed that females who experienced sexual violence were twice more likely to report suicidal ideation compared to females who experienced no sexual violence; males who experienced sexual violence, on the other hand, had “more than threefold higher odds” of attempting suicide.

Smith et al. (2020) also explored teen dating violence and suicide risk, utilizing responses from the 2015 and 2017 YRBS ($n = 1,962$). Despite their finding that teen dating violence did not mediate biological sex and suicidality, biological sex was a predictor of suicide, as males reported lower suicide risks compared to females. Another study focused on the longitudinal impact of dating violence on behavioral and psychological health in males and females (Ackard et al., 2007). Among 1,516 youth, the association between adolescent dating violence, cigarette smoking, and suicide attempts was found for both genders. Additionally, males presented high associations with adolescent dating violence and suicide ideation, but females were marginally associated

with suicide attempts, having presented high associations in the relationship between adolescent dating violence and suicide attempts. Lastly, Vagi et al. (2015) analyzed the 2013 National YRBS ($n = 9,900$) and found that in addition to risk-behaviors being prevalent among all students who experienced teen dating violence (compared to their normative counterparts), females had a higher prevalence of physical teen dating violence, sexual teen dating violence, both physical and sexual teen dating violence, and any form of teen dating violence in general, compared to males. Overall, research has found substantial associations between dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality among males and females, but differences in gender among these relationships are not clear. It is thus important to note that victimization (physical and sexual) and suicidality (ideas, plans, and attempts) differ across genders and must be more extensively studied.

The Present Study: The Hypotheses

The lack of literature regarding violence and mental health has led to major gaps in our knowledge of psychopathology in the CNMI. Although many studies present various risk factors for mental health problems in other parts of the world, such factors have yet to be fully explored in the CNMI. The present study investigated the relationship between dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality. Gender differences were also explored.

It was hypothesized that, after controlling for the contributions of substance use, bullying, and sadness, 1) both dating violence and sexual violence would be associated with suicidality, and 2) gender would influence the relationship between dating violence, sexual violence, and suicidality. Substance use, bullying, and sadness, which have been shown to be predictive of suicide (Wyatt et al., 2015), were used as covariates.

Methodology

Participants

Participants of the sample (n = 2,323, 48.3% girls) were drawn from the secondary data provided by the 2019 CNMI Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The sample consisted of students in grades 9-12, attending public schools; the age ranges were from 12 to 18 years old, and the students were racially and ethnically diverse. After accounting for missing data, the total sample was 2,308. The demographic information of the participants is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

<i>Sample Characteristics</i>			
Variables		N	%
Age	12 years old or younger	4	0.2
	13 years old	3	0.1
	14 years old	227	9.9
	15 years old	608	26.4
	16 years old	620	26.9
	17 years old	511	22.2
	18 years old or older	330	14.3
Sex	Female	1128	48.9
	Male	1180	51.1
Ethnicity	American Indian/Alaska Native	3	0.1
	Asian	839	37.4
	Black or African American	7	0.3
	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1129	50.4
	White	16	0.7
	Hispanic/Latino	3	0.1
	Multiple - Hispanic/Non-Hispanic	245	10.9
Explanatory Variables			
Experienced Sexual Violence	0 times	1955	87.8
	1 or more times	271	12.2
Experienced Physical Dating Violence	Did not date/0 times	2069	95.4
	1 or more times	100	4.6
Outcome Variables			
Considered Suicide	No	1636	71.5
	Yes	652	28.5
Made a Suicide Plan	No	1662	73.1
	Yes	613	26.9
Attempted Suicide	0 times	1605	82.2
	1 or more times	347	17.8
Covariate Variables			
Bullying at School	No	1862	81.3
	Yes	427	18.7
Experienced E-Bullying	No	1961	85.6
	Yes	329	14.4
Sad/Hopelessness	No	1163	52.0
	Yes	1074	48.0
Current Marijuana Use	0 times	1515	68.0
	1 or more times	712	32.0
Current Alcohol Use	0 days	1526	74.9
	1 or more days	511	25.1

Measures

Physical dating violence. Physical dating violence was measured through the question, “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose?” Responses were rated from 1 (“I did not go out with anyone during the past 12 months”) - 6 (“6 or more times”), for both questions. Responses were recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2-6” were recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”.

Sexual violence. Sexual violence was measured through the question, “During the past 12 months, how many times did anyone force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?”. Responses to the second question were rated from 1 (“0 times”) - 5 (“6 or more times”). Responses were recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2-5” were recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”.

Suicidality. Suicidality was measured through questions pertaining to suicidal ideation, suicide plan, suicide attempt, and suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse. Suicidal ideation was measured with the question, “During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide”. Suicide plan was measured with the question “During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?”. The response choices were 1 (“Yes”) and 2 (“No”) for both questions. Actual suicide attempt within the past year was measured with the question “During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?”; responses were rated from 1 (“0 times”) to 5 (“6 or more times”). Responses were then recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2-5” were recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”.

Substance use. Substance use was measured through reports of alcohol use and marijuana use. Current alcohol use was assessed through the question, “During the past 30 days on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?”, with responses

ranging from 1 (“0 days”) - 7 (“All 30 days”). Responses were recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2-7” were recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”. Current marijuana use was assessed through the question “During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?”, with responses ranging from 1 (“0 times”) – 6 (“40 or more times”). Responses were recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2-6” were recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”.

Sadness. Sadness was assessed through the question, “During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?” The response was 1 (“Yes”) and 2 (“No”). Responses were then recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “1” to denote “Yes”.

Bullying. Bullying was assessed through two questions, “During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied on school property?” and “During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied?” Responses to both questions were 1 (“Yes”) and 2 (“No”). Responses were then recoded: “1” was recoded into “0” to denote “No” and “2” was recoded as “1” to denote “Yes”.

Procedure

A two-stage cluster sampling was conducted for territories to produce a representative sample of students in grades 9-12 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The CNMI institutional review board approved the protocol for the YRBS, as territory sites are instructed to receive IRB approval from local school boards (for the details, see “Overview and Methods for the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System - United States”, 2019). The YRBS procedures were intended to protect students’ privacy, and participation was anonymous and voluntary; parental permission was obtained prior to survey administration. One class period was allotted for students to complete the self-administered survey by recording their responses on a computer-scannable booklet.

Data Analysis

Data for the present study was drawn from the 2019 YRBS collected by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention. A two-stage complex sampling design was used to obtain samples representative of the population in the survey; thus, data from the 2019 CNMI YRBS was weighted. All statistical analyses were performed in the Complex Samples option of the SPSS Premium Edition program, one of the statistical programs recommended by the CDC to account for the YRBSS complex sampling design (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Data was analyzed using descriptive, cross-tabulation, and logistic regression analysis. Descriptive analysis presented the general distribution of all study variables using weighted percentages. Cross-tabulation was performed to display the distribution and Pearson chi-square tests of association between gender and explanatory, outcome, and covariate variables. Lastly, while controlling for covariates (age, ethnicity, sadness, bullying, e-bullying, current alcohol use, and current marijuana use), a logistic regression analysis was performed to examine gender differences in the relationship between explanatory variables (physical dating violence, sexual violence) and outcome variables (considering suicide, making a suicide plan, and attempting suicide). To observe gender differences in this relationship, the logistic regression analysis was conducted by gender. Missing cases were treated as listwise deletion as an alternative method, such as multiple imputation has not been recommended by the YRBSS.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 displays the general distribution of the study variables. All explanatory, outcome, and covariate questions (except for substance use, which were framed to ask adolescents about their substance use within the past 30 days of taking the survey) were framed to ask adolescents if they experienced the situation within the past 12 months of

taking the survey. On explanatory variables, 12.2% ($N=271$) of adolescents reported one or more experiences of sexual violence and 4.6% ($N=100$) reported one or more experiences of physical dating violence. On outcome variables, 28.5% ($N=652$) reported that they considered suicide, 26.9% ($N=613$) reported making a suicide plan, and 17.8% ($N=347$) reported a suicide attempt. Regarding covariate variables, 18.7% ($N=427$) reported an experience of bullying in school, and 14.4% of adolescents ($N=329$) reported an experience of electronic bullying (e-bullying). A total of 48% ($N=1,074$) of adolescents reported feelings of sadness. Regarding substance use, within the past 30 days, 32% ($N=712$) reported using marijuana and 25.1% ($N=511$) reported consuming alcohol.

Cross-Tabulation Analysis

Table 2 presents the distribution of and results of the chi-square tests of independence between gender and outcome, explanatory, and covariate variables. A higher proportion of girls reported experiencing sexual violence (66.5%) than boys (33.5%) ($\chi^2(1) = 40.105, p < .001$). More boys (52.6%) than girls (47.4%) reported experiences of physical dating violence; however, this was not statistically significant. Regarding outcome variables, more girls than boys considered suicide (60.5% vs. 39.5%) ($\chi^2(1) = 52.668, p < .001$), made a suicide plan (60.6% vs. 39.4%) ($\chi^2(1) = 48.704, p < .001$), and attempted suicide (61.1% vs. 38.9%) ($\chi^2(1) = 138.9, p < .001$). More girls than boys reported more experiences of bullying, both in school (54.8% vs. 45.2%) ($\chi^2(1) = 7.753, p < .006$) and online (65.9% vs. 34.1%) ($\chi^2(1) = 44.803, p < .001$), and feelings of sadness (60% vs. 40%) ($\chi^2(1) = 101.074, p < .001$). Regarding substance use, boys, compared to girls, reported higher alcohol consumption (53.8% vs 46.2%) ($\chi^2(1) = 4.401, p < .047$) and marijuana use (56.1% vs. 43.9%) ($\chi^2(1) = 12.146, p < .001$).

Table 2

Frequencies and Chi-Square Results for Gender and Predictor, Outcome, and Covariate Variables

Variables	Girls	Boys	OR(95% C.I.)	P value
Sexual Violence	%		.429 (.315-.583)***	<.001
0 times	45.9	54.1		
1 or more times	66.5	33.5		
Physical Dating Violence			1.067 (.688-1.656)	0.77
Did not date/0 times	49	51		
1 or more times	47.4	52.6		
Considered Suicide			.507 (.416-.616)***	<.001
No	43.7	56.3		
Yes	60.5	39.5		
Made a Suicide Plan			.513 (.422-.625)***	<.001
No	44.1	55.9		
Yes	60.6	39.4		
Attempted Suicide			.584 (.443-.772)***	<.001
0 times	47.8	52.2		
1 or more times	61.1	38.9		
Bullying			.739 (.598-.914)**	0.006
No	47.2	52.8		
Yes	54.8	45.2		
E-Bullying			.437 (.338-.566)***	<.001
No	45.8	54.2		
Yes	65.9	34.1		
Sad or Hopeless			.421 (.350-.507)***	<.001
No	38.8	61.2		
Yes	60	40		
Current Marijuana Use			1.369 (1.152-1.626)***	<.001
0 times	51.8	48.2		
1 or more times	43.9	56.1		
Current Alcohol Use			1.236 (1.002-1.525)*	0.047
0 days	51.5	48.5		
1 or more days	46.2	53.8		

Logistic Regression Analysis

For boys, no statistically significant associations were found between predictors (sexual violence and physical dating violence) and outcome variables (having considered suicide, having made a suicide plan, and having attempted suicide, see Table 3). However, many important associations between covariates and outcome variables were found. Boys who self-identified as Asian were more likely to report having made a suicide plan ($B = -.637$, $S.E. = .270$, Wald statistic (t) = -2.356, Odds Ratio (OR) = .529, $p < .02$, 95% C.I. = .310–.904) and suicide attempt ($B = -.815$, $S.E. = .356$, $t = -2.292$, $OR = .442$, $p < .024$, 95% C.I. = .219–.895). Additionally, boys who reported feelings of sadness had 6.8 higher odds of reporting they considered suicide ($B = 1.923$, $S.E. = .191$, $t = 10.096$, $OR = 6.844$, $p < .001$, 95% C.I. = 4.693–9.982), 4.7 higher odds of reporting they made a suicide plan ($B = 1.554$, $S.E. = .191$, $t = 8.157$, $OR = 4.731$, $p < .001$, 95% C.I. = 3.244–6.900), and 4.5 odds of reporting a suicide attempt ($B = 1.510$, $S.E. = .290$, $t = 5.213$, $OR = 4.582$, $p < .001$, 95% C.I. = 2.551–8.038). Further, boys who reported an experience of bullying at school were 2.5 times more likely to report they considered suicide ($B = .949$, $S.E. = .246$, $t = 3.857$, $OR = 2.582$, $p < .001$, 95% C.I. = 1.586–4.203), 1.6 times more likely to report they made a suicide plan ($B = .497$, $S.E. = .229$, $t = 2.172$, $OR = 1.644$, $p < .032$, 95% C.I. = 1.045–2.589), and 2.2 times more likely to report a suicide attempt ($B = .793$, $S.E. = .335$, $t = 2.368$, $OR = 2.210$, $p < .02$, 95% C.I. = 1.138–4.294); those who experienced e-bullying were 2.5 times more likely to report they made a suicide plan ($B = .902$, $S.E. = .335$, $t = 2.692$, $OR = 2.465$, $p < .008$, 95% C.I. = 1.269–4.789). Lastly, boys who reported alcohol use had 1.6 higher odds of reporting they considered suicide ($B = .497$, $S.E. = .244$, $t = 2.033$, $OR = 1.643$, $p < .044$, 95% C.I. = 1.013–2.666) and 1.8 higher odds of reporting they made a suicide plan ($B = .627$, $S.E. = .244$, $t = 2.57$, $OR = 1.873$, $p < .011$, 95% C.I. = 1.155–3.037).

However, the results regarding sexual and physical violence were different for girls (see Table 4). In other words, girls presented significant associations between predictors

(sexual violence and physical dating violence) and outcome variables (considering suicide, making a suicide plan, and

Table 3

Complex Samples Logistic Regression Results Predicting Suicide Ideation, Plan and Attempt for Boys

Variables	Considered Suicide				Made a Suicide Plan				Attempted Suicide			
	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value
Age	.073 (.076)	0.968	1.076 (.926-1.251)	0.335	-.083 (.078)	-1.068	.920 (.789-1.073)	0.288	.092 (.121)	0.76	1.096 (.862-1.394)	0.449
Ethnicity (Other)												
Asian	-.332 (.303)	-1.093	.718 (.394-1.309)	0.277	-.637 (.270)	-2.356	.529 (.310-.904)	0.02	-.815 (.356)	-2.292	.442 (.219-.895)	0.024
Native Hawaiian/Other PI	-.248 (.282)	-0.879	.780 (.446-1.364)	0.381	-.482 (.267)	-1.809	.617 (.364-1.047)	0.073	-.705 (.422)	-1.669	.494 (.214-1.141)	0.098
Sexual Violence (0 times)												
1 or more times	.066 (.373)	0.176	1.068 (.510-2.237)	0.837	.745 (.378)	1.972	2.107 (.997-4.456)	0.051	.436 (.455)	0.96	1.547 (.628-3.809)	0.339
Physical Dating Violence (Did not date/0 times)												
1 or more times	.397 (.518)	0.766	1.487 (.533-4.149)	0.434	.137 (.648)	0.211	1.147 (.317-4.144)	0.833	-.318 (.765)	-0.416	.727 (.160-3.314)	0.678
Current Marijuana Use (0 times)												
1 or more times	-.099 (.237)	-0.419	.906 (.566-1.448)	0.676	-.023 (.240)	-0.095	.977 (.608-1.571)	0.924	.077 (.351)	0.219	1.080 (.539-2.163)	0.827
Current Alcohol Use (0 days)												
1 or more days	.497 (.244)	2.033	1.643 (1.013-2.666)	0.044	.627 (.244)	2.57	1.873 (1.155-3.037)	0.011	.469 (.317)	1.479	1.598 (.853-2.993)	0.142
Bullying (No)												
Yes	.949 (.246)	3.857	2.582 (1.586-4.203)	<.001	.497 (.229)	2.172	1.644 (1.045-2.589)	0.032	.793 (.335)	2.368	2.210 (1.138-4.292)	0.02
E-Bullying (No)												
Yes	.574 (.397)	1.444	1.775 (.808-3.901)	0.148	.902 (.335)	2.692	2.465 (1.269-4.789)	0.008	.311 (.449)	0.692	1.365 (.561-3.323)	0.49
Sad or Hopeless (No)												
Yes	1.923 (.191)	10.096	6.844 (4.693 - 9.982)	<.001	1.554 (.191)	8.157	4.731 (3.244-6.900)	<0.001	1.510 (.290)	5.213	4.528 (2.551-8.038)	<.001

Note: Reference category indicated in bracket; OR: Odds Ratios; C.I.: Confidence Interval

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Table 4

Complex Samples Logistic Regression Results Predicting Suicide Ideation, Plan and Attempt for Girls

Variables	Considered Suicide				Made a Suicide Plan				Attempted Suicide			
	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value	B (std.error)	Wald	OR(95% C.I.)	P value
Age	-0.023 (.064)	-0.358	.977 (.862-1.109)	0.721	-.180 (.071)	0.2547	.835 (.726-.961)	0.012**	-.113 (.092)	-1.22	.893 (.744-1.073)	0.225
Ethnicity												
Asian	-.420 (.262)	-1.601	.657 (.391-1.105)	0.112	-.398 (.279)	-1.428	.671 (.387-1.167)	0.156	-.740 (.320)	2.315	.477 (.253-.899)	0.022*
Native Hawaiian/Other PI	-.243 (.273)	-0.889	.784 (.457-1.347)	0.376	-.167 (.277)	-0.601	.847 (.489-1.466)	0.549	-.251 (.325)	0.771	.778 (.408-1.483)	0.442
Sexual Violence												
1 or more times	.890 (.225)	3.949	2.436 (1.558-3.808)	<.001***	.793 (.214)	3.703	2.210 (1.446-3.379)	<.001***	.551 (.220)	2.503	1.735 (1.122-2.683)	0.014*
Physical Dating Violence												
1 or more times	.897 (.472)	1.899	2.453 (.962-6.254)	0.06	.358 (.407)	0.881	1.431 (.639-3.201)	0.38	.672 (.447)	1.504	1.958 (.808-4.746)	0.135
Current Marijuana Use												
1 or more times	.228 (.210)	1.089	1.257 (.829-1.904)	0.287	.385 (.198)	1.946	1.469 (.993-2.174)	0.054	.173 (.247)	0.70	1.189 (.729-1.938)	0.486
Current Alcohol Use												
1 or more days	.355 (.202)	1.759	1.426 (.956-2.126)	0.081	.385 (.212)	1.815	1.469 (.965-2.237)	0.072	.594 (.238)	2.494	1.810 (1.130-2.901)	0.014
Bullying												
Yes	.311 (.213)	1.463	1.365 (.896-2.081)	0.146	.416 (.213)	1.952	1.516 (.994-2.313)	0.053	.374 (.248)	1.507	1.454 (.889-2.379)	0.135
E-Bullying												
Yes	.255 (.205)	1.241	1.290 (.859-1.936)	0.217	.560 (.241)	2.318	1.750 (1.085-2.824)	0.022	.392 (.273)	1.44	1.481 (.863-2.540)	0.153
Sad or Hopeless												
Yes	1.517 (.175)	8.66	4.558 (3.222-6.448)	<.001	1.396 (.169)	8.26	4.037 (2.889-5.642)	<.001	1.371 (.227)	6.053	3.941 (2.516-6.173)	<.001

Note: Reference category indicated in bracket; OR: Odds Ratios; C.I.: Confidence Interval

Discussion and Conclusion

The association between experiences of sexual violence/physical dating violence and suicidality has long been explored in previous research. However, the phenomenon is often understudied in the CNMI. The present study addressed this gap and provided an understanding of the relationship between sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality among CNMI adolescents while exploring gender differences in this relationship. Altogether, the study's hypotheses were supported: controlling for covariates, 1) there was a significant association between the predictors (sexual violence and physical dating violence) and outcome variables (suicide ideation, plan, and attempt) and 2) the relationship between sexual and physical dating violence was statistically significant for girls, but not for boys. Compared to boys, girls presented a higher prevalence of sexual violence and suicide ideation, attempts, and plans. Although boys reported more experiences of physical dating violence than girls, no significant gender differences were revealed. Lastly, regarding covariates, girls reported higher experiences of both school and electronic bullying and sadness, while boys reported higher instances of current substance use (alcohol and marijuana use).

Results of the study fully supported the first hypothesis, which was that the victims of sexual/physical dating violence were at a higher risk of either suicide ideation, plan, or attempt. This finding is consistent with prior studies that have examined the link between experiences of dating violence and suicidality (e.g., Baiden et al., 2019), and even other studies that show increased suicidality as a result of more than one experience of violence (e.g., Joyal, 2013). The findings are also consistent with previous studies which link experiences of sexual violence with suicidality (e.g., Tomasula et al., 2012). This suggests that despite gender differences, all victims of sexual/physical dating violence are at risk of suicidality, which prompts the need for continued intervention and prevention programs

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Results of the study also fully supported the second hypothesis, which was that there were gender differences in the frequency of, and relationship between, sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality. Specifically, girls had higher experiences of sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidal ideation, plan, and attempt than boys; additionally, girls who experienced sexual and physical dating violence had higher odds of suicide ideation, plan and attempt than boys. These findings reflect results of previous studies (Ackard et al., 2007; Vagi et al., 2015; Baiden et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020) and fully strengthen gender differences in experienced sexual violence, physical dating violence and suicidality, and show that girls are more affected than boys in this relationship.

Many prevalence studies have shown women to be disproportionately affected by sexual violence (Basile & Smith, 2011) and dating violence (Breiding et al., 2014) worldwide, and these factors have been associated with increased suicidality. Several factors have been investigated over time to explain this association. Women face a myriad of physical, economic, social, and psychological consequences of sexual/dating violence. Physical and sexual health consequences of abuse include disability, organ damage, chronic pain, gynecological disorders, and sexually transmitted diseases, to name a few (Jina & Thomas, 2013). Economic problems, stemming from their partner's not allowing them to work or go to school, can leave the victim without essential resources, which perpetuates the cycle of not being able to leave the relationship (Jina & Thomas, 2013). Social problems brought on by the controlling power of the perpetrator include being distanced from family members, facing stigmatization for abuse, and negative attitudes from society, which heightens stress for victims (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Jina & Thomas, 2013). Further social factors include the possibility that girls are in an "acceptable climate for violence", created by silence and inhibition by abusers, victim blaming attitudes, and tolerance of abuse by members known to the abuser and victim, or even by the victim themselves (Edwards et al., 2012). All the

mentioned circumstances can contribute to and increase the psychological problems women experience, which include substance use disorders, depression, fear, anxiety, poor self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Jina & Thomas, 2013), which are all linked to an increased risk of suicide (World Health Organization, 2002). An acknowledged global health concern, more attention should be directed to victims of violence in the understudied communities of the Pacific region.

For boys, even as the link between sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality was not significant, there were still significant associations between covariates (sadness/hopelessness bullying, e-bullying, and alcohol use) and suicidality. In other words, boys who reported sadness, bullying, e-bullying, and alcohol use also had high risks of suicidality. This finding is crucial to consider, as previous research shows that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA/PI) males are still found to have concerning rates of depression (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010), substance use (Wu & Blazer, 2015), and suicide (Lowry et al., 2011). While there can be many other predeterminants to mental health and behavioral problems, AA/PI males can experience barriers to seeking help for these mental health problems, ranging from stigma to gender role conflicts that would keep this population from not receiving services (Chang & Subramaniam, 2008). Thus, boys should not be undermined when examining negative health risk factors, as they, too, are at risk of serious mental health outcomes.

Regardless of the gender differences in covariates, the results of the present study have linked all covariates (sadness, bullying, e-bullying, and substance use, specifically alcohol) to increased odds of suicidality for both genders, which have been presented consistently in previous studies. Depressed mood has consistently been found to be a strong predictor of suicide among adolescents (Thapar et al., 2012). Bullying in both forms (traditional and cyberbullying) has been linked to increased suicide ideation, plans, and attempts for both boys and girls. This finding is consistent with earlier

studies (Kim & Leventhal, 2008). Thus, bullying must be addressed and considered more closely as a risk factor to avoid potential adverse outcomes.

Lastly, substance use for both genders was associated with an increased suicide risk. This finding supports existing studies (Nelson et al., 2019), and shows support for previous studies that have linked alcohol to increased suicidality (Baiden et al., 2019). Adolescents have been found to use substances to cope with negative affective states, despite the results of substance use leading to exacerbated stress levels and psychopathology (Goldston, 2004). Thus, more attention should be given to adolescent substance use, which has been shown to have negative health outcomes throughout one's lifespan that surpass one's mental health (Schulte & Hser, 2017). This is especially important in the context of Pacific Islander youth, who, in previous studies, have a higher risk of engaging in more serious substance use, such as binge drinking (Subica & Wu, 2018) and more serious negative mental outcomes (Wu & Blazer, 2014).

Limitations and Future Research

Although the present study clearly demonstrated the prevalence of and gender differences between sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality among CNMI adolescents, there are several limitations. First, because the YRBSS is self-administered, reporter bias may have occurred. Individuals may have intentionally provided inaccurate responses if they intended not to report unfavorable or negative experiences; thus, respondents may have underreported instances of sexual/physical dating violence or suicide ideation, plan, or attempt. Second, the results of the YRBSS are not entirely generalizable to all adolescents in the CNMI. Because the survey was administered only at public high schools, private high school students were not able to participate in the survey. Third, due to the quantitative nature of the YRBSS, unique, in-depth experiences of violence victimization and suicidality and other related mental health risk factors were not recorded. Mental health symptoms differ cross-culturally, and the Micronesian region is heavily understudied. Thus, concepts revealed only

through interviews can display these cultural differences mental health problems; these concepts include, but are not limited to, the interpretation and display of mental health symptoms (such as depression and anxiety), as well as perceptions and approaches to these mental health problems. Future researchers can conduct qualitative research to collect narratives from victims, or uncover other factors related to sexual violence/dating violence and suicidality not previously considered. Furthermore, mixed-methods studies can be employed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sexual/physical dating violence and how it contributes to suicide risk in the CNMI.

Clinical and Educational Implications

Several clinical implications are in place as we widen our understanding of negative mental health factors in the population. Mental health professionals and community members working with sexual violence and physical dating violence victims can work to develop/refine a culturally adaptive framework specific to the Micronesian region. This framework will aid in conceptualizing risk and protective factors for mental health problems, not limited to sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality.

Guided by a culturally informed framework, mental health professionals can develop and implement culturally appropriate treatments which can lower adolescents' experiences of negative emotionality. Practitioners can actively learn and understand the norms and values for Asian and Pacific Islanders' behaviors (as presented in earlier sections), and how these cultural elements can contribute to their help-seeking behaviors (Kwan et al., 2020). Goldston and colleagues (2009) identified concepts of help-seeking behaviors for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA/PI) youth, and these concepts can be considered in the development of culturally appropriate treatment in the CNMI. Because AA/PI youth are more likely to seek support for their mental health problems from friends or family (Goldston et al., 2009), outreach or mental health services can incorporate social support into the treatment process. As shame and stigma against mental health is prominent among A.A./PIs, mental health professionals

can also acknowledge this, as well as the silent acceptance of risk factors for mental health occurring in the community (depression, suicide, experience of sexual/dating violence), to reduce shame in association with mental health problems and help-seeking behaviors (Goldston et al., 2009).

Within the school setting, school counselors can also provide psychoeducation in the form of presentations within schools to raise awareness of sexual violence, physical dating violence, and suicidality (Goldston et al., 2009). Counselors can also be trained to provide culturally sensitive interventions for students. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to be aware of their beliefs about which gender may be more affected by mental health problems, as both have substantial risks of experiencing negative mental health outcomes (depression, bullying, and substance use) that co-occur with suicidality. This can maximize our opportunities to identify and offer services to all adolescents who can benefit from opportunities to lower their negative emotional/behavioral symptoms. Since female victims of sexual/physical dating violence are at a higher risk of suicide, continued prevention and intervention methods can be offered to encourage them to speak out and increase help-seeking practices.

Lastly, outside of the school setting, relevant organizations can sponsor outreach events and presentations to increase their presence within the community. Continued efforts to eliminate the culture of silence can address and decrease the stigma of seeking mental health services and promote help-seeking attitudes. Training opportunities can be offered on being a supportive and effective mandated reporter for those working closely with adolescents. Moreover, training can also be provided to assist individuals displaying suicidal thoughts and behaviors. In increasing our knowledge of prevailing risk factors within the community, efforts can be made to overall lower the rates of violence and suicidality.

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The Failed Capture of Guam in 1898, Through the Personal Narrative of Pedro Duarte

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The document that forms the centerpiece of this article shows the unique value of private letters as historical sources. Written on November 3, 1898 by Captain Pedro Duarte, secretary to the Spanish Governor of the Mariana Islands, the letter was addressed to Duarte's brother José in Madrid. Its conversational tone, marked by the candor typical of correspondence between siblings, vividly recounts the American takeover of Guam. Duarte describes the use of a false-flag ruse, a "sham parley," and his subsequent capture as a prisoner of war. Beyond its substantial contribution to understanding the true military operation from a perspective traditionally overshadowed by the victors' narrative, the letter provides a rare glimpse into the political consequences of the event. More importantly, it reveals the emotional and psychological experiences of those directly involved, adding depth and humanity to historical record.¹

Private letters are among the most interesting written sources that historians can encounter. Unlike official communications and reports, which are typically formal and filtered through bureaucratic lenses, letters are mainly private or semi-private, more clearly reflecting the author's preferences, prejudices, and moods. They offer insights

¹ This article is an English translation of the original Spanish letter, with a much expanded contextual analysis, originally published by: Madrid, Carlos. "Una fuente inédita para el estudio de las Islas Marianas. La captura de Guam en 1898, narrada por uno de los oficiales españoles protagonistas". In Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga, Miguel Angel Barbero (Coords.) *500 años de un océano llamado Pacífico*. Universitat Abat Oliba CEU. Barcelona, 2023. Pp. 179-199. The English translation presented here includes one paragraph of the original letter that was missing in the said Spanish article.

that are rarely found in official records, providing a more intimate and detailed account of events. Such informal communication captures the texture of daily life, revealing small but significant details like food prices, social relationships, and personal experiences. These elements are invaluable for constructing what is often referred to as the “history of private life,” as they provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the past.¹

The author

Pedro María Duarte y Andújar is undoubtedly one of the key figures in the final years of Spanish colonial administration in the Mariana islands and the early American colonial period in Guam. Born in Manila to Spanish parents on February 2, 1862, Duarte, like his brothers José and Juan, joined the Spanish Infantry Academy at the age of 15, successfully completing his studies in 1881. At the age of 25, he was assigned to the Mariana Islands as a third aide, for one year.² This first experience in the islands likely made a deep impression on him, as he met his future wife, María Millinchamps, and decided to make Guam his permanent home.

Since then, except for temporary assignments elsewhere in the Philippines, Duarte remained in the Mariana Islands, becoming one of the most knowledgeable officers in the region, according to various Spanish governors. During his time in the Philippines, he became involved with a Masonic lodge and played an active role in organizing new lodges across different cities. The Filipino revolutionary Apolinario

¹ The works of historians Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Philippe Ariès, and Georges Duby, are representative of History of Private Life.

² This biographical sketch is based on the information of his military record, at Archivo General de Segovia, signature 1^a D-1207.

Mabini later recalled meeting him in Guam, referring to him as “an acquaintance I met in Manila.”¹

In 1895, Duarte was appointed as secretary to the governor of the Marianas. During the Filipino Revolution of 1896, when Masonic networks were under heavier suspicion, authorities became wary of him. Despite being the only Mason in Guam, Duarte managed to secretly safeguard his Masonic belongings by placing them on a whaling ship run by fellow Masons before it departed.

“Capitán Duarte,” as he was known by the people of Agaña,² played an influential role in the social life of Guam during the early American colonial period. William Edwin Safford, the distinguished American officer, botanist, and linguist who wrote about his stay on the island in 1901, mentioned him several times in his diary, *A Year on the Island of Guam*. Safford noted Duarte’s continuous support to the new administrators and highlighted his helpful knowledge in the Chamorro language, medicine, and even engineering, despite not having formal training in that field.

¹ Mabini, Apolinario: *La revolución Filipina*. Tomo II. Manila 1931. Is noticeable that he did not refer to Duarte as “friend”. Just as “acquaintance”.

² I acknowledge the importance of adhering to Guam’s official spellings, such as CHamoru, Hagåtña, and Guåhan. However, in this article, I have retained the spellings found in archival documents of the era to preserve the original context and meaning as understood at the time.



Don Pedro Duarte in his later years. Photo Courtesy of Ms. Barbara Gilman.

In 1898, while still serving as the governor's secretary, the American fleet arrived in Guam, capturing Duarte and the other Spanish military personnel, experiences he describes in the letter translated in this article. The arrest caused significant distress to his wife, María Millinchamps, pregnant at the time, and she lost the baby due to the stress of the incident.¹ After the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Duarte decided to resign from his commission in the Spanish army where he had served for 21 years and returned to Guam with his family.

In 1905, Duarte became one of the founding members of the "Philanthropic Society Susana Hospital," which expanded the María Schroeder Hospital in Agaña.² In

¹ Safford, W. E. (2016). *A Year on the Island of Guam 1899-1900: Extracts from the Notebook of Naturalist William Edwin Safford*. Guam: Guamology Publishing. P. 28.

² *Index of Guam Judicial Records*. Micronesian Area Research Center. 1807-1920 Court Cases. 1172, Dyer, McNamee Mink, Palomo, Duarte.

1909, when an earthquake destroyed the Dulce Nombre de María Church in Agaña, Duarte designed the new structure.³ Since 1904, he also served as the postmaster for the Guam Post Office, holding the position until 1915, when he was removed from office under accusations of embezzlement. He was succeeded by James H. Underwood.

Some members of the Duarte family left Guam in the late 1920s.⁴ Visiting Manila on November 4, 1935, at the age of 73, Captain Duarte passed away after suffering a heart attack while walking past Manila City Hall. He was laid to rest in the Cementerio del Norte.⁵

The Spanish-American War in Guam

By June 1898, the Spanish-American War was nearing its end. Manila remained under siege, locked by land by the surrounding Filipino revolutionary forces, and by the US ships under Admiral Dewey. Following the Spanish defeat at the naval battle of Manila Bay, on May 2, the remnants of the Spanish fleet in the Philippines consisted mostly of small, scattered vessels, concentrated primarily in the Visayas. With nearly the entire island of Luzon under Aguinaldo's control, the American fleet understood that, after defeating the Spanish forces, they would eventually face the Filipino revolutionaries. To reinforce the troops already deployed in Cavite, President McKinley

³ Sullivan, Julius, OFM Cap. *The Phoenix Rises*, p. 104.

⁴ Personal communication to the author by Ms. Barbara Gilman, greatgranddaughter of Pedro Duarte, Guam, March 26th, 2004.

⁵ *The Guam Recorder*, US Naval Government of Guam. 1936. Volumes at the MARC Library, University of Guam. P. 320.

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ordered the dispatch of a division under General Anderson's command, on board of three transports, *City of Sydney*, *City of Peking* and *Australia*, escorted by the *USS Charleston*. En route to the Philippines, his commander Captain Henry Glass was to follow orders and seize Guam from the Spanish government.

Administered as a distant province of the Philippines by a Lieutenant Colonel of the Spanish army, the archipelago of the Mariana Islands was a remote, sleepy outpost with approximately 6,000 residents scattered across five of the largest islands as far as the Spaniards in the Philippines was concerned. These islands were inhabited by the Chamorros, who were mixed descendants of the ancient inhabitants, along with settlers from the Caroline Islands, a small group of Spanish Europeans, and other Westerners. The civil and military colonial presence in such a distant territory was small, limited to what was needed for public administration in the context of Spanish Philippines. There were military and civil medical doctors, priests, local mayors, teachers, a governor with his staff, and a fully functional civil society only bounded by logistical limitations and lack of resources. As far as military presence was concerned, it was just a garrison of 50 men and four officers that constituted the sole defense force for a province located 378 leagues from Manila. Since April 18, 1897, the province's appointed governor was Lieutenant Colonel Juan Marina Vega.

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The USS *Charleston* is depicted at the center of this Allen Ginter chromolithographic postcard. The US flag at the top mast was replaced prior to the attack on Guam's Fort Santa Cruz, -a false-flag ruse reported by various sources and further confirmed in the letter by Pedro Duarte.

On June 21, 1898, five American ships arrived at Guam. Passing by Hagatña, the small fleet headed to Apra. The USS *Charleston*, the only warship in the group, was also the only vessel to enter the harbor, while the others anchored outside, and prepared to bomb the old Fort Santa Cruz, whose ruins stood on an islet inside the bay. The ship fired its 6-inch cannon and prepared the boats for unloading, as described in his reminiscences by Joseph DeBurgh, a soldier of the Second Oregon Volunteer Infantry

aboard the transport ship *City of Sydney*.¹ While he and the other soldiers outside the harbor did not realize until later that the fort was abandoned, Captain Glass was close enough to observe the true state of the fort — completely empty, and in ruins — as the *Charleston* had anchored near San Luis Point,² approximately 6,000 feet from Fort Santa Cruz. The fort had been abandoned by many years.

To enter Guam, Capt. Glass made use of a “false flag” tactic. This is mentioned in all Spanish accounts of the incident, and further corroborated by Capt. Duarte’s writing. In his letter, Duarte recounts how Dr. Romero Aguilar and Captain García Gutiérrez reported seeing a “splendid Spanish flag” flying from one of the USS *Charleston*’s masts as they approached the ship. It is possible they mistook the red and yellow of the Spanish flag for the red and white of the Japanese flag, as mentioned in a few American accounts documenting this ruse.

Despite the lack of mention in any official account written by Capt. Glass, this undignified “false flag” tactic is supported by other American sources. For instance, USS *Charleston* paymaster James S. Phillips later recalled to his grandson, J. P. Berkeley, that the *Charleston* flew Japanese colors when entering Guam. In 1980, Berkeley, by then a retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant General, shared with Fr. Thomas B. McGrath of the Micronesian Area Research Center: “My grandfather always told of the *Charleston* standing into Guam under Japanese colors.”³

While in Guam waters, a journalist aboard the USS *Australia*, writing for *The Sun*, questioned Capt. Glass’s decision: “It seemed at first a bit humiliating to show an alien flag.” Some professional soldiers defended the ploy as legitimate under

¹ DeBurgh, Joseph, “A Few Reminiscences of the First Expedition of American Troops to Manila”, *The American Oldtimer*. Vol VI, No. 6. April 1939, 23-29, and Vol VII, No. 1. November 1939, 26-30, 45-48.

² As recalled by Duarte, recounting these events fifteen years later. Duarte, Pedro María: “The Capture of Guam by an eye witness” *Guam News Letter*, October 1913. P. 11.

³ Letter from retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant General J. P. Berkeley to Fr. Thomas B. McGrath, Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, March 15, 1980, MSS 0120. Credit and gratitude are due to German scholar Paul Druschke of Leipzig University for bringing this source to my attention.

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international law.⁴ That was not entirely accurate, though. Although U.S. military regulations did not explicitly prohibit the use of a false flag, such tactics were still considered “opposed to the highest military honor and courtesy.”⁵ Western international practice at the time explicitly banned “improper use of a flag of truce, the national flag or military ensigns, the enemy’s uniform, or the distinctive badges of the Geneva Convention.”⁶

Any references to this ruse during the so-called “conquest” of Guam were likely removed, ignored, or conveniently forgotten in subsequent American accounts, perhaps due to the ease with which the defenseless island was captured.

If war had really been declared between the two countries, Governor Marina, bound by Spanish law, could not board an enemy ship, so he proposed a truce-bound meeting, or “act of parliament,” in Piti. Captain Glass accepted, replying that he or a trusted officer “would be at 9 o’clock in Piti.” The letter of Duarte confirms the main elements of the story as seen from Spanish perspective, adding elements of color: the following morning, he and the other three Spanish officers arrived at the Piti pier at the designated time, completely unarmed and dressed in white, expecting a peaceful truce. Instead, they were met an hour later by over 25 heavily armed soldiers who practically surrounded them. Instead of Captain Glass, ranking interlocutor of Governor Marina, it was the third officer in command, fully armed as well, who greeted them. This officer compelled Marina to respond to Glass’s demands and then proceeded to detain Marina as he was about to leave the encounter, properly defined by Duarte as a “sham parley.”

⁴ “Our Flag at Guam” at *The Sun*. New York, August 8, 1898. P. 1.

⁵ Elbert Jay Benton, *International Law and Diplomacy of the Spanish-American War*. Baltimore, 1908. P. 142.

⁶ *Idem*. P. 142. It was mentioned in Art. 13 of the 1874 Declaration of Brussels; and Art. 8 of the 1880 Code of Laws of War written by the Oxford Institute of International Law.



Lieutenant W. Braunersreuther, the navigator of the USS *Charleston* and sent by Captain Glass as interlocutor of the Spanish Governor in the Piti encounter described in the letter.

The entire operation was an undeniably effective way to claim possession of Guam swiftly, in “one or two days.”¹ It was a conveniently quick approach to capture the Spanish officers of Guam, even if it meant sidestepping established laws of war.

Duarte's letter notes that Glass asked the Spanish officers to confirm whether “a garrison of 54 Spanish soldiers” was stationed on Guam, suggesting that he likely had prior knowledge of the island's weak defenses.² Thus, Glass's over-caution upon

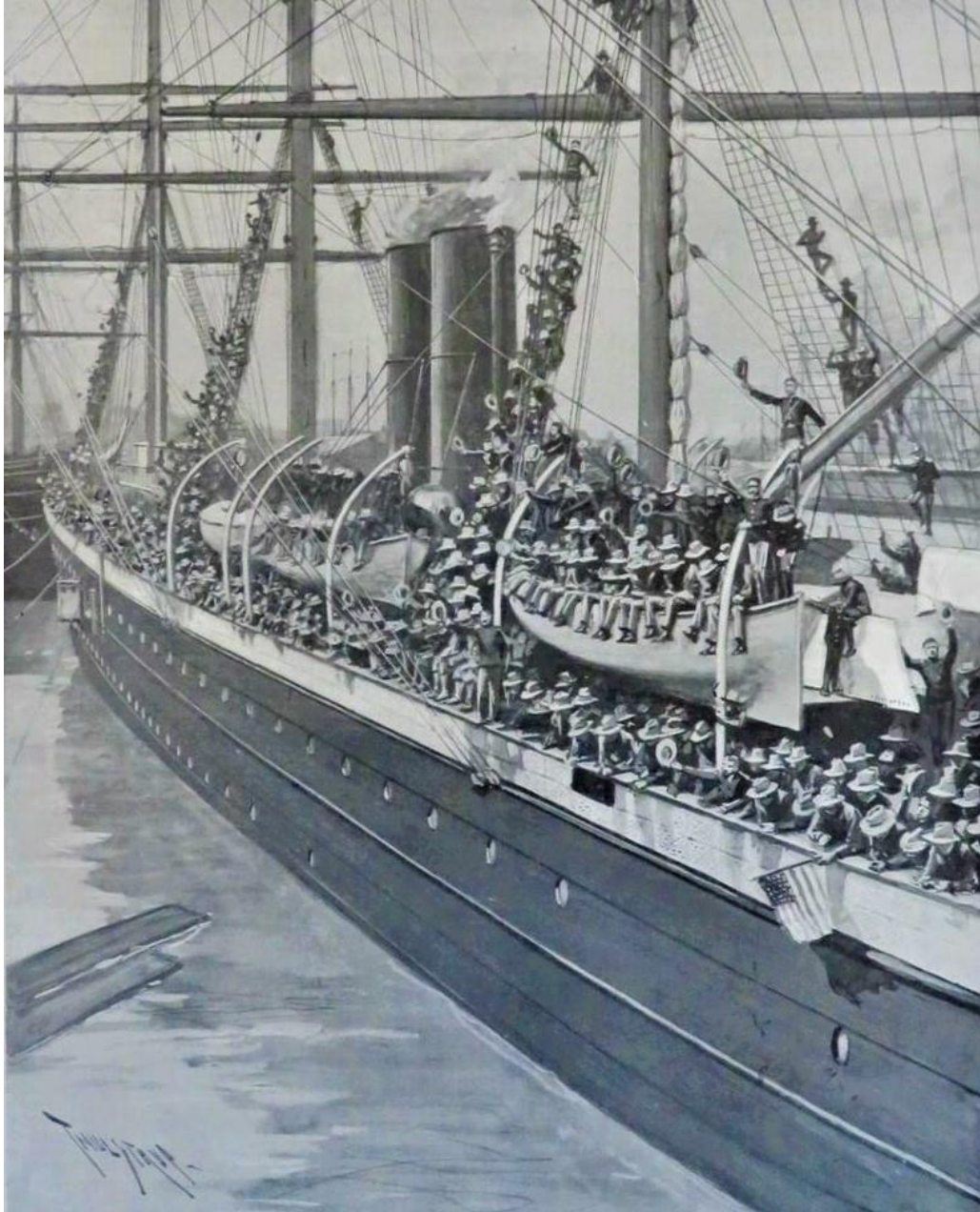
¹ Rogers, Robert F.: *Destiny's Landfall*. University of Hawai'i Press. Hawai'i 1995. P. 109.

² This suggestion is further supported by the recollections of Sr. D. Juan Marina Simo, the eldest of the few surviving grandsons of the last Spanish governor of the Marianas. In an interview conducted by me in Madrid on November 21, 2002, he recounted that his grandfather, while aboard the *Charleston*, recognized a man among the crew or officers who had previously been in Guam. Spanish official reports of the episode do not provide additional support to Marina's account.

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reaching Guam, may have been a precautionary measure to account for any unexpected changes under the usual military conditions of the island. The notion that the U.S. Navy had some knowledge of Guam's military situation is further supported by the recollections of Sr. D. Juan Marina, the eldest grandson of the last Spanish governor of the Marianas. I interviewed him several times before his passing in 2005, and during a conversation on November 21, 2002, he recounted a family story. His grandfather had shared that upon boarding the *Charleston*, he recognized a man among the crew who had been in Guam not long before. This anecdote suggests a potential intelligence link that was part of the U.S. Navy's understanding of the island's vulnerable conditions.

Captain Duarte's letter highlights several noteworthy aspects of the first American occupation of Guam. As he noted and sincerely appreciated, the sense of pragmatism of Capt. Glass did not prevent him nor the other American officers on board the *Charleston* and the *City of Sydney* from treating him and the other Spanish officers with exceptional respect and hospitality. Captain Duarte and Dr. Romero, both English speakers, maintained a friendly rapport with some of the American officers even after they reached Cavite in the Philippines.

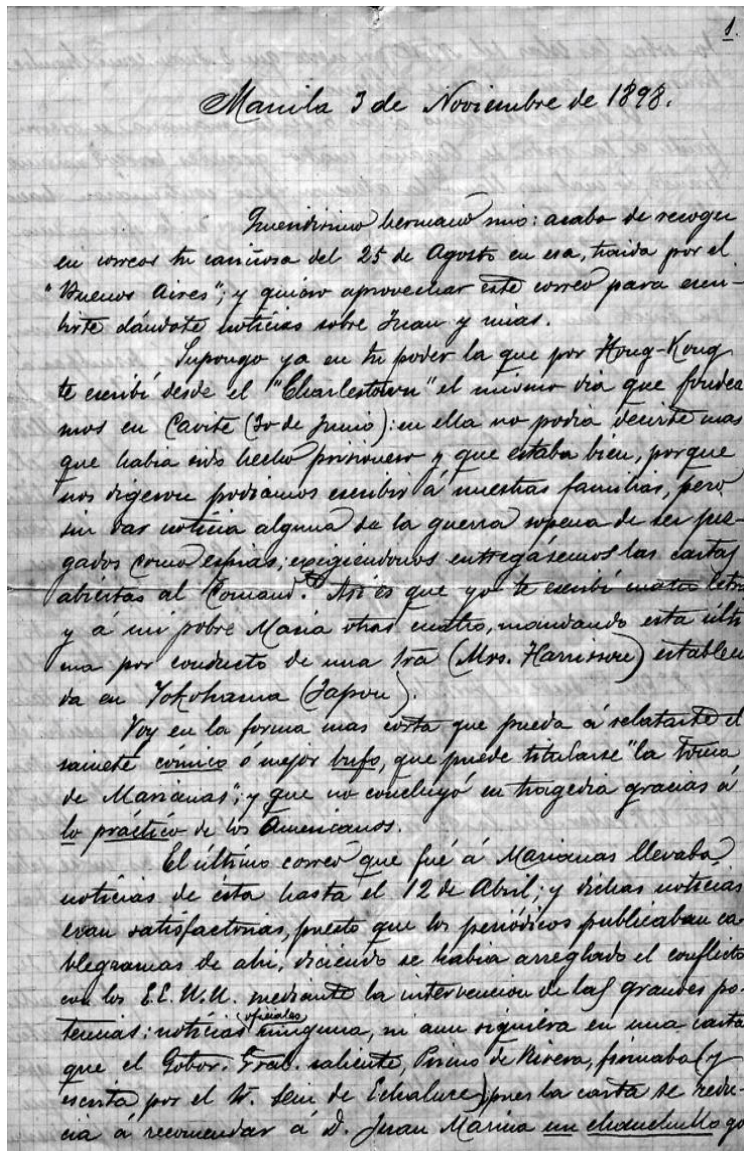


The US liner *City of Peking* leaving San Francisco. Harper's Weekly June 11, 1898.

Another key aspect the letter confirms is that, after Glass failed to leave an interim authority in place, the Spanish Administrator of Public Funds, José Sixto, naturally stepped in and regained control of the government with the support of local Chamorro troops. The figure of Sixto, often vilified in American narratives, should be re-evaluated within the broader analysis of primary sources, as should the rest of this historical episode.

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Besides the events about the attempted capture of Guam and its aftermath, in his letter Duarte also provides the perspective of a Spanish family with moderate liberal views, detailing the chaos that ensued after the Spanish surrender of Manila. By the time the letter was written, the Spanish administration had relocated to Iloilo, and an independent Republic of the Philippines was still a possibility.



Manila 3 de Noviembre de 1898.

Queridos hermanos míos: acabo de recoger en correo tu carta del 25 de Agosto en esa, traida por el "Nuevo Aires"; y quiero aprovechar este correo para enviarte algunas noticias sobre Juan y míos.

Supongo ya en tu poder la que por Hong-Kong te escribí desde el "Charleston" el mismo día que fuídesmos en Cavite (30 de junio); en ella no podía decirte más que había sido hecho prisionero y que estaba bien, porque nos íbamos pronto a escribir a nuestras familias, pero sin dar noticia alguna de la guerra ni de los peligros que corríamos; esiguiéndonos entregáremos las cartas a las tropas al Honrado. Así es que ya te escribí una carta y a mi pobre María otras muchas, mandando esta última por conducto de una tía (Mrs. Harrison) establecida en Yokohama (Japón).

Yoy en la forma más corta que pueda a relatarle el sainete cómico o mejor tragedia, que puede titularse "la Tragedia de Manila"; y que en conclusión su tragedia gracias a los practicos de los Americanos.

El último correo que fué a Marianas llevaba noticias de esta hasta el 12 de Abril; y dichas noticias eran satisfactorias, puesto que los periódicos publicaban telegramas de ahí, diciendo se había arreglado el conflicto con los E. U. M. mediante la intervención de las grandes potencias; noticias ^{oficiales} ninguna, ni aun siquiera en una carta que el Excmo. Sr. D. Sabido, Príncipe de Asturias, formaba (y cuenta por el Sr. Sr. de Calatayud) por la carta de recomendación a D. Juan María en el cual había ya

First page of the original letter, property of the Duarte family in Spain.

The manuscript

The letter was handwritten in Spanish on both sides of nine and a half sheets of well-preserved paper in black ink. It is dated in Manila on November 3, 1898, with a brief addition at the end of the letter dated two days later. The original is held in the family archive of the descendants of José Duarte, the letter's initial recipient.²⁰ His grandson José Antonio Duarte digitized it for me in August 2001. I then forwarded it to the Spanish Documents Collection at the Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, on November 27 of that year, along with a photocopy of a report written by Governor Marina I found at the Spanish *Servicio Histórico Militar*.

In the English translation of Duarte's letter provided here, I retained the underlining of words and phrases that its author used for emphasis. Minor adjustments were made to paragraph structure and word spelling to enhance readability. Duarte's original words are preserved in (parentheses), and sentences I have completed are noted in [brackets].

English Translation Of The Original Letter:

Manila, November 3 of 1898.

My dearest brother:

I just received your affectionate letter dated August 25 brought by the *Buenos Aires*, and I want to take advantage of this mail giving you news about Juan and me.²¹

²⁰ Gratitude is due to Antonio Duarte and his cousin Jose Antonio Duarte for their kind support, and to journalist Domingo del Pino for facilitating initial contact with them.

²¹ Juan was the third of the Duarte siblings, married to a Filipina and living in Manila at the time. References to him are easily distinguishable from those to the Spanish governor of the Marianas, Juan Marina, as Duarte consistently refers to his brother simply as "Juan" and to the governor as "Don Juan".

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I assume that you have already received, via Hong-Kong, the letter I wrote you from the *Charleston*²² the same day that we anchored in Cavite (June 30). In that letter I could not tell you much except that I was imprisoned, and that I was well, because we were allowed to write our family but with the condition that no mention about the war be made, under the penalty of being judged as spies, requiring us to hand over the letters opened to the Commander. So I wrote you few words, and another few to my poor Maria.²³ I sent this last one through her aunt (Mrs. Harrison) who lives in Yokohama (Japan).

I will be as brief as possible in relating to you the one-act comic farce, or better yet, the burlesque, which can be entitled: “The Capture of the Marianas”, and which did not end in tragedy thanks to the practical sense the Americans have.

The last mail that left for the Marianas brought news about this [city] until April 12. Such news were satisfactory as the newspapers published cablegrams of April saying that the problems with the U.S. had been settled through the intervention of the great powers. They were no official news, not even in a letter signed by the outgoing Governor-General Primo de Rivera (written by Señor Luis [Sein] de Echaluze), letter that was basically a recommendation for Don Juan Marina for a big fraud about the Northern Islands.²⁴ Don Juan, being an honest man, did not want to participate in such a mess.

On June 20 at six in the morning, four big ships were seen maneuvering in front of Agaña Bay, which drew our attention. However, they continued toward Apra Harbor.

²² The *USS Charleston*. Protected cruiser built in 1888, originally the flagship of the South Seas squadron of the United States. Was assigned to escort the three transports, *City of Sydney*, *City of Peking* and *Australia* that carried the 2,500 men destined to the Philippines. Naval History Department, Department of the Navy, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol. 2, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1963.

²³ María Victoria Millinchamps, wife of Pedro Duarte. Born in Guam, daughter of Henry Millinchamps and Emilia Anderson. She died in San Francisco around 1953.

²⁴ Luis Sein de Echaluze served as the secretary to Fernando Primo de Rivera, Captain General of the Philippines during his second term, from March 1897 to March 1898. The “big fraud” concerning the Northern Islands likely refers to the proposed private lease of the islands of Pagan and Agrihan in the Marianas group to a Spanish creole born in Agaña, for commercial exploitation, a matter that had been under discussion in the preceding months.

After a little while, we received a letter from the Port Captain, who resided in Piti,²⁵ saying more or less: "...at this very moment, eight in the morning, an American warship has entered the port and fired a gun salute. I am going to verify this visit, as soon as possible I will try to excuse You for not replying to these salvos".²⁶

This calmed us down until one in the afternoon when the Port Captain and the Doctor came to the governor's office. I was called and we listened as the two related the story of their visit to the ship. The two left the Piti pier aboard the captain's boat with the national flag abaft, heading for the *Charleston*, which had a splendid Spanish flag raised up above the mainmast. Upon arriving at the side of the cruiser, the Doctor asked if there were any health news. From the port door, the Second Commander replied that health was good on board and proceeded to invite them to go on board. They did so, and on deck they were received by the Captain of the ship and were led to his cabin. They were made to sit down and light a cigarette that he offered them. Then, the Captain told them, "You ought to know that the war between our nations has been declared".

The visitors replied that in the Marianas, they had heard nothing of such a thing; and puzzled, he [Glass] asked when they had last received news and of what date. They answered him the truth, then the man told them, "The war was declared on April 25, the Spanish squadron in the Philippines has been completely destroyed in Cavite and I come to take possession of this island in the name of my government; the war will be short (and in correct Spanish) "God will do it!". Then he said:

"Do you have 54 Spanish soldiers garrisoned here?"

"Yes sir," they replied. "And what forces do you bring?"

²⁵ Situated in close to Apra Harbor, Piti is separated of Agaña by 8.5 kilometers approximately.

²⁶ Quotation marks were used by Duarte not implying literal wording, but to refer to statements made by others.

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On a piece of paper, he then wrote a note, which he gave to those he was talking to. The note stated:

“Protected cruiser *Charleston*, Captain Henry Glass, with 2 canons of 20 centimeters, 6 of 15 centimeters and even 14 minor calibers, and 600 men.

–Liner *City of Peking*.

–Liner *Australia*.

–Liner *City of Sidney*.

–Leading an American military division under the command of General Anderson”.

When asked about the gun salutes he had fired, he said they were not salutes but shots fired at the former Fort Santa Cruz, inviting a fight, thinking it was defended. After concluding the conference and as the Doctor and Port Captain were about to leave, he said, “Please tell the Governor that, as a military officer and a gentleman, I wish to confer with him here.”

Imagine the effect that the above story would have on the good D. Juan Marina in particular and on everyone in general. Don Juan decided to write to the Commander of the *Charleston* telling him that his duty prevented him from going on board, but that wishing to hear what he had to say, he would go to Punta Piti for the conference to take place there. He assured Glass that if he wished to come ashore, he could return safely to his ship. The letter was carried aboard by the [Spanish] Ensign, Commander of the Marine garrison, who was perfectly attended. Mr. Henry Glass replied that he would descend to Piti at 9 the following morning or send a trusted officer to express his intentions.

At night and with the knowledge of this reply, the governor called together those of us who were military men in his office, with the objective of seeing if anyone had any idea on any means to defend the island with any probability of success. Of course, we all had

to surrender to the evidence that there was not a single reasonable probability of success defending the island. We had only 54 trusted men armed with Mausers, and these with no more cartridges than those each individual had, it would not be possible to arm the Chamorros for lack of functional weapons. This was all the result of what had happened during the time of Don Jacobo, when 600 Remington rifles with ammunition were requested, so if there was a need to arm the people, it could be done. But we had not received any reply from the General Captaincy. (By the way, here [in Manila] on the other hand, the rifles were granted, only to be turned against us shortly after).

[In Guam] there is not a single fort. As you know, the island is small, it is therefore illusory to seek refuge and defense in the mountains, where in a couple of days we would be hunted given the numerical superiority of the enemy (their forces were not less than 4,800 or 5,000 men, including troops and sailors). Support for us was out of the question, how could we expect any when two months have already passed since the war started and we were not even notified of its declaration? In short, we had to admit our impotence for any sheer success, yet (here the noble man of La Mancha comes in²⁷), we resolved to defend ourselves at all costs—some even invoked Sagunto and Numancia!²⁸ Don Juan Marina thanked us for our good wishes and reserved his decision, pending the following day's conference.

Needless to say, that night was a trial for me, as I spent it running from one place to another. Don Juan's spirits dropped somewhat, understandable in a man nearing retirement who suddenly found himself facing such a misfortune. I therefore had to take charge of extraordinary duties and, worse yet, calm the townspeople, who, out of fear of the unknown, were taking to the mountains.

²⁷ Duarte keeps his earlier comparison with a comic farce, now parodying the over patriotic reaction of some of the officers like if the well-known Spanish character Don Quixote was entering the stage.

²⁸ Sagunto and Numancia, two icons of the Spanish ancient military history and prototypes of resistance against invasions. The city of Sagunto in 218 a.C. resisted more than 8 months a siege by Hannibal, and the ancient city of Numancia resisted for 11 years the arrival of the Romans to the Iberian Peninsula.

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At 4:30 in the morning I went home, and by 7 o'clock I was already in the Government to accompany the Governor to Piti. He had ordered that the Port Captain and the Doctor accompanied him too, since they were on board the cruiser, and I, as the Secretary, all of us going unarmed and in white suits.

[At Piti] At 9:30 o'clock we saw a boat coming with an American flag in the stern and a white one in the bow. From this boat several armed men jumped over the pier and formed a semi-circle around us. A Naval Lieutenant, 3rd of the "Charleston", came forward with a sheet of paper which he handed to the Governor. At the same time he took out his watch he said to him in a somewhat abrupt manner and in bad Spanish:

"You have 30 minutes to answer".

The Governor replied that he did not have time since the city was 8 1/2 kilometers away and he could not come and go in half an hour, and the American replied:

"Answer right here".

In the paper, Captain Glass limited himself in saying: "When I left America, my government ordered me to seize this island, therefore it is necessary that You with the officers and military men at the service of Spain surrender, giving in your armaments, ammunitions and flags. The officer, messenger of this communication, has the order to wait for only thirty minutes".

The good Don Juan wanted to have more time, but the American officer stood on his ground, so the governor had to reply right there and then. In the first piece of paper he could find at hand he wrote more or less as follows:

Having received your communication dated yesterday, without defenses of any kind, or elements to oppose with probability of success to those that you bring, I see myself in the sad precision of surrendering; although protesting the act of force

that is conducted against me and the way it has been done, since I have no news from my government that war has been declared between our two nations.

To the Commander of the War Cruiser *Charleston*.

He called me and gave me the paper so that in the company of the Port Captain, we could give it to the officer, as it was hard for Don Juan to be the one to give it himself. I gave the small paper to the officer expecting that he would go back to the cruiser to hand it to the Commander, but vain illusion! He opened it himself and slowly learned of what it said, and when he finished, he said:

“I need that you stay here with me.”

He called the Governor (who was about to ride the carriage and leave for Agaña) and the Doctor, telling them the same thing what he told us. The first one replied that he needed to go to the city and that he was protesting against the detention that was taking place in an act of parliament, to which the American retorted:

“A war is a war. You all have to come with me to the ship as prisoners. Captain Glass will explain”.²⁹

We had to follow him in a boat, but before that, he forced Don Juan to send four letters wherein he was giving orders to the [Spanish] Commander of the Marine Infantry detachment, so that he and his 54 men would go down to Piti to surrender their weapons and ammunition.

When we were already in the boat, water started to pour on us as if in a flood, and some 400 or 500 meters from the pier, we saw two lines of boats tugged by steamships,

²⁹ In broken Spanish in the original.

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hidden right at the tip of Cabras Island, that were there during the sham parley. As we crossed the two enemy lines, I could count in the first [line] a total of 800 men in 25 boats and launches, and the doctor told me that, after counting some more in the second line, he also saw machine guns on the boats and the two revolving cannons on the steamer's launches, clearly visible. At two o'clock, we arrived on board the cruiser, soaked to the bone, and were led to the Commander's cabin.

The officer spoke in English very fast to make difficult for us to understand him. He spoke with the Commander who then told us, seeing our condition, that he would allow us to go back to the land as long as we keep parole (word of honor) to return, yet we did not accept. Then they allowed us to write our families asking them to send us some clothes. At this point, courtesies began. As we came out of the Captain's cabin, we were each approached by a cruise officer who, very courteously, led us to their chamber, gave us paper, envelope and everything else we needed for writing and everything at our disposition. A little later, they gave me (how thankful I was) a cup or a mug of tortoise broth and a big glass of good white wine from California. I wrote there to Maria a letter that I'm sure she passed to you. By the way, it was written in great haste and almost while I could barely stand from weakness, soaked to the bone. The second-in-command collected our letters and immediately sent them ashore in a steam launch. The officers invited us to join them on deck, where they left us completely free in the stern area.

At about 5 of that afternoon, the officers had all left the cruiser leaving us alone, while they fired gun salutes and launched hurrahs of ordinance for the capture. This took place in Punta Piti, with a Company of the cruise going down with the flags of Oregon Regiment while the whole Port was occupied by 2,000 men well distributed. The Company of honor took charge of the armaments and ammunitions of the garrison or detachment that we had, and afterwards, they boarded back bringing with them our 54 soldiers and their two Ensigns, with the arms and the national flags.

So that in the Marianas they did not leave a single man, nor their flag, nor any appointed authority. We remained silent because we could not do anything else. I only thought of how to make all these [news] reach Spain so that, at in due time we could invoke the Treaty of Berlin to our favor, which I, the naïve of me! thought that it could serve for something else other than for spending some budget in troops and in Guardia Civil garrisons in exchange for being able to say that the Caroline Islands were Spanish.³⁰

At 6pm, they made us go down to eat at the Wardroom, having the attention of placing us alternately with them, and to the right and to the left of the presidency, the Governor and the Port Captain, Navy Lieutenant Don Francisco García Gutiérrez. They did not spare the means to be kind and even put a small gramophone at the center of the table and chose the cylinders containing Spanish tunes and melodies that they sang and chanted. The food was splendid and with all types of wine, of which they had a bit too much. You can imagine that we were not actually in the right mood and humor to correspond to joys and parties.

At night, we were told that we would be transferred to the liner *City of Sidney*, since there were no unoccupied chambers in the *Charleston*. At 9 we were transferred and handed over to the military chief of the *Sidney*, Commander Mr. Phelps. In pairs, they put us in the First Class cabins with a sentry at the door to prohibit us from going out. I was assigned as companion the military doctor Señor Romero. We did not have a bad night, as during the first hour we were accompanied by two very pleasant young men, lieutenants from the regular Army and graduates of West Point academy, who occupied the cabin next to ours. This is how the 21st of June of 1898 ended, which as you can

³⁰ The Treaty of Berlin, signed in 1885 by Western colonial powers including the United States of America and Spain, established “legal” procedures for the conquest and subjugation of other peoples. Initially, it applied only to the coastal territories of the African continent; however, later that same year, Germany invoked it against Spain in a dispute over the “possession” of the Caroline Islands. It sparked an international conflict that ended with the recognition of Spanish sovereignty and the establishment of a colonial administration in the said Micronesian archipelagos.

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imagine I will never forget.

The following day, they brought me the clothes and money that my poor Maria sent, with a letter that you may well imagine the sorrow that it caused me. Apparently, under similar distress, or better said under the sorrow that overwhelmed her, she must have written Juan and you. Imagine, the poor thing was still waiting for me for lunch!

We stayed in the cabin all the morning until 6 in the afternoon, when we sat sail. Upon setting the steamer in motion, Mr. Phelps called us on the deck and asked our word or promise not to try to communicate with our soldiers. We gave it to him, and he left us free to walk all around the ship except in the prow where our troops were. He informed us that upon the orders of Captain Glass and General Anderson, and in compliance to the instructions of President McKinley, we should be treated with all consideration and in accordance to our ranks.

After eight days of navigation, passing through the N. [North] of Luzon, we reached the [Manila] Bay, anchoring off Las Piñas. You can form no idea of the effect on us of seeing the disaster at close range. Although from the American press we had on board we were already acquainted with the news up to the 2nd of June, we thought it all exaggerated and most of it false. The very night we arrived (30th of June) we could not sleep all night, because of the noise of the rifle and cannon discharges that could be heard around Manila; During the whole of the following day we heard and saw heavy fire all along the coast of the bay as far as Cavite. Later we learned that they were the insurgents taking over all our military detachments in that province, detachments that had to surrender due to hunger or lack of ammunition for the most part. In short, our hearts crumbled when we saw so much disaster and witnessed the sad situation of Manila. And as if all this were not enough, they announced to us that since the American expedition had arrived and counting already on land forces, the following day Admiral Dewey would send the *ultimatum* to the city, that if they would not surrender, they would be bombarded.

The Commander of the *Charleston* came to tell us that if we gave him our word of honor not to bear arms against the U.S., he would set us free to reach Manila. We replied though that we could not promise something that we knew from the outset that we could not comply, since on reaching Manila our place was in the trench against whoever would attack the capital. He understood it perfectly well, because he told us that his intention had not been to offend us, since the parole is admitted in the armies of the principal nations and the same in that of the U.S. He offered us that he himself would see to it that we remained on land as well as possible, and indeed he himself saw to it that we were not surrendered to Aguinaldo and that we remained under the custodian of American forces, taking us down at the Naval dockyard of Cavite on July 5 and locking us up in the pavilions of the Governor of Fort San Felipe.

There we have been well treated, with sufficient, or rather with surplus of rations, and continuously visited by the officers of the American army who came with us. From that darned Fort we saw the attack and surrender of Manila, as well as the sufferings and humiliations of the [Spanish] officers and soldiers that the rebels had as prisoners in Cavite. These humiliations caused anger to the Americans, who later, out of compassion, helped and facilitated the escape of most of those prisoners. There was a day in which about six officers and thirty Spanish soldiers took refuge in the Fort, who the next day were embarked for Manila at the Dockyard by the Americans themselves.

Well after the capture of Manila, we were allowed to transfer to the city as prisoners of war, remaining under the custody of American authorities. There you have in detail the vicissitudes of my abduction and imprisonment.

When I arrived here, I went to see Juan, finding him skin and bones, while Titay was suffering with severe dysentery. All were caused by worries, privations, bad nourishment, etc. during the siege. Now, Juan is quite recovered, and she is recovering little by little, although because she gets scared of almost everything, she relapses again, so you can imagine the dismay that it causes our good brother Juan. Add to all of this that

the personal safety of the Peninsulares is wanting, and that now no servant wants to work. Since everybody is considered to be independent, they find demeaning to be servants, so our good Juan is burning out and cursing everything to hell. I try to calm him, but you know his character, he cannot be indifferent to slander and despicable behavior. Since now these are the most abundant fruits in Manila, try to picture how our good Juan lives now. All his belongings are packed in chests ready to leave anytime, but... where can they go which is not worse than Manila?

Our brother tells me that in the beginning of the year, he sent you the candy you wanted, but he found it strange that you did not write him anything about the matter. I told him that if you had received it, you would have written to let him know, so I believe it may have been lost, especially considering that he sent it through a customs agency.

I have received several letters from my good Maria. The poor thing never missed an opportunity to write me some lines. The last ones I received were dated July 28th, (received through the monitor “Monterey”), August 4th (through the monitor “Monadnok”) and August 7th (through the German cruiser “Arcona”).

In all of them she complains about the lack of news from us and the situation they are going through there [in Guam], seeing American ships with troops passing at every step and fearing any attempt by the political deportees that were sent from here to the Marianas at the beginning of the insurrection, who are now doing as they wish.

The Chamorro people, according to all the letters from there, are behaving very well, having presented themselves, after our removal from there, to the Administrator of Public Treasury, who is the most characterized among the civil employees (all of whom had remained there, without any interference from the Americans), asking him to take charge of the Government, which he did. Everyone continued paying their taxes as if nothing had happened, and a section of Chamorros was armed with machetes and clubs, to patrol the town and keep the exiles in check

By this time, you should already have a letter from me because I wrote extensively to you [and passed it] with Dr. Romero, who returned there on the American transport "Pensylvania" after the surrender of Manila. God willing, nothing out of the ordinary has happened over there! I would have tried to return to the Marianas since my presence there is always necessary due to the interests I have there, but I think it would isolate me from the news, and I consider it more convenient to stay here to see what will ultimately be decided regarding all this. I lose something by staying here (as they say, "the master's eye fattens the horse"), but it is likely that I would expose myself to a greater loss if, by being there, I missed a good opportunity or, above all, if the settlement of my previous [professional] status is delayed. So, I will tell you and consult with you about what I intend to do.

My military situation: on August 9, I have been in service for twenty-one counted years, having two years of credits from my previous stay here, and two more completed last August 13 of this second stay. Will they credit me these years for retirement, or should I wait day by day to complete 25 years? I have been in this office [Secretary of the Governor of the Mariana Islands] since April 1, 1897, which I hold until present. This has not affected my current situation because I wanted to wait to complete 24 evaluation periods, so I did not ask for a leave of absence since Primo de Rivera declared these islands pacified. Otherwise, I would have done so, as what it would have been more rewarding to attend my own businesses, which I could not attend to due to my assignment. Had I done it that way, the Americans would have left me there in peace, just like they did with all the military men who were not in active service.

Hopes for promotion... you would understand so well what hope I can have after this disaster. And worse, having younger people ahead of me. Besides, it is not worth for me to continue being posted here and there, considering the [economic] loss I would have on the other aspect.

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Financial situation: Now, I have more than two thousand pesos in cash, not counting what the State owes me as salary, and expired bonuses, and the half-salaries first, with the two compensations, which according to my calculation would amount to 1,035.50 pesos. God knows when I would see that! In Marianas, I have an extensive coconut and coffee plantation of 400 hectares, registered in the Land [Registry] and with a good house. From this property, I earn a bit more than the Captain's salary, where I already have planted (and I continue planting) more than 10,000 coconut trees, and some 26,000 coffee plants planted by me. So this is my hope, as you well know how much coconut costs, and how challenging it is in Marianas. Ever since the Japanese came to establish themselves there, the agricultural properties have increased in value, but now much more: as an example, it suffices to tell you that my good Maria says that she was able to sell ten *picos* of coffee, from the 52 we have stored up, at 45 pesos per *pico*, a fabulous price in Marianas.³¹ There, the price of copra has gone up until three cents of peso per pound. This hurts me, because it is a pity to lose an income that grows progressively, and that there is no other business there where it can be earned. Besides, it's improved by a good investment of a small capital in storing products that are profitable, as of now, no less than 70% (every 4 months) of the invested capital.

Some Americans have met me here [in Manila] to inform them of the business there [in Guam], proposing me to embark on one with them. A German from one of the firms here in Manila also made me a proposal to be the representative of their company, offering me a good commission (18%) for the purchase and sale. But I told them that until the *Sphinx of Paris* speaks,³² I would not decide on contracting commitments, and then, I will get in relation with the one that will give me more advantages.

³¹ Pico was a unit of weight used in the Spanish Philippines, equivalent to 63.25 kg. or 139.4 Pounds.

³² The sphynx, in ancient Greek mythology, was a mostly silent creature. The *Sphynx of Paris* here is in reference to the negotiations of peace between Spain and the United States that were still taking place in Paris at the time Pedro Duarte was writing this letter.

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Family situation: You already know how big it is, and in Marianas they live more economically than in any other place. I only have to worry about the education of the younger ones, and this I have resolved it: I began since I arrived in Marianas the last time, I made sure that Henry [Millchamps] and Emilia, who know English, spoke in this language to the younger ones. And the arrival in Marianas of an American family with nine small ones, very intelligent by the way, helped me in my purpose. Since that family stayed at first at my in-laws' house, and the little ones spoke only English, they were always playing with mine, they speak that language almost like if it was Spanish, and today Pedro and Mariquita speak it just as well. So that is something that I have in advance. In California, or better, in San Francisco, or in Los Angeles, San Diego, and other cities that were formerly Mexican, both Spanish and English are spoken. And according to the official teaching programs and public school catalogues [there], the children can take whatever course (even Commerce, which is a real degree there) without paying a cent since all official education is absolutely free, the State being the one who finances the schools. In consequence, one would only have to worry about sustenance and clothes for the children. In addition, for those students who excel, once they finish the plan of education with distinction, they are given job placements upon graduation. The sustenance of the children there, according to some people who have informed me, is more or less the same in the Peninsula. Besides, I have the advantage that Henry has relatives there and a cousin of his, who does not have children, lives in Alameda (near San Francisco). The last time he was in Marianas (October '97), he wanted to bring Pedro with him, but I did not let him because at that time I had the intention of sending him to the Peninsula this year or the next one. Since my idea is that the children get to do the career or get the profession that can make them earn decently as soon as possible, and they do not show any kind of opposition to this, I will try to convince them that they do an Industrial or a Commerce degree, which are practical and with good perspectives. Pedro turned eight [years old] last June and it is not worth for him to stay in Marianas since he already knows what they can teach them there, like to read, write and the catechism. Juan

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(whom you have not seen yet) is younger, he is five [years old], he has the same face as Pedro, but his hair is blonder; he can still wait, and it is better that he stays with me longer. He is too independent and very stubborn, making it more difficult for his mother to discipline him. Their trip would not mean a great effort on my part, because the head of the family I referred to previously, has already suggested several times that he would take Pablo with him when he goes there together with his two younger ones (the two older ones are already in San Francisco). Besides, to support him there would not cost me more than the average of 30 dollars (American) monthly, and for which Señor Don Pedro already had ready a pack of white linens that his dear mother herself prepared.

I am giving you the previous information so that you may know, in the best possible way, my present situation. In lieu of this, it is not convenient for me at all to be transferred somewhere else, as it would cost me, afterwards, around a thousand pesos to come back.

There are three solutions: retirement, transfer to the reserve or supernumerary. The first solution, if I get a bonus, it is convenient for me, because although there would be nothing more after 25 years of service, it is always a salary that will produce income. But... will they pay me for the time (or rather half of it) of service in the Philippines? Will they pay my retirement after the current catastrophe? If I get the credits, I am about eight months short of 25 [years].

To be transferred to the reserve would be the best, but I doubt they will open such a pass now since there is an excess of people waiting for it.

The third solution is the one that, in the absence of the other two, remains feasible and seems most suitable for my purpose. However, I don't want to be caught off guard by events and lose once again what I am currently at risk of losing. It would work against my interests if, by failing to act in time, I were forced to return to the Peninsula, having to cover my passage and expenses just to come back later—a cost I could avoid. I could also

miss the opportunity to get ahead of those who, if I don't act, will take the lead and rob me of gains that I could otherwise secure.

Since you likely have earlier access to information than I do here, especially concerning any peace resolutions, I ask that you let me know which solution you think I could pursue.³³ The most pressing issue for me is to be free as soon as possible to focus on my own matters, which will continue to suffer losses as time passes. Since you are there more informed about what I might be able to request, please write to me, in detail if needed, but to save as much time as possible, please write me by cablegram with your advice. I will cover the cost as I will explain to you later.

I attempted to submit a request here, asking that once the Treaty of Peace was signed, I be granted transfer to a supernumerary status. However, they responded first that, as I am a prisoner and under American authority, they could not accept my request. Second, they said the Captain General is General Ríos, and the command is located in Iloilo. In short, the situation is such chaos that it's hard to know who to go to.³⁴

As I mentioned before, and as you understand from the lengthy explanation I've given, it is advantageous for me to get ahead. A cablegram can gain me a month over a letter.

Therefore, I would appreciate it if, once the right moment arrives, you could send me the following cablegram: "Leave of Absence," "Reserve Status" or "Retirement", whichever you see as best and, above all, fastest. If it's appropriate for me to address the request directly under your authorization, add the word "Request" to whichever of the other three options you send. In the first case, I will submit a request here according to

³³ The Treaty of Paris signed between the United States of America and Spain was signed on December 13, 1898.

³⁴ Spanish General Diego de los Ríos was in charge of the remaining islands under Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines. Until the conversations of Paris resolved, the capital was transferred to Ilo-Ilo. The capital of the Marianas province was transferred to Saipan Island.

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the option you recommend. In the second, I'll know that I need to send you the request by the next mail. My address is: Pduarte = Manila.

Please in your letter let me know the cost of the cablegram in your currency.

I hope this letter reaches you in time, that is, before the final decision is made in Paris. I mention this because General Whittier, who was in charge of customs here, just left for Paris from Hong Kong on the 5th, to inform the delegates handling the carving of the bird that the eagle seized, as they say. He won't arrive in Paris until the middle of next month.

Everyone here speculates about what will happen. For my part, I doubt that anyone will step up to cover the debt of Cuba – which is what hurts the most. And I don't see where the resources for pacifying this place could come from. I am quite afraid that the Philippines will end up no longer being ours. The Americans are starting to take a liking to the situation, and the insurgents rather follow what they say, and nothing from us. The situation in the Visayas is as God wills, despite everything General Ríos says. Anyway, you will know the decisions in Paris before we do here.

Tell Pepín to keep studying; one never knows when one might need it. My time in captivity would have been much harder otherwise. As they say, necessity forces one's hand. While in the Marianas, I took up English, and I could translate and write it fairly well, but speaking it was difficult due to the pronunciation. When I was captured and had no choice but to speak it if I wanted to communicate, I would constantly ask people to write down what they wanted to tell me, and seeing it written helped me understand perfectly. Over time, from both stammering through it and hearing it daily, especially in Cavite once Dr. Romero, who spoke it well and was released under the Geneva Convention, joined us, I started to get better at it. I shared with him being the interpreter, particularly with the twenty-five [Spanish] officers of the [ship] *Leyte* who also needed to communicate with the guards, that was a good exercise. Those three months of captivity

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helped me a lot, as now I can understand and make myself understood, and I write it even better. Who would have thought English would become necessary? I have a gift prepared for Pepín, and if I see Elustondo, who was heading there, I'll give it to him to bring.

What's up with Enrique? Has he entered the academy? I hope we soon see him become a man. Tell them that in four or five years, when I have everything settled in the Marianas and my presence there is no longer so necessary, I'll come around to give them a big hug.

I repeat my request: please don't fail to send the notice as discussed, as any delay in freeing me to tend to my own affairs would be a serious setback.

I won't take up any more of your time. Give Pepín and Enrique many kisses and a big hug, and warm regards to Sofía and her family.

To you, a big hug from your loving brother,

Perico

If you write to Don Antonio, tell him I haven't forgotten them and will write at the first opportunity. Address: Calle de Victoria, 15 (House of Doña Ana Anderson), Manila.

Until Spanish mail service regularizes, it would be better to send mail through the Marseille route.³⁵ Juan is still at Palma, 7.

However, given Titay's fears and the current instability, they might leave Manila. For this reason, you may include her letter inside mine if you wish. November 5, 1898.

³⁵ Vía Marsella, meaning sending the letters through the French line of mail ships.

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Elustondo left for Hong Kong without taking the gift I had prepared for Pepín. There will be another opportunity. The *Buenos Aires* has delayed its departure until tomorrow.

[End of the Letter]

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The Matua Song: Ritual and Ceremony in Ancient Guam

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In 1995, Bill Weurch of the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center³⁶ (RFT-MARC), showed me the colonial notation of an indigenous song of the elite upper class Matua in Guam. It did not have a title. Ethnomusicologist, Barbara Smith, at the University of Hawaii suggested that I use the first three words of the lyrics “Hasgnon gof dya” as an ‘incipit.’ As I became more familiar with the role of betelnut, *pugua*, (PMP³⁷ *buRah, Blust, 2013, 749) in the native culture and its ceremonial status, I gave it a working title: “The Betel Nut Song.” This current research suggests, however, that the most appropriate title should be “The Matua’s Song.” The Matua were the ruling class in Guam prior to Spanish colonization, but ‘Matua’ was also the name of the ruling class of the Toraja people in Central Sulawesi. Although this paper focuses on music, it intends to link the two Matua peoples through common elements in music, genetics archeology and linguistics.

The following notation³⁸ and lyrics were found in the report of the French Navy Captain Louis D. de Freycinet during his three-month visit to Guam in the Mariana Islands in 1819. The song was sung to seal the peace at the end of a war between villages. The song contains one word in its lyrics, *bijamu*, that can be traced back to Hindu origins in c. 8th century Indonesia.

³⁶ RFT-MARC, University of Guam, U.S.A.

³⁷ Proto Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) branch of the Proto Austronesian (PAN) language family

³⁸ Notation is a system of writing musical tones on a set of 5 lines called ‘staff’

The Matua Song

Metronome 108

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of five staves of music, each with a line of French lyrics and a line of English translation. The music is written in a simple, early 19th-century style. The first two staves are the main body of the song, and the last three are a refrain. The lyrics are in French and English, with the English being a translation of the French. The French lyrics are in italics, and the English are in a standard font. The English lyrics are a direct translation of the French, with some words in parentheses to indicate where the French words are not in the English. The English lyrics are: "You do this on purpose", "you women", "sitting on my lap", "in front of me", "you tease me", "with your wad of betel", "with the peper leaf", "and the urucu nut", "that you did, that you did", "at your house, at your house", "at your house.", "Di", "Ku, di", "di lin di li . . .", "di lin di li . . .".

Has-gnon, gof ---- dja pu - la - u -- an ---- ho, ngu ho sud ---- di,
 You do this on purpose you women sitting on my lap

gul mi - na - - - - ho; ho su - u - - - ni ngu ma - ma - - - on,
 in front of me you tease me with your wad of betel

Refrain.

ngu plu - plu - djon djan pu - gu - a - - - on. li-dja - - mo, bi - ja - - mo,
 with the peper leaf and the urucu nut that you did, that you did,

bi - dja - - mo; ghe - - - mo, ghe - - - mo, ghe-ghé - - mo. Di
 that you did, at your house, at your house at your house. Di

ku, di ku, di lin di li . . . ku,
 Ku, di ku di lin di li . . . ku.

Figure 1. This musical notation was published on page 398 of the scientific report of Captain Freycinet, in 1824. The original lyrics were translated into French. The notation was left out of the Glynn Barrat translation into English in 2003. A microfilm copy of the original is on file at RFT-MARC, University of Guam.

The song appears to have been written in an eighteenth-century style of notation either by one of the Jesuit missionaries or by a student of *El Colegio de San Juan de Letran* in Hagatna, Guam under the tutelage of the Jesuit teachers. Whether it was notated in the 1600s or 1700s is not known. It is in the Baroque style of notation used by such eighteenth-century composers as Johann Sebastian Bach and George Friedrich Handel. Another example of Jesuit notation, possibly for the violin, was left in Guam by the Jesuits when they returned to Rome in 1769. It is possible that the notation for “Hasgnon gof dya” was also left behind for the students’ use. Another example, of music notation (not shown) from the Freycinet report is a Spanish dance called *moresca*. It accompanied a young CHamoru (mestizo) dancing the part of the Aztec Emperor, Montezuma, in what was plausibly the first European musical to be produced in Guam: *The Dance of Montezuma* (Freycinet, 1824).

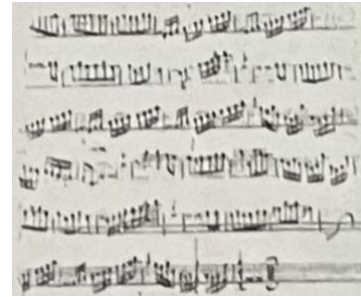


Figure 1. Example of notation left by the Jesuits in 1769 when they left Guam and returned to Rome. It is for a solo instrument; possibly violin.

The Matua song, albeit with its western notation, illustrates how effective music can be as a research tool, as a probe into understanding an ancient culture. Evidence, such as this tends to be passed on without much change from its original language and context. To wit, betel and song were immutable ritual elements in the peacemaking ceremony mentioned above. It must be admitted, however, that the mere fact that it is written in western notation indelibly colors one’s impression of how the song might have been sung. Surely, whomever notated the tones³⁹ had to make some compromises to make it fit neatly into the western notation. As the context and meaning of the song suggests, the singer was young and had healthy voice. In 1684, Garcia reports how good

³⁹ *Tone* is the musical sound itself compared to a *note* which is how the tone is symbolized on paper.

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was the female singers' sense of pitch was. This have might have carried over easily to the men. If so, the notation might be faithful to what was heard. The song is old, but how old is also difficult to tell. The term 'bijamu' suggests that, at the outset, in Guam, it could be as old as 1000 years. The ritualistic nature of the song suggests that it was a product of early Matua rule in Guam.

Musical sound, whether sung or sounded on an instrument, is an integral element of religious ceremony. This song highlights the symbolic role of betel nut in the ancient Matua culture as an element of both ritual and ceremony. Its importance in the ancient culture is supported by archeological, genetic, sociological and linguistic evidence. It underscores Peter Bellwood's call for a "comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach" to research that will balance that of archeology and linguistics.

Austronesian history must first be analyzed from a linguistic vantage point. However, we cannot explore the background coherently, if we rely solely on genetics and archeology. A comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach is needed to make sense of the language history (Bellwood, 2014, 41).

Who were the Matua?

In the Malay language *tuan* means lord, master or landowner, the upper class noble ... "it is a clear reflex of PMP *ma-tuqah/tuha"⁴⁰ (Blust, 2000,101). Through migration, the Sulawesi *tuan* appear to have become the *Matua in Guam*. The Matua reigned in Guam and its Islands for 668 years, from the date of their maritime migration from Wallacea⁴¹

⁴⁰ CHamoru language is placed tentatively under the Proto Malayo Polynesian (PMP) branch of the Austronesian language family. The CH spelling is used in this paper to distinguish the Spanish mestizo term 'CHamorro' and the whole language with its Spanish, Pilipino and native American elements from the pre-conquest language of the Guam natives; and when speaking about the genetics of the Chamorro.

⁴¹ An area around Sulawesi that includes the Spice Islands (Moluccas) and islands of the Banda Sea to the East and the coast of Borneo to the West.

and Sulawesi c.1000 YBP to the time of Spanish colonization in 1668, at which point evidence of their cultural practices began to disappear.

The only mention of Matua being descendants of a god come from the mythological writings of I Galigo about the Bugis and Toraja nobles during the first millennium CE. This precedes all such mention of Matua in Hawaii and the Pacific. According to the most reliable carbon-dating of artifacts, Hawaii was settled in 1219, and the only mention of a god named Matua in India was in 1812. In Sulawesi, however, the “great god in the sky, Matua,” existed since at least since the early first millennium. God Matua sent gods to populate the earth, and these became the Matua people of Sulawesi. This suggests that the elite Matua class of Guam obtained their name and status from the *To Matua* of the Sulawesi Toraja⁴².

The existence of the Matua song with its indicative word *bijamu* adds to our impression of what life was like in Guam and Saipan prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Linguistically, understanding this word can tie together loose ends in the historical



Figure 3. Borobudur Temple, the iconic symbol of Hindu Buddhism in Indonesia. Construction finished in 852 CE. Stone reliefs depict Hindu life throughout Indonesia. Photo by M. Clement, 2023.

record, especially in the area of herbal medicine and the work of healers. *Jamu* is the name of herbal medicine in Indonesia. In the ancient culture, music was sacred, tied to nature, and it was used to ‘speak’ to the gods. Healers such as the *macana* and *kakana* appealed to these gods and were a threat to the missionaries who were teaching Christian Doctrine. *Jamu* and betel were socially unifying forces in the ancient Matua culture of Guam.

⁴² Although the religious and cosmological nomenclature in Sulawesi appears to belong to the elite class of the Sadan Toraja, the Wana Toraja and Bugis contributed to it and may have been part of the 1000 CE migration.

The role of betel in Matua culture: Sulawesi and Guam

According to bio-archeologist, Nicolette Parr, around the year 1000 CE, there was a dramatic increase of the use of betel nut in Guam. I suggest that this increase reflects the introduction of new customary uses of betel such as in ceremony and ritual in which betel would have played a role. Parr dates the wide-spread use of the Matua grinding mortar, *lusong*, (Toraja, *lesung*) to c 1000 ybp. Citing Moore, 2005, Parr states: “Stone mortars and pounders are found ubiquitously throughout Guam and date almost exclusively to the *Latde* Period. They were likely used to ‘grind, pulverize, and de-husk plant products, such as rice, cycads, and arrowroot tubers’ (Parr, 2012, 62). Parr dates a reduction in dental caries during the *Latde* period, partially to the “culturally introduced practice of betel-nut chewing which is known to have cariostatic properties (Parr, 2012, 104).” In this sense, betel appears to have functioned as an herbal medicine.



Figure 4. Indonesian woman grinding *jamu* in the *issong* mortar, *lussung* in CHamoru.

The song is dated to migration by one word in the lyrics, *bijamu*, which dates to the 8th Century Hindu Mataram Kingdom in Java, Indonesia. *Bijamu* is the verb form of the Hindu term *jamu*⁴³ which is the name of the herbal (Ayurvedic) medicine introduced from India around the first to third centuries CE. That it rose to prominence in Java is seen in a stone relief in the Temple of



Figure 5. Borobudur relief. Slaves (below) are depicted making *jamu* for the royalty seated above. Photo: Clement, 2023.

Borobudur. The stone panels on the temple wall depict Hindu life throughout Indonesia as of the ninth century CE. The panel on the right shows slaves preparing *jamu* for the Javanese royalty seated above. *Jamu* consisted of ground seeds, bark, herbs, ferns and spices that could be used in food or prepared as a drink. Conceivably, the Matua Toraja of Sulawesi were involved in trade

⁴³ The Javanese Hindu name for an herbal medicine ‘healer’ is Jampi. In Guam and Saipan *yo-amte* or *e’amti*

between the Spice Islands and the rest of Island Southeast Asia. Jamu is recognized as an intangible cultural heritage item of Indonesia.

Lyrical contexts

The lyric *bijamu* has a long history in Indonesia, and it is found in the refrain of the Matua song in Guam. The first four lines of text make up the verse. The last two lines make up the refrain. They employ canonic parallelism, typical of both the *mero* poetry of the Matua and Wana Toraja and *mari* of the Matua in Guam. Initially, the Matua words were interpreted either by the Jesuits or the CHamoru historian, Don Luis de Torres. They were given to Captain Freycinet to translate into French. The English translation (Clement, 2001) corresponds to the translation by Glynn Barratt (2003). The lyrics follow:

Hasgnon gof dya, palauan ho,	You do this on purpose, you beautiful woman
Ngo ho saddi, guimina ho	Sitting in my lap in front of me
Ho suuni, ngu mamaon	to inflame me with your desires with a piece of betel
Nyu pupludyon, djan puguaon	with the leaf of the betel and the nut of the areca tree
Bijamu, bijamu, ghemo, ghemo	That you did, that you did; at your house, at your house
Diku, diku, dilin dili ku	(untranslated words)

The Matua bachelor, *ulitao*, is singing to the single girl, the *layao* (pronounced *ladzao*), but it is the girl who holds the power over the boy. She uses her skills to prepare a packet of areca nut (betel nut), the leaf of the betel tree and slaked lime to stimulate the libido of the *ulitao*. *Suuni*, taro root (line 3), is a metaphor for the male sexual organ. *Bijamu* (line 5) refers to “what she did,” which, more specifically, was to prepare the *pugua*, i.e., wrapping the betel nut in a leaf of *beter*.

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The chewing of betel nut is said to have originated in India, but its use spread throughout Southeast Asia. When mixed with slaked lime powder and wrapped in a *beter* leaf it becomes slightly intoxicating. The mixture makes one's saliva turn red and continued chewing can turn the teeth black. It has many medicinal purposes, thus its use as an herbal medicine, *jamu*. The *rajao* is using the betel to intoxicate the *ulitao*. In the 1640s, Alcina claimed that the *beter* leaf came from the Beter River in Cambodia. (Alcina, trans. 2002).

Bijamu has another meaning in Indonesia, e.g., Kartomi reported it as 'guest' (Kartomi, 2013, 98). *The word jamu carries the meaning of "guest, hospitality, made from plants," and is the traditional wisdom carried through generations of Indonesian families.* (Tridjaja, 2017, 222-223)." *Bijamu* had a similar double meaning in Guam. The offering of Betel was a sign of hospitality to a guest; a sign that the guest was welcome. In the ancient Matua culture of Guam, if a young couple desired to start a family, i.e. "marry", the oldest women of the boy's family would approach the house of the oldest women in the girl's family. If the girl's grandmother did not offer betel, it was a sign that the arrangement could not go forward. No words of rejection were needed.

In line 5 of the song, the word *gehmo*, "at your house," might have a contradictory meaning. I suggest that the words "your house" do not refer to the girl's family house but rather to the *guma ulitao*, the bachelor house. It was customary in the Matua culture for a father to rent out his daughter, for a year, to the *ulitao* for their pleasure. As Del Valle states:

Usually, the father of a young woman arranged with the Urritaos for the dedication of his daughter to the men's house (Murillo Velarde 1749:336, 339, 291). She would live there for a period of about one year. This service was reciprocated by the young men who offered their labor to the parents of the young woman. In Ritidian village, ten or twenty Urritaos lived with one woman in

the men's house. This premarital consorting of the sexes was fully accepted in ancient Guam (Del Valle, 1978, 20).

In the last line of the song, there are the words *diku, diku, dilin diliku*, I suggest this lyric is a window into the secret lives of the young, post-pubescent Matua boy and girl. They are the evidence that man and womanhood began early in life, at the time when boys and girls became sexually active and that their words and activities were kept among themselves. The words were referred to as being nonsense syllables, as *fino*⁴⁴ *gualafon*, the language of the moon. However, John Paul Gaimard, the naturalist on Freycinet's voyage of 1819 and Dumont D'urville's voyage of 1834, reports the word *didissou* which he translates as "women's parts." The initial sound of the word suggests that it might be relevant to the interpretation of *diku* etc.

It should be mentioned that the term *jamu* is still known to some *suruhanu* or healers in Guam. One family reported that their grandmother used the words *jemo* and *momo* (Quintanilla, 2024). Recently, I was told, anonymously, that there was a *jambi* tree in Saipan. According to one theory in Indonesia, *jambi* was the origin of the term *jamu* (Tridjaja, 2017). In Saipan, there is the term *yo-amti*, (pronounced djo-amti) for "healer". Another form of the word in Saipan is *eamti* (Fritz, 1904). The convergence of *eamti*, *yo-amti* and *jambi* in Saipan is a clear connection to Indonesian *jamu*.

Freycinet says that they would sing this at their secret song societies and cites the one in Pago (Freycinet, 1824, 385; Clement 2001, 60; Clement, 2014, 59). Freycinet describes the song society in Chuchugu, Guam.

Bachelors on the Mariana Islands had the custom then, as will be noted again elsewhere, of gathering in communal houses where they could give themselves

⁴⁴ Malay: *lin*, language, Brandstetter

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over to the most shameful debauchery with young girls, who came to join them there not only with the full consents, but even with the encouragement of their mothers. These houses called *guma ulitao* or bachelor houses were formerly very widespread. A particularly well-known one stood in *Chuchugu* [tsutsugu] the village that had become the haunt of many young debauchees (Barratt, 2003, 30).

Freycinet mentions another song that refers to the sexual liberties that young people had: *Hodjong akaga*, (go out young tease) sung by a mother telling her daughter to go out and turn herself over to the boys to enjoy ... “as an afternoon snack” (Freycinet, 1824, 369); Perez, c. 1995).

The song can be understood in the context of matrilineal culture wherein the reason for “Being” is procreation and perpetuation of the clan, of the bloodline of the *Maga Haga*⁴⁵, head woman of the clan. This manifests itself in Matua courtship ritual and marriage ceremony. Brownrigg (1992, 7) states that betel reached its highest ceremonial use in the Malay wedding ceremony. Betel was a metaphorical ‘performative’ element in every stage of Matua courtship and marriage in Guam, putting betel on a par with Malay tradition.

The lyrics set the matrilineal tone and context for the song, i.e., that the *layao* had the power to control the use of betel. In 1768, Captain Page stated “when a woman chooses to favor her admirer with a portion of her masticated betel, he receives it as a pledge of particular intimacy (Safford, 1899).” In the 1600s, in the neighboring island of Samar, 1,500 miles west, a girl will offer a boy her *buyos*, signaling that she wants to have sex (Alcina, 2002, 401; Clement, 2014a). The symbolism of betel is not limited to the Matua of Guam.

⁴⁵ Sumbanese *minye haghū* (Barbier & Newton, eds., 1988, 129)

In whatever type of ceremony the song is presented, the *lajao* is offering the betel. This is in line with other ritual uses of betel in Matua ceremonies. It was part of the protocol for greeting a guest, of receiving a boy's mother's request to ask for the girl's hand in marriage, in the ceremony to end war and signal peace, and to consecrate life crisis ceremonies. Upon the first birthday of a Matua son, a drink called *laulau* is prepared; it consists of ground coconut, rice and betel.

When an important Matua dies, it is the woman, the *tetsa*, who wails while mourning the deceased. The deceased's betel pouch was placed on his burial mound along with a miniature *proa* to sustain his soul on the voyage to visit the sun and the moon (Levesque, vol. 3, 73), (Vitebsky, 1995, 193)⁴⁶, (Clement, 2001, 45) metaphorically paying respects to the original brother/sister pair: *Puntan*⁴⁷ and *Fu'una*. The Toraja refer to *pu'u*⁴⁸ as *puya* (Atkinson, 1989. In Guam, *puya* (pudja) means "naval" or "source," thus aligning with the role of Pu'u as the Hindu source or creator of the Matua Toraja of Sulawesi.

Verifying the translations

The first challenge I encountered was the translation of *bijamu* as "that you did." Freycinet credits Don Jose de Torres with being his musical advisor, but the translation does not tell what she did. It seemed to parrot the bricolage (Wrbner, 1986, pp. 151-156) of the early missionaries who pronounced and spelled it as *bida-mu*, a combination of the Spanish word for life: *vida* (*bida* in CHamoru) and the CHamoru personal pronoun *mu*, meaning 'your' (Topping, 1975, 31). This undermined the indigenous translation 'that you did.'

⁴⁶ Wana Toraja: Pwe, bat owner of the sky. Approximation: CHamoru pwengi, night. *Micronesian pwongi

⁴⁷ Javanese punden >. CH puntan

⁴⁸ Malay or Hindu words with /p/ change to /f/ in CHamoru. There are exceptions; some are loan words.

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To resolve this problem, between 1995-2000 I presented the song to various CHamorus⁴⁹ such as Congressmen Ben Blas and Robert Underwood, storyteller Clotilde Gould, Professor Benit Dungca, CHamoru scholar Carmen Iglesias Santos, teacher Dora Torres, singers Ben Meno, Bill Paulino and Angelina Anderson; radio host, William Charfauros; former CHamoru Language Commission head, Alumina Perez and to Dr. William Peck of Rota.

In 2004, I created a sound recording of the melody using instruments that the Matua had in 1668: the musical bow and the Jews harp. I added an electronic synthesizer to simulate the sound of a gong. With its drone-like quality, it sounded 'Indonesian.' I presented the song and recording at the world conference of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) in Fuzhou, China and received a favorable reaction.

In 2013 Miguel Villar announced that CHamoru⁵⁰ DNA was inherited from Sulawesi and the Wallacea region of Indonesia. This inspired me to look for the origin of 'bijamu' in Indonesia. Coincidentally, at this time, a CHamoru, Ray Quintanilla, had written a play called *It's got to be Chamorro*, and we planned to use the song in the play. Quintanilla organized a meeting of CHamorus who were to be involved with the play to hear the song. We met in Chuchugu, Guam. The group debated the meaning of *that you did* but without any consensus. It accepted the Freycinet translation. The group included Joey Franquez, Jose Garrido, Leonard Iriarte, Ray Quintanilla, Robert Underwood and *Rudy* Villaverde. In addition, I solicited comments from guitarist Carlos Laguana and researcher Rlene Steffy.

In my search for the Indonesian meaning of *bijamu*, I focused on the root *jamu* and discovered that it was the herbal medicine introduced from India by the Hindus

⁴⁹ The CH spelling of CHamoru is used to separate the mestizo born CHamoru with a Spanish-Catholic world view from the animistic, Hindu influenced world view of the pre-conquest Matua.

⁵⁰ DNA concerns the genome of the 'whole' CHamoru including Spanish and native American heritage.

early in the first millennium. This provided a firm basis for exploring further linguistic connections between the languages *Fino CHamoru*, Malay, Javanese and Sanskrit.

CHamoru DNA⁵¹ and migration

In the early 2000s, National Geographic announced its genome project to map the world's migrations. Some of the first results, announced in 2013, indicated that the mitochondrial DNA of female CHamorus⁵² was inherited from the region between Central and South Sulawesi circa 3500-3200 years ago. No data was reported for

the CHamoru male. The DNA also showed that there was a second migration c. 1000 CE from Wallacea to Guam. Once again, it showed that the female DNA was inherited from

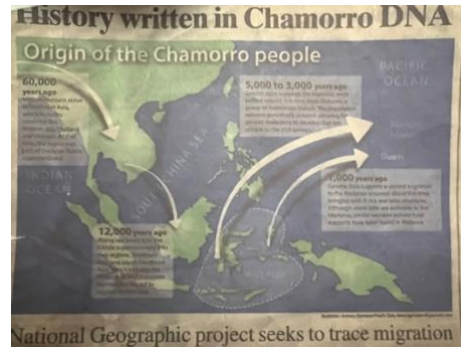


Figure 6. Image from Guam Pacific Daily News, 2013.

Figure 7. The Bugis double-outriggered prahu, *Wellenrang*, of Sulawesi, built by Sawerigading in mythological times. (Pelras, 1996). It could be similar to the prahu used in the migration to the Guam islands c. 1000 CE. The above relief panel is shown in the Temple of Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java.

Central Sulawesi, an area occupied historically by the Toraja, Bugis and Wana tribes. As for the male CHamoru, the migration indicated that their Y-chromosome DNA was inherited from northeastern Sulawesi, specifically the

Mollucas or 'Spice' islands. DNA indicates an individual's complete genetic makeup or genome. Through human genes, parents pass traits to offspring. In genetics, humans are identified by their Haplo group. "Haplo" refers to the different branches of DNA that determine a person's genetic make-up that can be inherited together. In the case of the CHamoru, the Haplo group that the National Geographic project tested is B4a1a1a. Researchers were able to determine the CHamoru inheritance from comparing the presence of this B4a1a1a sequence in ancient (neolithic) human remains with samples of the same sequence in contemporary CHamorus' DNA. These results showed how

⁵¹ Deoxyribonucleic acid. A complex molecule that holds all of a person's genetically inherited information.

⁵² Blust uses the term "pre-Chamorro" to name the first migrants to arrive in the Marianas however early that might be. The earliest confirmed archeological dates are c. 3200-3500 BP.

DNA can be used to track world migrations. According to Miguel Vilar, manager of the National Geographic project, “The unique B4a1a1a lineage from Guam and Rota may have arrived in a separate wave of migration 1,000 ybp from ISEA, along with the distinct *latde*⁵³ structures and rice agriculture, both of which have ties to Indonesia” (Vilar et al, 2013, 121).



Recently, some of the same researchers, reaffirmed the validity of the National Geographic results for matrilineally inherited lineages in both the Unai⁵⁴ and Latte (Matua) periods in the Marianas. The Unai period is from c. 3500 to 1000 BP; the Latte or Matua period is from 1000 to 1668 CE. They also show that a previously unknown M2 FROpalau lineage mixed with FR Marianas between 2400 to 1700 years ago, giving the CHamoru people 15 percent FROpalauan ancestry. (Liu et al., 2022). The M1 Haplogroup indicates Southeast Asian ancestry (SEA). The origin of the M2 Haplogroup is 40 percent SEA and 60 percent southeast India and Bangladesh. This does not necessarily change the direction of migration from Sulawesi into Micronesia.



Figure 2 Image: Science Magazine, July, 2022.

The 1000 CE migration from Sulawesi brought dramatic change reflecting advances in Indonesian culture. Visitors to Guam during the Spanish colonial era commented that there were two distinct social classes in Guam, one that was superior to the other. From the evidence produced so far, this upper class appears to have been the Matua of Sulawesi. The fact that the word Matua appeared in Guam suggests a

⁵³ The *latde* spelling reflects its Matua-period pronunciation in Guam; Toraja: lantai, Indonesian, lanta.

⁵⁴ Unai Period, c. 3500 BP to 1000 BP; Latte Period, 1000 CE to 1668 CE.

connection with the Toraja tribes of Sulawesi of which the Matua were the ruling class. The Matua reign lasted for 668 years in until the time of Spanish colonization in 1668.

The Toraja spoke a Malay language with a number of Hindu loan words such as *bijamu*⁵⁵ as seen in the Matua song “Hasgnon gof dya.”

Summary & Conclusion

History has generally been defined by the educated elite of a culture. In the Matua era, 1000-1668 CE, the Matua were those elite who held the power and who were the preservers of tradition; they were the leaders of their culture. Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead puts it this way. *Cultures put forth their most important songs and dances so they will survive and perpetuate the essence of their culture* (Hart, 2003, Clement, 2014a). I suggest that the Matua’s Song represents the essence of the ancient Matua culture. It was inherited from the Hindu-Buddhist tradition in Java and is based on the role of herbal medicine and healing, with all of its ceremonial and ritualistic meanings. The close relation between *jamu*, *jampi*, *yo-amte* and *eamti* supports that connection. Because of the songs chronological connection to the Hindu culture of Java and Sulawesi, the concept and practice of *jamu* could only have reached Guam through the 1000 CE migration. The two studies on CHamoru DNA confirm that this took place. On the isolated island of Guam, it should be natural that the Matua would pick a heritage item such as *jamu* and elevate it to the status of song, as if it were a national anthem.

Although this is a music paper, it has identifies the period from 1000 to 1668 CE as the Matua period; chronologically this corresponds to the the archeological-based Latte Period. It suggests that the Matua were the driving force in the culture and that

⁵⁵ I suggest it was introduced as *berjamu* and, over time, dropped the “r”.

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the Latte an expression of spiritual beliefs and their social order. Genetics seems to confirm what foreign observers have said for centuries: that there was a superior class in the Mariana Islands that ruled over others. These were the Matua and they laid the native foundation for what has come to be called the Kostumbren CHamoru in the Spanish colonial period. As for the language, the 1000 CE migration introduced key Hindu loan words in the Chamorro language that reflect the Hindu influence in Java and Sulawesi. Since the 2400 YBP migration of the M2 Haplo type-FROpalao lineage primarily indicates Indian origins, it also can be construed to mean that there were Indian trade contacts in Indonesia prior to the formal Hindu migration that began around 100CE as well as Hindu contact with Guam. Following these threads will require more research. The Matua Song demonstrates the power of music and the symbolism of *jamu* as a central ritualistic element in the Matua ceremony to make peace after war and as a healing agent. The fact that the Hindu word *bijamu* is used to describe the preparation of betel indicates a connection between the Matua of Sulawesi and the Matua of Guam. The mixture of *beter* leaf, betel nut and lime powder falls under the category of herbal medicine. The Hindu loan words *jambi*, *jamu*, *eamti* and *yo-amte* support this claim of a common nomenclature of healing words in both Indonesia and Matua culture of Guam.

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⁵⁶ U.S. House of Representatives resolution for CHamorus to carry betelnut between Guam and the Continental U.S.

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Across Oceans and Continents: Sonic Imaginations, Lălai and Basque Intersections in Guåhan, Mariana Islands

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Abstract

CHamoru/Chamorro cultural groups have become crucial storytellers in terms of how music-making, dance, and chant engage in complex processes of negotiation that situates the music practices themselves as formidable forms of knowledge production. This article draws critical connections of Basque influences in the Mariana islands by interrogating the function of lălai in both CHamoru cultural groups and often-overlooked Basque intersections most notably by Pål'e' Roman De Vera, who was an important figure in creating hymnology in the CHamoru language. I use music to enmesh the primacy of Basque and Chamorro Catholic influences in broader social-historical impacts that have yet to be considered along musicological fields. I then follow lălai in terms of how performative modalities function in the context of officially sanctioned celebrations which I argue, offers alternative routes in bringing together seemingly disparate pockets of historical significance. Theorizing the acousmatic, and sonic imaginations offers a way to make sense of the musical and sonic colonial violences that have occurred via the introduction of tonal regimes sanctioned upon indigenous peoples and how lălai makes known the musical strains of Basque relations in the Mariana Islands. In doing so, I advocate for listening beyond ocularcentric approaches, in favor of more capacious avenues of understanding cultural heritage in the Marianas.

Note on Spelling: Naming indigenous lands and waters is a political act and decidedly more so for naming the peoples themselves. Rather than defaulting to one monolithic term to refer to the islands, peoples, I opt to navigate through several orthographical styles and means of self-identification. By no means is this a self-induced confusion by the author nor for readers, but a tactical move to flesh out multilayered indigenous specificities as well as indicating how naming is implicated in ongoing reclamations of indigenous naming practices and resistance to historical colonial structures and current divisions of island entities.

A Relistening to Chamorro Hymns

In the Mariana Islands, Catholic hymns most widely sung to this day by the Chamorro people include “O Maria Nanamagof”, Matuna i Ginasgas-mu”, “Iya Bilen”, and “San Jose” to name a few. When congregations sing them in the *GumaYu’os*, church, across the villages or in family homes gathered by the *bilen*⁵⁷, nativity scene, one can hear how to articulate words, phrases and expressions in the Chamorro language which are seldom heard elsewhere by those who sing them – considering the critical status the indigenous vernacular. In positioning the Church’s role in the islands, Vince Diaz aptly describes the missionization of the Marianas saying, “for the Chamorros Guam and the Marianas, one finds not the classic remoteness and insularity that is supposed to deliver the specificity and particularity of cultural alterity on which modern anthropology cuts its teeth; instead, one finds the complexity of creolized culture forged out of centuries of intercultural mixing as the principal form of Indigenous social and cultural articulation” (Diaz, 2010). Most devoted Catholics in the Mariana Islands understand that most *Kantan GumaYu’os*, Church songs, or *Kantan Nubena*, Novena Songs, to be adapted and translated from Spanish hymns, however, a sizeable corpus of these hymns can be

⁵⁷ Bilen literally means Bethlehem in Spanish, it can either refer to the city of Bethlehem or, the Nativity scene of the baby Jesus’ birth that is decorated in churches and homes during Christmas. Furthermore, Bilen is one way to spell it in Chamorro, the spelling Belén is more recognizable in Spanish.

traced back to the Catholic communities of Basque Country located in several enclaves along the Pyrenees mountains, in the regions of southern France and northern Spain. While historiographical work has done much to unpack the complexities of Chamorro agencies elsewhere (Clement, 2011; Flores, 1999 Perez-Hattori, 2004; Diaz, 2010; Camacho, 2011; DesLisle, 2021), I raise critical awareness to how musical research, acoustic and auditory life have yet to be fully considered in conventional Micronesian discourse most especially when it comes to heritage and the reshaping of it. Attending to the experiential in this way can afford a fresh perspective of how history persists in faculties beyond the written whereby “people come to express their relation to sound and its circulation” (LaBelle, 2010). In this article I interrogate the CHamoru term *lălai* and its storied function in Native Catholicism in the Marianas by assessing how it has evolved in perpetuating indigenous CHamoru culture both within and beyond religious spheres. I do so to raise the significance of actors who were responsible in developing seminal texts of Church hymns such as *Lălai Hulo Anti-ho Kanta Gumayuus Siha* by the Basque priest Pâle’ Roman De Vera. I interrelate the diverging applications of the term such as how contemporary actors deploy their own aesthetic formation of *lălai* in recent contexts which points to conceptual shifts in ever-evolving indigenous heritage practices. The following section interweaves Basque and Chamorro historical experiences.

Wars, Regimes, and Occupation Across Continents and Oceans

The people of Mariana islands had been plunged into the Second World War via the aerial bombing by the Imperial Japanese Army and subsequent occupation of Guam on December 8th 1941-August 1944. About five years earlier, the Basque town of Gernika a vibrant town and region known to be the “ancient town of the Basques” (Steer, 1937) was heavily bombed by the Nazi German Luftwaffe's Condor Legion and the Fascist Italian Aviazione Legionaria. Done at the behest of military general Francisco Franco, the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) resulted in Franco successfully

overthrowing the Second Spanish Republic which would then secure Franco's power as Spain's dictator for nearly forty years. Both in Guam and Gernika, each of these tragic bombings received global attention for their role in how each war would play out, and while they were categorically different conflicts separated by geographic location, highly diverging cultural contexts and geopolitics, certain parallels and critical intersections are worth interrogating. These include faith-driven communities, the music, prayers and rituals that sustain peoples during times of war. When taking into account Spain's imperial presence in the Marianas for over three centuries, since the end of the Spanish-Chamorro Wars (1671-1699), missionaries from many parts of Spain and Europe played a pivotal role in Spain's overseas empire, but I argue that certain Basque influences have made a particular indelible mark on the Chamoru people. For example, complex layers of how on the one hand, Basque's cultural ethnic, cultural, and political repression on the European continent against dominating European powers can create certain affinities between Chamorro and Basque peoples, but how on the other such affinities lose their traction in the context of missionization of the Marianas. Relating these experiences of oppression between Chamorro and Basque peoples does not seek to over-simplify a naivety of shared struggle, nor does it diametrically oppose their participation in colonization just because iconic figures of Basque heritage stood alongside and participated in empire, but rather this article examines these intersections and incongruencies as important positionalities to work through as cultures of commemoration and heritages continue to transform. Chamorros have responded to such transformations for example, by both their revival of cultural performing arts as well as their investment in Catholic faith that ebb and flow between one another. To further flesh out such implausible relations, I take a critical ear to the musical

compilation of traditional Basque Church songs that have since been made into Chamorro Catholic hymns⁵⁸. This formidable repository Chamorro musical heritage is forever etched in their resilience during World War II and commemorations thereafter within the social fabric known as Kustumbren Chamorro. I investigate Pãle' (Father) Roman de Vera's musical and Chamorro language contributions to the Chamorro people of the Mariana islands. I do so by introducing well-known Kantan Guma Yu'os (church songs) and kantan nubena (novena songs), many of which were translated and adapted from traditional Catholic Basque hymns into the Chamorro language.

Basque and Chamorro Intersections

"Those who know the Jesuits know that Basque nationalism is completely Catholic."

—Sabino Arana, EL CORREO VASCO, July 29, 1899

Excerpt from "The Basque History of the World," Mark Kurlansky (1999)

In his book *The Basque History of the World* (1999) Martin Kurlansky opens the fourth chapter entitled "The Basque Saint" with the epigraph above. While a thorough reading of Basque history is well beyond this article's scope, one historical experience relevant for both the CHamoru people and Basques is their devotion to the Catholic Church. In further teasing out more complex strains of Basque encounters with the Chamorro people, it would be Jesuit priest Blessed Louis Diego de San Vitores, beginning in 1668 (Rodríguez-Ponga, 2021) who would establish the first Catholic Mission and school, *El Colegio de San Juan de Letran*, in the island of Guam and in Oceania writ large. With this establishment, San Vitores named the patron of the city of

⁵⁸ There have been other religious musical influences dealing with the Church in the Marianas such as German Capuchins in the Northern Marianas as well as missionaries from other orders and parts of Spain. This is a rich history, but I respectfully sidestep this because I specifically focus on Basque connections which consists of hymns also used in the islands of Rota, Saipan, and Tinian. While a complete survey of hymns particular to island locales are important, it is not the main focus of the article but rather the longer historical legacy of Basque's role during Spanish colonization, the American Naval period both pre- and post-World War two.

Hagåtña after San Ignacio de Loyola (St. Ignatius of Loyola) a Basque saint and founder of the Society of Jesus or Jesuit Order (Forbes, 2011). Guam's colonial center of power within the capital village of Hagåtña was known as San Ignacio de Agaña by the colonial and Chamorro elite. After centuries of established faith in the Marianas, many Chamorros remain devout Catholics. Before Basques converted to the Catholic faith, they lived in their homelands prior to the Romans entering the Iberian Peninsula and are descendants of the early Vascones and Aquitanians. This heritage makes Basques distinct from the relatively recent Indo-European languages and cultures that arrived in the Iberian Peninsula over 5,000 years ago. Basques have persisted in maintaining a distinct cultural identity in relation to the nation-states they live in, Spain and France. Such efforts in maintaining their way of life did not come without their own respective struggles as well as resistance to concerted efforts by occupying powers to impose various forms of erasure. For example, early on in their history, Basques experienced a period of Christianization, where their belief systems were relegated to archaic mythological paganism. In the 20th century during the Franco dictatorship, *Euskara*, the Basque language, was banned from being spoken in public. While acknowledging the difference in geographic distance and of cultural contexts, comparable punitive punishments can be said to have been experienced by Chamorros and Basques respectively at the hands of suppressive regimes, including being fined for speaking one's mother tongue and in some extreme cases, being jailed (Bitong, 2022). As is the case with marginalized communities, oppressive acts of outlawing mother tongue deeply discouraged intergenerational language transmission. In fact, such language policies in both the Franco regime and the American occupation before and after WWII in Guam coincided during the same period.

Historical processes of epistemicide are important to note, but particularly in terms of how music has the potential to loosen its salience when one's culture is threatened is an important characteristic I aim to flesh out. That is, music's ability to fly

under the radar of outright prohibition brings connections between CHamoru and Basque experiences between different regimes, across continents and oceans so as to assess possible reasons how Basque Capuchin missionaries helped protect CHamoru culture amid changing colonial administrations and even in times of war.

From Guma' Åcho Latte' to Guma' Yu'os: Ringing in Natives in an Island of churches

The Catholic Church in *Guåhan*, Guam, and the Marianas have been one of the only consistent institutions where speaking, singing and cultural agency in the Indigenous language was permitted, even amid American assimilation policies. While *lålai* has been a vital force in the reclamation in recent CHamoru indigenous heritage initiatives, components of this Indigenous genre such as *fino' håya*, become complicated when the promulgators of such practices are linked to the longer history of Spanish colonization. Nevertheless, Basque priest's integration of Chamoru language via Basque Catholic hymns into native Catholicism particularly in the 20th century is a primary focus. I argue that by interrogating *lålai*, which was how Basque Catholic hymns were hitherto understood in a CHamoru context, demonstrates the interplay of CHamoru agencies across multiple generations and, an entryway into broader discourses of the role of the Church during times of war, but first I will first give a brief personal anecdote to introduce sonic imaginations. Recalling how I traveled around the island by car as a child, I was taught to make the sign of the cross whenever we passed a village church which was further by other sonic cues such as the ringing of the bells. Churches in the islands can be a means of orienting oneself and can prove important when navigating from one village to the next. This otherwise innocuous detail opens certain cultural conditionings up for critical reflection, such as how the church building has become a demarcating architectural force that becomes audibly palpable between villages. The subtle habit of me making the sign of the cross compels me to wonder: how long has this practice been present in the islands? To what extent were other variables at play in

positioning the church as a locus of authority? Not only was I frequently reminded by my parents and elders to maintain this tradition, but the ringing of church bells also subconsciously reinforced this practice as well as its presence. The lasting sound connection that churches across centuries evoke can fall under what sound studies scholar Jonathan Sterne (2012) calls “sonic imaginations”. Sterne explains,

Sonic imaginations rework culture through the development of new narratives, new histories, new technologies and new alternatives. Sonic imaginations “reproduce cultural understandings at every turn”—there is no knowledge of sound that comes from outside, only knowledge that works from particular limits. These limits in turn work like affordances—baseline assumptions and massive traditions to build from, as well as conventions worth playing with and struggling against. (Sterne, 2012)

I use sonic imaginations here as a way to approach history with memory so as to loosen historiographical evidentiary paradigms to instead, engage in processes that resensitize how CHamorus may have perceived their lived-in sonic worlds and its transformation but also how cultural practices persisted. Running parallel to this, it is also useful to call attention to what sound studies scholars refer to as acousmatic sound (Kane, 2014). Generally speaking, acousmatic is a sound that one hears without knowing what causes it (Kane 2014). Acousmatic sound allows for a certain threshold of acceptance, a tolerance of the ubiquitous presence of many sounds in the everyday, detaching the sources of the sound, which lends oneself unconcerned with the circumstances of its production. Just as I associated my upbringing with never questioning the sign of the cross, I use this term to analyze how the isolation of sound—as in the ringing of church bells—behind the veil of acousmatic sound, can be perceived as critically correspondent to subtle disciplining of CHamoru bodies and, their subsequent removal from ancestral villages to a rough layout of the partitioning of island villages today. Moreover, Kane argues that “the acousmatic character of the

sounds matters, in that the enigma of their source—its invisibility and uncertainty—is a central feature of the experience” (2014). I argue here that a church bell whether visible or not to villagers, did not function as a means to draw attention to itself as a source of sound, but rather far from an aesthetic orientation, the material effects of such foreign audible properties could have very well been initially associated with ideas of forced removal, control and power from the vantage point of a villager. Take for instance such strategies for musical religious control which suggests the earliest machinations of what would be the *lukao* in Native Chamorro Catholicism,

This ministry involved sporadic treks to the villages or paths in the hinterlands, where the mission hoped to catch Natives off guard, and attract others to God's word by singing holy verses, often referred to in Spanish as *ejaculaciones*, which San Vitores himself likened to "holy darts" he would fling expertly into the innocent hearts of otherwise ignorant and unsuspecting *indios* (Diaz, 2010).

The “holy darts” that Vitores musically threw at my Chamorro ancestors eventually sedimented into the matrilineal transformation and relocation of native womanhood, part and parcel of the thick veneer of Native Catholicism. Turning back to my personal vignette, in the village of Hagåtña where my father is from holds the historic distinction of being the first church to be established in the Pacific. The Jesuit priest Father Louis Diego de San Vitores was the first Roman Catholic priest to establish a permanent mission in the islands of *Lāguas* yan *Gāni* starting in 1668 and after his martyrdom in 1672, the CHamoru/Chamorro people of the 15-island archipelago were embroiled in war with ancillaries of the Spanish colonial enterprise. After almost thirty years, the conflict eventually resulted in a campaign known as the *redducción*, a programmatic process of relocation whereby the native inhabitants were forcibly removed from their ancestral villages and island locales. As Chamorros/CHamorus were concentrated on the southernmost island of *Guåhan*, Guam, the Spanish regime at first found it increasingly difficult to contain native populations owing to their extensive knowledge of

the land and sophisticated ocean-going canoe culture. When it came to leaving at a moment's notice, Spanish galleons stood at a significant disadvantage against agile CHamoru *sakman*, flying proa. A brief example to illustrate this point is Scott Russell's synopsis the CHamorus of Gāni, and their subtle display of navigational prowess as a means to refuse forced relocation,

Tinian, and Saipan under control (Hezel 1989:8–10). Soon after, canoes bearing the news of the Spanish victory were sent to the Gani islands with orders for their inhabitants to resettle into Fatiguan, one of the newly established mission villages on Saipan (Hezel 1989:10). Although the Gani Chamorros offered no physical resistance to this forced resettlement, it soon became clear to the Spanish that they were not happy with life on Saipan. On a rainy night in July 1697, four hundred islanders abandoned Saipan and returned to their former homes in the Northern Islands (Lévesque 1997:157). Alarmed by this mass exodus, the resident priest on Saipan, Father Gerard Bowens, sought the assistance of Governor José Madrazo (Russell, 1998).

Such a massively executed clandestine exodus under the cover of night bespeaks the level of duress and equally, the amount of navigational skill Gāni CHamorus mustered to get out of colonial confinement even if resistance to the *reduccion* was only temporary. Surely the account above suggests the level of long-voyage navigational skill that eventually became absent after the Spanish-Chamoru Wars. Magellan's burning of the village⁵⁹ of Humātak in 1521 marked the beginning of such altercations between Europeans and the Taotao Tāno ⁶⁰. The doing away of canoe transportation can be seen

⁵⁹ Every year on Indigenous People's Day, a holiday formerly known as Discovery Day, the southern village of Humātak in Guam hosts a celebration where cultural dance groups reenact the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer funded by the Spanish monarchy. In this reenactment, performers stage the burning of villages and reflect on the first interaction with Europeans and the colonial impacts of the arrival of Spanish galleons to the Mariana Islands.

⁶⁰ This term also refers to the naming of the indigenous Mariana Islanders as the CHamoru/Chamorro people. Its literal translation is "people of the land".

as part of staged plans in the structural transformation of how indigenous populations could move within the boundaries of the regime's newly formed villages whereby the church as an architectural structure stood as locus of power. After CHamorus/Chamorros were subdued militarily, the Church as a physical structure itself emerged as a formidable institution in reshaping social relationships in the islands in ways that molded new modes of listening onto indigenous peoples. By carving out new village locales both physically and sonically, the construction and function of the church transformed the spatial orientation of island environments in ways that were practically conducive to how priests were to administer the new religion to the native population. Perhaps unknown to the clergymen was that along with the hymns and prayers that were taught to their newly acquired local flock, was the introduction of a new technology that participated in forming a new social order that further instilled behaviors of movement conducive to colonial containment. That is to say, if there was a sound that could mark the most significant cultural-institutional shift in the islands of Låguas yan Gåni, and quite possibly the Pacific writ large, the ringing in of the church bells throughout island villages are quite literally towering candidates. Where it was simply not possible for the physical presence of clergymen, large metal cup-shaped resonators with pivoted clappers were part of a new acoustic arsenal that reinforced the territorial domain of colonial municipalities and were exceptional in cutting through the thickness of tropical foliage. Capuchin priest and historian Pålle' Eric Forbes even notes that the bell clapper had been given the nickname by Chamorros as *chilin kampana* or *dåmmut kompana* (Forbes, 2019), which refers to the male penis and scrotum.

Such playful references to church bells suggest a new type of masculine control, but they also play up indigenous frames of navigating through environment such as paying respect to the *taotaomo'na* known as *Ga'tos*⁶¹ who in ancient CHamoru legend, provided passage via his penis or, sought retribution by the swelling this body-part if one disturbed his dwelling. The interruption of natural sounds by church bells situates the notion of acousmatic again by how CHamorus have had to make sense of divergent attributions concerning the divinities heard in the noises. Bells are historically important in their role as an instrument of discipline over the everyday lives as in the ordering of time, where the ringing of church bells over several times a day ushered in a particular quantified time regimen that focused on fixed hours of the day. The deployment of church bells served to take physical account of people in relation to organizational spaces for things like communal prayer and work. Pål'e' Eric Forbes has written on how Chamorros prided themselves in waking up early at the sound of the *åtba*, the first church bell of the day to ring at four o'clock in the morning (Forbes, 2011).

After the violence of the Spanish-CHamoru/Chamorro Wars, bells were part and parcel of a plea- for islanders to assume their neatly plotted out locales and a subtle warning to permanently stay within the village confines, away from their former ancestral villages and to leave their *guma' latte* and ancestral relatives who dwelled there behind. I speculate how such historical accounts of forced removal produced various effects of noise and sound wrought on natives that point to how jarring these bells must have sounded when used in the service of colonial biopolitics. A new set of listening capacities arose that focused on maintaining life based on colonial control of native bodies via acousmatic listening. They also evoke a complicated past and present

⁶¹ Michael Lujan Bevacqua writes that, "*Gatos* (100) was a *taotaomo'na* who was known for his large penis. He would travel with other spirits which served as his soldiers, who would use *Gatos'* penis when crossing rivers. If you entered into *Gatos'* territory without permission and were to disrespect him by urinating there, he would touch his penis to you, and you would be unable to *me'me'* (urinate) or *masinek* (defecate)."

that moves beyond oversimplified tales of outright native conversion and demise. While the missionization of the Marianas had violently transformed the islands, Pacific peoples who are a part of the Church today do not necessarily consider their faith as antithetical or a negation of their indigenous heritage. As Pacific peoples began to fill the four walls of church buildings, they also acted dynamically in ways that shaped these new institutions even as they were being shaped by them. Pacific Scholars such as Joakim Peter note, “To varying degrees indigenous people have been shown to be active manipulators of the forces of Christianity, ultimately branding their own signature on the missionization process” (Peter, 1996, 281). Teresia Teaiwa argues that rather than positioning Christian conversion as an indicator of a process of Europeanization, she points to how Vince Diaz has argued that it is also very much a process of indigenization (Teaiwa, 2021). Local lore and legends are enmeshed within the fabric of the islands wherein belief systems are often indistinguishable between Indigenous and Christian. The church as a building and a communal meeting space within the village serves as a nexus for cultural production. For example, throughout the year, village parishes across the island are a focal point for fiestas after their local church’s namesake, namely a patron saint celebration which culminates with a village fiesta. While CHamorus/Chamorros were engaged with and affected by assimilation policies of missionization, natives who adhered to the new social structure became equipped with a new means of moral soundness that allowed them mobility. Achieving the goal of Catholic worship ensured unhindered village-to-village traveling that while within the primary purpose of church fiestas, also allowed for cultural practices to graft onto church activities; achieved primarily through the maintenance of extended family relations.

Performing Cultures of Commemoration

CHamorus met Ferdinand Magellan who arrived in Guam in 1521, where his crew consisted of several Basque men among others. Under his command, it is said in oral

history that this crew razed the southern coastal village of Humåtak to the ground after a misunderstanding of trade protocol, which Magellan characterized as theft by Chamorros when they took precious metals and other rare materials (Souder, 2021). Most notable of the Basques was Juan Sebastián Elcano, who almost certainly was present throughout this skirmish if not a participant. Elcano, a Basque explorer, finished what Magellan had started, the first global circumnavigation. The celebration of Elcano's accomplishment which is known as "Desembarco de Elcano" takes place every four years in the Basque Country town of Getaria in Gipuzkoa.⁶² In Guåhan in 2019, a diverse cohort of scholars and community experts asserted a strong presence as part of events commemorating the 500-year anniversary of the circumnavigation by emphasizing the Chamorro perspective in global discourse in locally organized responses (Rhowuniong, 2019). These included locally driven events such as symposiums, book launches, sling stone competitions, dramatized re-enactments, and formal ceremonies. For example, when the ship Juan Sebastián De Elcano visited Guåhan, many local interventions in this historical discourse took place. For Guåhan and the Marianas, Magellan's arrival has been known in Chamorro history as "Discovery Day." In recent years, however, a shift to prioritize the Chamorro perspective has led to a change of name to "Chamorro Heritage Day", an annual holiday commemorated in story, music, and dance, in the southern village of Humåtak. In February 2021 to commemorate the Magellan-Elcano circumnavigation 500-year anniversary, the "Spanish" (Basque?) ship named Juan Sebastián De Elcano, docked at Naval Base Guam as it retraced the expedition's historic route.

⁶² ("Getaria Representa El Desembarco de Elcano Tras La Primera Vuelta al Mundo 500 Años Después" 2022)

This commemoration was met with a strong Chamorro presence that involved indigenous seafaring societies who met the ship in open waters as well as ceremonial greetings in *fino' h̃aya*⁶³ by Indigenous chant groups such as *I Fanl̃alai'an*, Place of Chant. In what musicologist Brian Diettrich has called “a multilayered engagement in saltwater places” (Diettrich, 2018) Master of Chant Leonard Iriarte led *I Fanl̃alai'an* in a ceremonial *l̃alai*, chant. *I acho alutong i taotao-m̃ami!* (we are the people who are of the alutong stone) one of the chant lines expounds upon the great stone pillars of the ancient Chamorro people. As the Elcano's crew stood reverently at the arrival ceremony, the fact that such historically silenced utterances were chanted again by *I Fanl̃alai'an* half a millenium later demonstrates how critical musical heritage is in the reclamation of Chamorro storytelling through the revival of their cosmologies in the face of fraught colonial legacies.



Image 1. I Fanl̃alai'an Oral History Project greets the Elcano vessel as it arrived for the 500-year anniversary of the Magellan-Elcano circumnavigation in February 2021. Photo source: The Guam Museum.



Image 1. CHamoru Heritage Day in Hum̃atak Bay March 2024. Various CHamoru Dance groups gather to reenact Magellan's Arrival. They performed Indigenous cosmologies such as the creation story of Puntan and Fu'una. Photo courtesy of Andrew

⁶³ Ojeya Cruz Banks who has worked with *I Fanl̃alai'an* states that, “*I Fanl̃alai'an*’s distinct approach to chant composition is to use older Chamoru concepts and the language *fino' h̃aya*. This is a native tongue not laden with Spanish vocabulary and is rarely spoken. The group is dedicated to revitalizing *fino' h̃aya* through chant”. See her article, *L̃alai: Somatic Decolonization and Worldview-Making through Chant on the Pacific Island of Gũahan* for more in-depth analysis on this term.

Påle' (Father) Roman de Vera

The “Men of Navarra” arrived in Guåhan beginning in 1914 (Forbes, 2001). Having taken orders from Rome, Capuchin Friars from the Basque region of Navarra, Spain took up the duty of tending to Guåhan’s Catholic faithful (Forbes, 2001). It was during this time when a Basque connection re-emerged in the Marianas, the first since the expulsion of the Jesuits beginning in 1769⁶⁴. The Navarran friars were responsible for building new church infrastructure across the island, while Påle’ Roman de Vera⁶⁵ played a key role in growing the Catholic faith of the island primarily by learning and teaching fellow priests the CHamoru language. De Vera is responsible for compiling a number of hymns⁶⁶ from Basque Country, introducing musical texts that became codified into Chamorro. His work ensured that prayers could be said in CHamoru and that hymns could be used in practically all-important religious occasions from village parishes to Chamorro households. Nubena devotions such as the *Nubenan Niño Jesus* Novena of the child Jesus, *Tres Reyes*, Three Kings, and the Feast of the Immaculate Concepcion with Santa Marian Kamalen⁶⁷, the patroness of the Mariana Islands are just a few devotions where one can trace a few to Basque hymns. Forbes has written on the prolific life of Påle’ Roman de Vera, an excerpt of Forbes’s biography of de Vera biography is as follows,

Father Roman Maria de Vera (1878 – 1959), a Catholic missionary on Guam from 1915 until 1941, was one of the first important writers in the CHamoru language. Prior to him, there was only a handful of literature published in

⁶⁴ After the Jesuits established *Colegio de San Juan de Letrán*, the Spanish Crown expelled the order from Spain and its colonies beginning in 1769 however this took some time to take effect in the colonies.

⁶⁵ It is important to note that when someone joins a religious order, their name changes from their birthname. All clergymen mentioned are identified by their religious name.

⁶⁶ Påle’ Roman de Vera also compiled hymns from the Spanish-Speaking globe, from Spain and Mexico, I however choose to focus attention on Basque hymns because of its underacknowledged significance and, in connection to broader discourses of how marginalized communities struggle under nation-states and regimes; a primary theme as I aim to connect diverging groups via heritage practices in this article.

⁶⁷ Santa Marian Kamalen also known as Our Lady of Camarin is the Patroness of Guam, Mariana Islands.

CHamoru. Because the overwhelming majority of CHamorus at the time were Catholic, de Vera's religious works in CHamoru were widely read and became the norm for many in CHamoru orthography. On 30 April 1915, de Vera began his 26-year assignment on Guam. He quickly became the acknowledged expert in the CHamoru language among the Catholic missionaries. All missionaries after him had to learn the language from de Vera and pass a final test by him before they were allowed to minister among the people. As literacy increased in Guam, de Vera appreciated the importance of publishing religious works in CHamoru. By the end of his tenure on Guam, he had translated more than 30 religious works into CHamoru, the first being printed in 1920, five years after his arrival. This was the largest output of literature in CHamoru produced by any individual up to that time, and for many years afterwards. He also published a CHamoru-Spanish dictionary in 1932 (Forbes, 2009).



Image 3. Front page of Pâle' Roman de Vera's publication of Chamorro language Hymns. Photo source: Lawrence Borja



Image 4. Chamorros (all in white garb) Father Jesus Baza Duenas, Jose Manibusan, Bishop Miguel Angel Urteaga Olano, Father (Monsignor) Oscar Lujan Calvo, and Father Román María de Vera; taken in Manila about 1938 when the three Chamorros were still seminarians. Photo source: Guampedia

Most significant among de Vera's output was the many songs he translated into Chamorro language. De Vera compiled one of the most widely used Chamorro songbook publications, *Lalai-Hulo, Antiho: Kanta Gumayuus Siha*.

While more effort needs to be done in terms of calculating an exact number of songs de Vera translated into Chamorro from Basque Catholic songs, Pål'e Eric Forbes has been keen to point out many significant ones sung regularly throughout the liturgical calendar in the islands. While the words and expressions embedded in the melodies are oftentimes regarded as an older style of speaking Chamorro, some of the melodies, in contrast, are readily recognizable to Basque Catholics. For instance, in 1985, Chamorro Catholics from Saipan, Guam and the US travelled through Basque Country, attending Mass in Pau, France as well as in Burgos, Spain as part of a pilgrimage to attend Blessed Louis Diego de San Vitores's beatification in Rome. During the Mass Chamorros sang hymns that excited celebrants such as Father Francisco Echeverria (Pacific Daily News, 1985).

Chamorro Hymn	Basque Hymn
San Jose	Himno de San Ignacio
Matuna i Ginasgas-mu	?
Iya Bilen	Oi Bethleem!
Kurason Santos	?
Hu Noni Hao Maria	Ama Maite Maria
Ha' na Gos Piniti hao	Jose Deunaren atsekabe-atsegiñak
O Maria Nanamagof	?
Chamorro Hymn	Basque Hymn

Similar pilgrimages are made by the Chamorro faithful today as well. Below is just a short list of some of the more widely sung Chamorro Hymns, and their Basque counterparts.

While the question marks in the table represent the remaining comparative work yet to be done in tracing Chamorro songs and their Basque counterparts, Pål'e Eric Forbes' work is a crucial starting point. He has done significant work in chronicling the contributions of Pål'e Roman de Vera and particularly the Catholic Heritage of the Chamorro people. His sharp analysis of Chamorro language in the texts of the Chamorro hymns are a valuable resource and can be found on his personal website paleric.blogspot.com. Returning to De Vera, if one looks at the index section (Fañoda'an) in the 1950 version of the song booklet, clues for what each composition is more widely known as are indicated in parenthesis next to the CHamoru/Chamorro title. The selection of songs in Pål'e Roman De Vera's songbook draws from a combination of popular hymns of the time to ones sung around the Asia-Pacific and Micronesia region with annotations that indicate Palau or Saipan for example. His songbook does not contain any Western musical notation, which supports the idea that such forms of musical education simply were not needed for teaching songs to the village people. Thus, a possible teaching style could have been what is often referred to teaching by "rote", a method of musical education regarded as a lower form musical teaching. Such a method would not be an accurate characterization given the oral tradition of Pacific Peoples and in particular, Chamorros who relished in their tenacity of maintaining storytelling practices steeped in auditory memories, stock melodies and vocal singing styles such as Kantan Chamorrta⁶⁸. While many musicians over the generations have set De Vera's songbook to sheet music notation, one edition of notable significance, due the expansive range of hymns it covers, is Lawrence Borja's compilation entitled *Leblon Kanta: Chamorro Sacred Hymns* (Borja, 2021).

Further investigation into the musical underpinnings of Pål'e Roman de Vera's life especially in connection to the musical networks available to him at the time may

⁶⁸ *Kantan Chamorrta* is the contemporary name given to traditional call-and-response, impromptu verse-making. Practitioners refer to the genre as *ayotte'*, meaning to throw (verses) back and forth.

reveal hitherto underrecognized motivations and global flows of music worthy of musicological consideration. Initial directions point to a contemporary of Pâle' Roman de Vera by the name of Aita (father in Basque) Donostia OFM Cap. (1886-1956), a fellow Basque Capuchin priest, Donostia successfully blended his priestly career by becoming a prolific composer of Basque musical folklore as he ascended to become a prominent musicologist in western music art form. While his residencies took him to metropole centers such as Paris, Barcelona, and Madrid, some of his most treasured arrangements are short song forms like church hymns based in Basque heritage (Ondarra, 2024) . Given both the relation of heritage and of religious order, it would not be far off to suggest de Vera advancing Donostia's music both as a Basque and in service of the Church, nor would it be surprising to discover even more concrete connections between them.

Conclusion

Through lălai, I have attempted to tease out similarities and differences between Basques and CHamorus in order to build connective knowledge and advance relationships between individuals and practitioners through musicological approaches that takes music, sound, and the contexts in which they are apprehended seriously. Some scholars state that fino' hăya, is an older Chamoru language that fell out of practice due to colonialism (Cruz-Banks, 2021), while this may be partially true, more explanation is needed because fino' hăya did not totally fall out of practice but rather persisted through the institution of the Church and was even promoted by its clergy. Complicating lălai in the storied context of Catholic Chamorro hymns sounds out a multiplicity of practices in unidentical ways. This is not problematic, but rather a richly diverse discourse that seeks to invigorate CHamoru indigenous plurality in the exploration and tracing of vocal music despite historical connections to the very institutions that sought complete erasure, especially in their initial penetration. One can identify other indigenous voices in comparable circumstances. For example, in the

central desert region around Hermannsburg in Aboriginal Australia, choirmaster Morris Stuart led a choir of Aboriginal women to Germany to sing German hymns because they wanted to “take back the hymns that were given to their great grandparents by German missionaries” (MIFF, 2017). One woman from the choir remarked “but they are now our songs, part of our story and identity” (MIFF, 2017). This Aboriginal woman offers a compelling persuasion that alternatively shifts understandings of the all-too-often notion of an “authentic” past that unduly plagues indigenous practitioners whereby they are demanded to produce bullet-proof explanations with unequivocal certainty for the musical expressions they practice. *Lălai* can be an example of a dynamic exchange between differing communities by way of how sacred liturgical poetry was translated into indigenous languages. Understanding relationships in this way listens for the ways that not only acknowledges the violence of attempted colonial erasure but also the acts of giving that took place albeit of a musical nature. Because such *lălai* carry significant weight, resounding throughout generations, making a case for investigating Basque and Chamorro relations might then become a more worthwhile pursuit. Integrating Basque people’s storied relationship to the Spanish Crown and nationalisms that systematically sought its removal, further compels how such contradictions and convergences should be interrogated in more detail in order to listen for how musical heritage, especially against the backdrop of dramatized narratives such as the ones discussed here, can get at histories and memories in ways that other modes cannot. Sonic imaginations as I have put forth in this article allows for the capacity to shift from one perspective to another to decenter the authoritativeness of the historical canon and include the interpersonal that takes seriously when CHamorus *hasso*—an amalgam of possible temporalities. How cultural transformations occur for the case of Guåhan and the Marianas are replete with movements that aim for indigenous revivals too large to cover here, but by bringing an anomaly to light like the Basque legacy in Guam, it becomes clear just how important vocal music was in maintaining a distinctly rich elevated form of indigenous language. For example, both Pålē’ Roman De Vera and CHamoru cultural

groups can be cited to have used terms such as *fino' hãya*, although the context of their usage, suggests diverging stances on what these terms mean and their application. Still, individuals participate in both the Catholic Church and expansive cultural dance group networks. Depending on which vantage point one chooses to engage imperial history, a possible Chamorro perspective could conclude that the scale overwhelmingly tips Basque relations as active facilitators of the missionization of the islands, whereby identifying Spanish or Basque actors may not have mattered at all to Chamorro perceptions. Because of centuries of native investment in this sacred musical repertory, however, it is not so easy to villainize the continued legacies and presence of the Church.

In the context of war, journalist George Steer's coverage of the Gernika bombardment in 1937 he writes "The only counter-measure the Basques could employ—for they did not possess sufficient airplanes to face the Insurgent fleet—were those provided by the heroism of the Basque clergy" (Steer, 1937). The same ilk of devoted Basque clergy was dispensed to Guåhan. Under the guidance of Bishop Joaquin Oláiz, the three Chamorro priests of the 20th century were ordained, Pãle' Jesus B. Dueñas and Pãle' Oscar L. Calvo and Pãle' Jose Manibusan. Pãle' Dueñas and Pãle' Oskât Calvo were the Chamorro priests that were left to administer the island during the Japanese WWII occupation. Pãle' Skât⁶⁹ Calvo and Pãle' Jesus Baza Dueñas (image 4) are forever known for their heroism. Along with their ministry, Chamorro songs of prayer created by Basque priests were embraced by Chamorro populations because they were predicated on the insistence of retaining and codifying languages that resulted in sacred songs being translated and sung in native tongue. Throughout generations, most notably during the Second World War, these *lålai* translated by Pãle' Roman De Vera were sung as Chamorro families guarded their statues of village saints; while hiding them from Japanese imperial armies, as warring empires wreaked havoc and bombed

⁶⁹ Oscar in Chamorro is pronounced and spelled Oskât, while many know him with the shortened nickname Skât, I use Oskât to clearly render the CHamoru spelling and pronunciation.

villages. Lălai was sung in whispered volumes during occupation and were at times the only means to listen to mother tongue when everywhere else was forbidden. Basque peoples can empathize with these experiences, given their twentieth century history. The repertory contained in Pålle' Roman de Vera's book is held in high esteem for Chamorro faithful, while at the same time performing complex entanglements that haunt and provide hope. A thorough assessment on each of the lălai's origin in Pålle' Roman De Vera's compilation would be the next natural step in the research presented here. The rich history of Basque musical heritage outside their role in the Catholic Church is deliberately left out here because that sphere requires more in-depth research to successfully incorporate an appropriate analysis. This presents yet more musical trajectories to be investigated. I have focused only on the music associated with the Catholic community of Guam and the Mariana Islands. Considering recent efforts to incite Indigenous renewal such as the 500-year Magellan-Elcano circumnavigation and Chamorro Heritage Day, it is my hope that this musically rich traversal inspires more attentive listening practices to such storied hymns in terms of how they resonate through the ages as part of the persistence of language reclamation and cultural practices despite their relation to colonial legacies. If listened to and sung in this light, fresh opportunities to connect new realms of musical revitalization await in movements across oceans, peoples, continents and archipelagos.

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Against the Law

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In every moment lived as a U.S. imperial subject, the past acts upon the present in ways that determine whether the lights come on or not, and why. Whether there is food. Whether one can pay for it. Whether one lives or dies. This presence of the past across the landscapes of U.S. empire is the result of complex intersections of memory, history, and the law. This essay is an attempt to understand some of these intersections, and in particular, to describe ways in which the law transports the unsettled past into the present in U.S.-dominated spaces in the Pacific.

In U.S. law, the concept of *stare decisis*, valuing precedent, ensures continuity, a cohesive system of laws. At the same time, valuing precedent means that law serves as a vehicle by which history—not just of the law, but of society as a whole—reaches the now. One of the effects of this principle, I argue, has been that a body of laws that validated the ownership of human beings as chattel, even after that principle has been disrupted, minimized, disappeared, has continued to have consequences across the landscape of U.S. imperialism. Here, I want to investigate some of the profound implications, and limitations, associated with the fact that U.S. law continues to serve as a determining force in Guam (Guåhan) in the long the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. I engage this subject from the perspective of a resident of another imperialized space—Puerto Rico (Borikén)—classified by the federal government as an “unincorporated territory,” with the implications of that status for sovereignty and citizenship.

The case of *Davis v. Guam*, which Arnold “Dave” Davis initiated in 2017, focused on the voting rights of the CHamoru. Cases related to voting rights are important because they point to ways in which a given population constitutes, *or is able to*

constitute, power. In looking closely at this case and related cases in parts of the Pacific region where U.S. law is dominant, I argue that law created with the intention of mitigating the effects of legal slavery in the United States—specifically the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments—when applied to territories claimed by the United States, as it has been in subsequent legal decisions related to Guam, Hawai‘i, and American Sāmoa, creates a straitjacket limiting the rights of indigenous people. These constitutional amendments were two of the “Reconstruction Amendments,” incorporated into U.S. law in the aftermath of the Civil War in an attempt to protect the rights of formerly enslaved people. With their careful, race-neutral language, these amendments bore the heavy burden of pushing back against an entire order that had evolved from the law’s earlier sanctioning of human beings as property, including the horrific violence required to maintain it. As Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson pointed out in oral arguments in the case of *Merrill v. Milligan*, the Fifteenth Amendment was all about making literal amends for slavery based on race and attempting to turn back the pernicious effects of white supremacy.⁷⁰ However, it used race-neutral language instead of specifically identifying the group that had been harmed. This set up the Fifteenth Amendment as a tool that could be used equally by whites to assert their “equality,” an act that, as I will show, has had the effect of further disenfranchising marginalized citizens of U.S. territories.

There exists an extensive body of scholarship addressing, from various angles, the ways in which U.S. law has carried forward traces, both large and small, of the originary notion of property as a legal category that could include human beings in the context of U.S. society.⁷¹ My focus in this essay is not on the history of the law in a U.S.

⁷⁰ Now *Allen v. Milligan*, 599 U.S. 1 (2023). Oral arguments in the case took place on October 4, 2022.

⁷¹ Two examples include Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Norton, 2018), and Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, [2010] 2020).

domestic context, however, or on how a particular body of laws and its evolutions continue to impact U.S. society per se. I am interested, rather, in what happens to the discourse and exercise of rights when certain laws that were designed to address civic dangers related to race in the United States are applied *outside of* the United States in places that became U.S. territories through imperial aggression.⁷² In what follows, I will explore a narrow slice of these much larger conversations about race, indigeneity, history, imperialism, and the law through a close reading of *Davis v. Guam*, a case that Michael Lujan Bevaqua and Elizabeth Ua Ceallaigh Bowman have succinctly described as “another example of federal interference in local affairs” (138),⁷³ as well as cases cited in that decision that provide the foundation for it. Although *Davis v. Guam* has received little sustained scholarly analysis to date, it is important not only because it illuminates the issue of how U.S. law relates to the specific context of Guam, but also because it sheds light on the general problematic of the U.S. Constitution as applied in imperial contexts.

The *otherness* contained in the Constitution consists of two groups: those who are sovereign and those that the Constitution identifies as enslaved, then formerly enslaved. The Supreme Court decision in *Morton v. Mancari*, which relates to Native Americans, articulates the distinction between these groups. It states that Indians are not a “discrete racial group”—in the situation in question in this case, race was not the basis of the preferential hiring, but rather, “members of a quasi-sovereign tribal entities whose

⁷² This subject intersects the extensive body of scholarship about the Insular Cases, a series of Supreme Court cases that address issues related to U.S. territories acquired through imperial expansion. The Insular cases were, to put it bluntly, intended to justify US colonial domination on the basis of racism. See, for example, Christina Duffy Ponsa-Kraus, “The Insular Cases Run Amok: Against Constitutional Exceptionalism in the Territories.” *Yale Law Journal* 131, no. 8 (June 2022): 2449–2758.

⁷³ Michael Lujan Bevacqua and Elizabeth Ua Ceallaigh Bowman, “Guam.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 30, no. 1 (2018): 136–144.

lives and activities are governed by the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] in a unique fashion” were favored. The Justices therefore decided that the issue at hand was not a *racial* issue, but rather an issue of representation based on history and sovereignty that transcended definitions of race as they have developed in the United States. In other words, indigenous people living within the boundaries of the continental United States, including Alaska, are not sovereign because they are a separate race; instead, they are sovereign because they are imagined by the federal government as existing outside U.S.-based concepts of race. As strange as this tenet may be, the Court has not extended the status of being *beyond race* to Pacific Islanders or Puerto Ricans—because their societies and cultures have never been construed as sovereign under U.S. law. That is, the Constitution does not contemplate the governability of peoples perceived as non-sovereign *and also* not connected to the legal category of property within the United States. In other words, it does not imagine or provide for the existence of non-sovereign groups that have come under the jurisdiction of the United States through imperial acts/imperial violence, such as the populations of Guam, Hawai‘i, the Northern Marianas, and Puerto Rico.⁷⁴ Through the application of the law, I argue, U.S.-based concepts of racial difference, and specifically the U.S. style of racism that has emerged

⁷⁴ As a *Harvard Law Review* “Comment” describing the case noted,

[I]n *Davis v. Guam*, the Ninth Circuit held that a Guam statute restricting the right to vote in a plebiscite to “Native Inhabitants of Guam” violated the Fifteenth Amendment by using ancestry as a proxy for race. In its reasoning, the court claimed to leave unresolved whether, in nonvoting contexts, “Native Inhabitants of Guam” constitutes a political classification rather than a racial one. Political status would not only insulate policies that preference Guam’s indigenous population from the strict scrutiny “applied to race-based affirmative action laws,” but could also grant Guam wider self-governance over its indigenous peoples by using ancestry-based classifications as policy tools. However, the court’s logic itself precludes that possibility by implying that political status is inappropriate in Guam’s context. (693)

“Constitutional Law — Territories — Ninth Circuit Holds That Guam’s Plebiscite Law Violates Fifteenth Amendment — *Davis v. Guam*, 932 F.3d 822 (9th Cir. 2019).” *Harvard Law Review* 133, no. 2 (December 2019): 683–690.

from legalized slavery, have gone on to shape life in the territories that the United States claimed during the course of its imperial expansion. As a result, in the context of U.S. empire, the legal discourse of rights *itself* deforms the exercise of rights on the part of imperial subjects.⁷⁵

The origins of the controversy in the case of *Davis v. Guam* are rooted the Guam government's efforts to determine the will of the people in terms of their political status vis-à-vis the United States. The principle of self-determination is a cornerstone of international law, one that has been codified in United Nations Charter, for example, yet it has proved extremely challenging to put into effect in imperial contexts. After Guam's Commission on Self-Determination was created in 1980 with the goal of determining the will of the people of Guam via a plebiscite,⁷⁶ a majority in 1982 voted for

⁷⁵ Referencing *United States v. Guam* (2017), Rose Cuison Villazor makes a key point that applies as well to *Davis v. Guam*:

...[A] federal court would once again need to examine where the rights of indigenous peoples in the U.S. territories fit within the broader principles of equal protection and individual rights that are guaranteed under federal statutes and the U.S. Constitution. Determining how to resolve the tension between these two seemingly competing rights in the U.S. territorial context is not easy. Both implicate compelling claims that raise equality and social justice issues. On the one hand, the history of race discrimination underscores the importance of using equal protection principles to shield individuals against government oppression in property. On the other hand, the ongoing efforts to decolonize the U.S. territories and address the harms of imperialism demonstrate the need to protect the rights of indigenous groups. (128)

See "Problematizing the Protection of Culture and the Insular Cases," *Harvard Law Review Forum* 131, no. 6 (2018): 127–135. Response to *American Samoa and the Citizenship Clause: A Study in Insular Cases Revisionism*.

⁷⁶ See <https://www.guampedia.com/commission-on-self-determination/>. A 1960 United Nations document, the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People," promoted self-determination for colonized places "whose people have not attained a full measure of self government." The 1960 UN declaration regarding self-determination was followed by Resolution 1541, which spelled out the options for achieving self-government: free association with an independent state based on the people's free choice to do so; integration with a state; or being a sovereign independent state. Equality was the clear aim of these options, from the UN's stated perspective.

commonwealth status (73%), and accordingly, during the late 1980s and the 1990s, Guam repeatedly submitted legislation to become a commonwealth.⁷⁷ However, the U.S. government argued that Guam's bill "included incompatible aspects of independence, free association, commonwealth and statehood."⁷⁸ In 1997, the legislature of Guam created the Commission on Decolonization, intended to amplify the work of the Commission on Self-Determination. Although it "was inactive for several years during the 2000s," the Commission on Decolonization was reactivated by Governor Edward Calvo in 2011⁷⁹ to act "in the interest of the will of the people of Guam, desirous to end colonial discrimination and address long-standing injustice of [the CHamoru] people."⁸⁰ The focus of the Commission on Decolonization was "to educate the people of Guam of the various political status options available, should Guam be allowed to pursue a change in its political status and relationship with the United States,"⁸¹ but more than this, it was meant to "determine the intent of the native inhabitants of Guam as to what they desire for their future political relationship or status with the US."⁸²

In 2000, the Guam legislature created the Guam Decolonization Registry with the goal of registering all residents of Guam who conformed to the definition of a citizen of Guam as per the original 1950 Guam Organic Act, which defined those who thereby had the right to become a U.S. citizen:

Guam Organic Act conferred U.S. citizenship on (1) all individuals who, as of April 11, 1899, were inhabitants of Guam and either were Spanish subjects or had been born on the island; (2) all individuals born on Guam on or after April

⁷⁷ Via the Guam Commonwealth Act.

⁷⁸ See <https://www.guampedia.com/guam-commonwealth-act/>.

⁷⁹ See <https://www.guampedia.com/commission-on-decolonization/>.

⁸⁰ *Davis v. Guam*, Court of Appeals Decision, 9.

⁸¹ See <https://www.guampedia.com/commission-on-decolonization/>.

⁸² *Ibid.*

11, 1899, who were subject to the jurisdiction of the United States; and (3) the descendants of those individuals.⁸³

The vast majority of these now-U.S. citizens (approximately 98.6%) were CHamoru.⁸⁴ Subsequently,

[I]n 2000, the Guam legislature also passed a law calling for a plebiscite to determine the “political status” preference of the native inhabitants of Guam, those who were recorded in the Registry. The 1997 Plebiscite Law also called for a “political status plebiscite” during the next primary election, in which voters would be asked:

In recognition of your right to self-determination, which of the following political status options do you favor?

1. Independence
2. Free Association
3. Statehood

Moreover,

⁸³ See 48 U.S.C. 14211; Pub. L. No. 630, ch. 512,

§ 4(a), 64 Stat. 384 (1950) (repealed 1952). The Organic Act’s citizenship provisions were in effect only until 1952, when Congress repealed and replaced them with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, 8 U.S.C. 1407. See Pub. L. No. 82-414, § 403(a)(42), 66 Stat. 163, 279-280 (1952); Appellee’s Br. 6-8.

⁸⁴ See John M. Gore, Acting Assistant Attorney General, and Diana K. Flynn and Dayna J. Zolle, Attorneys, Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Appellate Section – rfk 3718, “Brief for the United States as *Amicus Curiae* Supporting Plaintiff-Appellee and Urging Affirmance” in *Davis v. Guam*. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/file/1015166/download/>.

Voting in the plebiscite was to be limited to “Chamorro [sic] People,” defined as “[a]ll inhabitants of Guam in 1898 and their descendants who have taken no affirmative steps to preserve or acquire foreign nationality.”... The Commission on Decolonization was then directed to “transmit [the results of the plebiscite] to the President and Congress of the United States and the Secretary General of the United Nations.”⁸⁵

These efforts to determine the political will of the CHamoru created controversy among the usual suspects. When Arnold “Dave” Davis, a white ex-military resident of Guam, attempted to register with the Decolonization Registry and thus for the plebiscite, he was denied. Consequently, in 2011, Davis sued the government of Guam in local court for discrimination based on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments,⁸⁶ after approaching the Department of Justice under President Obama and being denied. The local judge dismissed Davis’s suit for “lack of standing and ripeness” because no plebiscite was on the calendar. (“Standing,” a prerequisite for bringing a lawsuit, requires that a person or entity has suffered a real, concrete injury, or an “injury in fact,” while “ripeness” refers to there being an actual controversy to decide in that moment.) Davis appealed this decision to the Ninth Circuit Court, the federal court that hears cases related to Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Hawai‘i, as well as Alaska and other western U.S. states. This time the judge found that Davis’s rights were, in fact, currently being infringed.

The decision of the Ninth Circuit Court provides a comprehensive overview of the legal stakes in this case:

The purpose of the Commission on Decolonization was to “ascertain the desire of the Chamorro [sic] people of Guam as to their future political relationship with

⁸⁵ *Davis v. Guam*, Court of Appeals Decision (2019), 10.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

the United States.”...It was charged with writing position papers on the political status options for Guam and with conducting a public information campaign based on those papers.

The plebiscite could not go forward, however, because Dave Davis sued the government of Guam for disenfranchising him.⁸⁷

As it adjudicates Guam’s efforts to parse and respond to its colonial status, *Davis v. Guam* illuminates a paradox of the U.S. as a republic in its exercise of imperial power.⁸⁸ Dave Davis’s claim that he was being discriminated against was based in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution; as noted above, these apply to Guam via the U.S.’s Organic Act of Guam (1950, since amended), which serves

⁸⁷ The following is from the Court of Appeals Decision in *Davis v. Guam*:

Congress has provided that the Fifteenth Amendment “shall have the same force and effect [in Guam] as in the United States.” 48 U.S.C. § 1421b(u); *accord Davis II*, 785 F.3d at 1314 n.2. That Amendment provides: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” U.S. Const. amend. XV, § 1. The Fifteenth Amendment is “comprehensive in reach,” and applies to “any election in which public issues are decided or public officials selected.” *Rice*, 528 U.S. at 512, 523, 120 S.Ct. 1044 (quoting *Terry v. Adams*, 345 U.S. 461, 468, 73 S.Ct. 809, 97 L.Ed. 1152 (1953)).

Guam argues that the Fifteenth Amendment is inapplicable to the plebiscite because that vote will not *decide* a public issue. It notes that the 2000 Plebiscite Law requires Guam to transmit the results of the plebiscite to Congress, the President, and the United Nations but will not, itself, create any change in the political status of the Territory. That is so. But, despite its limited immediate impact, the results of the planned plebiscite commit the Guam government to take specified actions and thereby constitute a decision on a public issue for Fifteenth Amendment purposes. (14–15)

⁸⁸ The case was denied certiorari by the U.S. Supreme Court on May 5, 2020. See <https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/guam-v-davis/>

as the basis of Guam's government, a government that "has only those powers conferred upon it by Congress."⁸⁹ (Guam's Organic Act states that "the second sentence of section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment" and "the Fifteenth Amendment" apply to Guam.) The Organic Act contains a bill of rights that states, "No discrimination shall be made in Guam against any person on account of race, language, or religion, nor shall the equal protection of the laws be denied,"⁹⁰ and contains the provision that "the second sentence of section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment" and "the Fifteenth Amendment" shall apply to Guam.⁹¹ Therefore, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws," and "[t]he right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."⁹² These laws, written in the aftermath of the Civil War to protect formerly enslaved people from discrimination by whites, and applied to Guam by the United States' imperial government, provided the foundation of Davis's claim that in being prevented from voting in a plebiscite intended

⁸⁹ The original Guam Organic Act can be found here: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/81st-congress/session-2/c81s2ch512.pdf>. Citations are from the amended Act (http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/pacific/GU/guam-the-organic-act-of-guam-and-related-federal/at_download/file). This reference is on p. 10).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

⁹² This is the language of the U.S. Constitution. It seems important to emphasize that the only way that the people of Guam obtained U.S. citizenship was through a walkout of Guam's Congress in 1949. This Congress had been established in 1917 by U.S.-appointed governor Roy Smith and was composed of "Chamorro men appointed by the governor, but their role in the governance of Guam was only advisory." The Guampedia site emphasizes that "[t]his did not, however, prevent Chamorros from utilizing the Congress as a platform to discuss civil rights, citizenship and grievances against the naval government." In setting up the Guam Congress, in fact, Smith had been responding to many petitions sent to the U.S. Congress by native Guamanians, "calling for self-government and citizenship." See <https://www.guampedia.com/organic-act-of-guam/>

to gauge the political will of a colonized people, his rights as a white “American” were being violated.⁹³ The racial elements here are nothing new; they are, rather, a reiteration of racial dynamics that date back to the Reconstruction-era United States. As Katherine Murray has pointed out,

Guam was deemed an “unincorporated territory” on the basis that incorporating territories inhabited by “alien–races” would present difficulty for “Anglo–Saxon” society. Yet now that Guam is occupied by a significant number of settlers from the states, mainly officers in the military and their families, the United States is committed to ensuring absolute equality. Any efforts made by the Guam legislature to advance the political aspirations of its indigenous inhabitants have been struck down in the name of racial equality. This played out in *Davis*, where the Ninth Circuit struck down a nonbinding plebiscite on the basis that voting was a fundamental right that cannot be denied based on race and can only be limited by “citizenship, civil capacity, and residence.”⁹⁴

⁹³ A political science analysis of the case (as distinct from a legal analysis) finds the following:

Colonized demoi, such as Guam’s Chamorro people, are widely considered to be owed self-determination....This demotic bounding decision would “flow downstream,” impacting non-members’ individual rights, potentially including their right to vote....But in *Davis v. Guam*, decisionmakers deemed Chamorro demotic interests irrelevant and individual voting rights inalienable. Voting rights thus “flowed upstream” unimpeded, obviating the possibility of Chamorro decolonization.

Aaron John Spitzer, “Approaching the Boundary Problem: Self-Determination, Inclusion, and the Unpuzzling of Transboundary Conflicts.” *Journal of International Political Theory* 18, no. 2 (first published online, June 3, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/17550882211020386>

⁹⁴ Katherine Murray, “America’s Footnote: International Intervention Required to Decolonize Guam.” *University of Miami Inter-American Law Review* 56, no. 1 (2024): 33–72, 70. <https://repository.law.miami.edu/umialr/vol56/iss1/4>.

Yet this moment is connected to a history of sovereignty and ethnic/racial difference that stretches back even farther than the Reconstruction Amendments, indeed to the origins of the U.S. Constitution itself, in particular the clause of that document known as the Territorial Clause (Article IV), which has formed the basis of the federal government's self-arrogated ability to make laws for Guam, Puerto Rico, and other "territories" it has claimed over the course of its imperial history, including the lands occupied by Native Americans on the North American continent that it came to dominate as a result of war and settler colonialism. The Territorial Clause, as well as the Constitution in general, make clear that the Constitution contemplates governing only two types of spaces: territories within the continent that were occupied by Native Americans, and states. Thomas Jefferson acknowledged this fact explicitly: "The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union."⁹⁵

It is critical to keep in mind that the Territorial Clause was written by the United States's founders specifically to account for Native American territories that they believed, and planned, the new nation would come to dominate and incorporate in the course of expansion *on the North American continent*. Even in these very early days of the Republic, Thomas Jefferson and others understood that expansion would be critical to securing the power of the new nation; likewise, they understood that Native Americans would need to be somehow subdued in order for this expansion to occur. Native American populations have *therefore* been incorporated into U.S. legal discourse as sovereign nations within a nation in certain keyways that are based not on "race," but on a right to self-governance based in a prior acknowledgment by the U.S. government of a sovereignty linked to "special treatment" that had long been granted Native American tribes, as the case of *Morton v. Mancari* makes clear. In this case, which

⁹⁵ See *DeLima v. Bidwell*, 182 US 1 (1901).

addresses a hiring privilege given to Native Americans in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Court stated that the privileges afforded Native Americans were *not* “a ‘racial’ preference, but instead, in this instance, ‘an employment criterion reasonably designed to further the cause of Indian self-government’ that was intended to help “[fulfill]...Congress’s unique obligations towards the Indians,” related to the Fifth Amendment.⁹⁶ The U.S. government could instantiate in law such connections between the U.S. republic and these still sovereign nations within a nation precisely because the Founders and the Constitution they created could envision a contiguity between what it meant to be “of the United States” and what it meant to be “Indian.” However, they were unable to imagine a connection with “others” who were descended from Africans, or who were of a native group that they had not pictured as belonging to the “American” nation. This is evident in the fact that they did not class Black men as citizens of any nation, while Native Americans were citizens of their own nations. The hugely consequential problematic of U.S. federal laws in questions of citizenship and sovereignty in the Pacific came to the fore in *Fitisemanu v. United States* (2021), a case heard by the Tenth Circuit Court, the federal appeals court that covers 6 midwestern and western states.⁹⁷ At stake here was constitutional (not statutory) birthright citizenship for those born outside the boundaries of the United States—in other words, for *all those born in U.S. territories*. John Fitisemanu is an American Sāmoan who moved to Utah. American Sāmoans do not have birthright citizenship; if they move to the United States, as U.S. *nationals* (they are not citizens), they will not be able to vote or to serve on juries, among other rights enjoyed by citizens. Their passport will be stamped with the

⁹⁶ See *Morton v. Mancari*, 417 US 535 (1974).

⁹⁷ The case is identified as Nos. 20–4017 & 20–4019, appeal of 426 F. Supp. 3d 1155, argued before the Tenth Circuit on September 23, 2020.

information that they are, in a sense, “second-class.”⁹⁸ (American Sāmoa came under the control of the United States when the U.S. “annexed” portions of it, and then essentially intimidated the local government into giving up control at the turn of the 19th century.) The government of American Sāmoa, positioning itself against Fitisemanu, argued that it opposed automatic birthright citizenship for American Sāmoans on the grounds that such citizenship could irreparably harm the unique culture of those islands. Instead of having its people be granted birthright citizenship, the government of American Sāmoa wanted to *enjoy self-determination* and have the latitude to decide what relationship American Sāmoans would have to the United States. The U.S. government argued the same side of the case, claiming that American Sāmoans are not American citizens by birth, and that they are therefore in a key aspect stateless *precisely because they want self-determination to decide what their relationship to the United States will be.*

Fitisemanu, by contrast, argued that *all* people born in territories have birthright citizenship because of the Fifteenth Amendment’s guarantee of voting rights without respect to color. The U.S. Constitution gives everyone in the territories birthright citizenship, he stated; there is nothing in the Constitution to the contrary. This was the argument that had prevailed before the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah.

⁹⁸ The oral arguments before the Tenth Circuit are available here:

<https://www.courtlistener.com/audio/71814/fitisemanu-v-united-states/>. See also Staff Consortium, “Case That Sees Dept. of Justice Denying Birthright Citizenship in U.S. Territories Likely to Be Appealed to Supreme Court,” *Virgin Islands Consortium*, September 24, 2020, <https://viconsortium.com/vi-us/virgin-islands-case-that-sees-dept-of-justice-denying-birthright-citizenship-u-s-territories-heard-wednesday-case-expected-to-be-appealed-to-supreme-court>.

When the U.S. government appealed that decision to the Tenth Circuit Court, however, in the recording of oral arguments, one of the appeals judges can be heard insisting that if American Sāmoans were granted birthright citizenship in the United States, they would have *dual citizenship*. He seemed not to grasp the point that for American Sāmoans there cannot be dual citizenship, because *there is no other country*.⁹⁹ American Sāmoans, as part of a non-independent territory of the United States, have either U.S. citizenship or essentially no citizenship. In the end, the appeals court found in favor of the U.S. government.

This decision is relevant to the situation of Guam and Puerto Rico, in which citizenship is statutory. If the U.S. were to revoke statutory citizenship at any point, there is a theoretical possibility that these groups would be rendered stateless, and thereby, in certain crucial ways, rightless. At the same time, the deeper incursion of structures of imperial government into the daily lives and identities of people with their roots in these spaces—which are marginalized from the perspective of the imperial government—undeniably does have the potential to change deeply held cultural norms and values. Rights vis-à-vis the imperial government do seem to come with the erosion of traditional identities.

Issues of race and racism on the part of the imperial government underlie its denial of certain rights to those outside the boundaries of the imagined community of the nation, as in cases such as *Fitisemanu*. At the same time, U.S. legal structures (laws and jurisprudence) make a show of a kind of race neutrality that in fact functions, ironically, as a way to *enforce* historic inequities in imperial contexts, as we see in *Rice v. Cayetano*. This was a U.S. Supreme Court case focused on the voting rights of native Hawai‘ians that formed a key precedent for the decision in *Davis v. Guam*, and it helps to shed light on the issues and assumptions contained within the U.S. government’s

⁹⁹ Ibid.

position on the rights of people native to the territories. In 1999, Harold “Freddy” Rice, a Hawai‘ian not of native ancestry (that is, ancestry not dating back to the era of the Hawai‘ian monarchy)—someone not unlike Dave Davis—sued the government for the right to vote in the elections for the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, arguing that the voting was too narrowly restricted, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause and the voting rights guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment. At issue, essentially, was the nature of the historic relationship between the U.S. government and native Hawai‘ians. To what extent would the U.S. government listen to the descendants of the sovereign people whom it had overthrown, now that they had been ostensibly incorporated into the United States body politic?

In deciding the *Rice* case, Justice Anthony Kennedy referenced the history of the Fifteenth Amendment in the attempt to roll back racial discrimination in the nineteenth-century United States:

.... the Amendment prohibits all provisions denying or abridging the voting franchise of any citizen or class of citizens on the basis of race. “[B]y the *inherent power of the Amendment the word white disappeared*” from our voting laws, bringing those who had been excluded by reason of race within “the generic grant of suffrage made by the State.”... The Court has acknowledged the Amendment’s *mandate of neutrality* in straightforward terms: “If citizens of one race having certain qualifications are permitted by law to vote, those of another having the same qualifications must be. Previous to this amendment, there was no constitutional guaranty against this discrimination: now there is.”¹

Kennedy’s fundamental idea here is that because “the word white disappeared,” a “mandate of neutrality” ensued. However, his claim is blind to the fact that the concept of *whiteness* does not so easily vanish from laws that were, from their very origin,

¹ My italics. *Rice v. Cayetano*, 528 US 495 (2000), 15.

designed specifically to protect white interests. Although laws are powerful exemplars of what linguist J.L. Austin referred to as “speech acts,” or utterances that *make* things happen, in this context the disappearing of a word is not enough to roll back race-based prejudice and discrimination.² This problem is reflected in the way that Kennedy employs the word “qualifications.” *What are these qualifications?* How are they being defined? How does a non-ancestral Hawai‘ian share the same “qualifications” as an ancestral Hawai‘ian? “Neutrality” is not a forceful weapon against historic acts of oppression and their ongoing social consequences, particularly when the term itself is used to presume an equality that does not exist.

Kennedy goes on to write, “Ancestry can be a proxy for race. It is that proxy here.” He continues, “One of the principal reasons race is treated as a forbidden classification is that it demeans the dignity and worth of a person to be judged by ancestry instead of by his or her own merit and essential qualities.” This line betrays the heart of the argument.³ The notion that “race” is a demeaning term that erodes a person’s “worth” shows just how heavily invested the Court is in equating *race* with *Blackness*. And it indicates the way in which race-based slavery in the United States remains at the heart of that nation’s legal constructions. That the Court characterizes race as a negative signifier diminishing human worth is a construction owing to the post-Emancipation revaluing of Black bodies/selves as essentially *worthless* once they were no longer vulnerable to the specific valuations of the slave system, as well as a tacit acknowledgement of the looming shadow of white supremacy.

Kennedy dismisses the importance of ancestry by suggesting that honoring it is literally disrespectful on the part of society. He lectures native Hawai‘ians on where their dignity and worth *should* come from: “An inquiry into ancestral lines is not consistent

² J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Clarendon Press, 1975).

³ *Rice v. Cayetano*, 18.

with respect based on the unique personality each of us possesses, a respect the Constitution itself secures in its concern for persons and citizens.” The concept of a collective based in ancestry is deemed suspect when measured against the collectivity established by the Constitution, as the Court focuses on an abstract source of belonging that the Justices in the majority argue facilitates the modern idea of the nation as an “imagined community,” although they do not use that phrase, in which a shared history is based on selective remembering.⁴ This approach becomes clearer as the language of the decision unfolds:

The ancestral inquiry mandated by the State is forbidden by the Fifteenth Amendment for the further reason that the use of racial classifications is corruptive of the whole legal order democratic elections seek to preserve. The law itself may not become the instrument for generating the prejudice and hostility all too often directed against persons whose particular ancestry is disclosed by their ethnic characteristics and cultural traditions.⁵

But what would be an appropriate response to a situation that was shaped by extralegal acts? By the annexation of a sovereign nation? By the *Requerimiento*, the unilateral possessory document that Spanish sailors with Columbus read aloud in their foreign tongue to people they met for the first time in Borikén, Ayiti, Guanahaní, or mumbled through thick beards from the decks of their ships upon dropping anchor? “Distinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are by their very nature odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality,” Kennedy continues. “...Ancestral tracing of this sort achieves its purpose by creating a legal category which employs the same mechanisms, and causes the same injuries, as laws or statutes that use race by name. The State’s electoral restriction enacts a race-

⁴ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalisms* (Verso, 1983).

⁵ *Rice v. Cayetano*, 528 US 495 (2000), 20.

based voting qualification.”⁶ This idea returns us to the problem associated with a central paradox of the Enlightenment—its proclamations of freedom and human dignity in the context of slavery and acts of deliberate oppression. This paradox has never been resolved in the United States, a republic whose founders were deeply and ironically invested in its intertwined ideals and oppressions. The nation’s later imperial acts illustrate that the contradiction has also created untenable problems for those who have been declared lesser precisely because of their ancestry.

Kennedy goes on to address the difference under U.S. law between ancestral Hawai‘ians and Native Americans:

Even were we to take the substantial step of finding authority in Congress, delegated to the State, to treat Hawaiians or native Hawaiians as tribes, Congress may not authorize a State to create a voting scheme of this sort. Of course, as we have established in a series of cases, *Congress may fulfill its treaty obligations and its responsibilities to the Indian tribes by enacting legislation dedicated to their circumstances and needs.*⁷

Acknowledging the validity of legal demands based on race and ethnicity appears terrifying to the interests embodied by the Court in this context *because of white supremacy*; implicit in these readings of the law is the idea that race *will* be weaponized to create oppression. In the case brought by Freddy Rice, the only issue is that a non-native Hawai‘ian is trying to get some of what native Hawai‘ians have—thus, in the guise of neutrality and fairness, the white non-native person attempts to claim *everything*.

This is the arrogance and hubris that is instantiated in the law when it speaks of making whiteness disappear. In fact, in the imperial context, the law reproduces the hierarchies around which it was made *simply by claiming universal values*. We see also

⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁷ My italics. Ibid., 22.

that for the supposed effect of neutrality and fairness to take place, race must be quite carefully separated from *sovereignty*. This is because the acceptable basis of rights is not identity per se, but rather a particular history that the law will recognize based on what—as a result of its own history—is encoded there as valuable. And it is, specifically, *sovereignty that can be conceived as connected to the mythos of the United States as a nation* that is recognizable as valuable in this context.

Kennedy concludes, “The State’s position rests, in the end, on the demeaning premise that citizens of a particular race are somehow more qualified than others to vote on certain matters.”⁸ But how is this premise always “demeaning”? Why does it seem frightening and wrong that some people in an imperial context, such as Freddy Rice and Dave Davis, are different in their “qualifications” than others? It’s evident that the lens of imperialism would be more appropriate for the law’s view of these situations than the notion of an imaginary race neutrality. The effect that imperialism has on legal and political discourse, and on lived reality, should be a factor shaping legal thought on these matters, but it is not. Instead, the same old language and thinking are trotted out in which those in power naively apply the Founders’ half-realized ambitions stated as fact, along with the attempt to make amends for slavery, to all subsequent law, including that applying to the effects of U.S. imperial aggression. “Race cannot qualify some and disqualify others from full participation in our democracy,” Kennedy states. “All citizens, regardless of race, have an interest in selecting officials who make policies on their behalf, even if those policies will affect some groups more than others.”⁹

This is missing the point, however. Meanwhile, *affect* appears to be a euphemism here; *affect* is the watering down of a century of imperial violence. “Under the Fifteenth Amendment voters are treated not as members of a distinct race but as members of the

⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁹ Ibid.

whole citizenry,” Kennedy writes—but the Justices are getting ahead of themselves. There is no whole citizenry—the “imagined,” or perhaps imaginary, community breaks down in the aftermath of imperial conquest. Referring to the white petitioner, Kennedy asserts—and thereby makes it law—that “Hawaii may not assume, based on race, that petitioner or any other of its citizens will not cast a principled vote.” And this is the essence of “white privilege”—that “we” should get to meddle in everything. Betraying a naive application of the sweeping rhetoric of the nation’s founding ideals (based as they were on the most profound contradiction imaginable, that between slavery and freedom), Kennedy sweeps toward a grand conclusion:

When the culture and way of life of a people are all but engulfed by a history beyond their control, their sense of loss may extend down through generations; and their dismay may be shared by many members of the larger community. *As the State of Hawaii attempts to address these realities, it must, as always, seek the political consensus that begins with a sense of shared purpose.*¹⁰

Simply presuming a shared purpose, however, does not cause it to exist. Kennedy ends with, “One of the necessary beginning points is this principle: The Constitution of the United States, too, has become the heritage of all the citizens of Hawaii.”¹¹ Once again, the words of the opinion beg the question: *How* did the Constitution become the “heritage” of all Hawai’ians? We know the answer: via the forceful removal of their own prior governing body.

In the *Rice* case, not only the majority opinion in favor of Freddy Rice, but also the minority opinion in favor of the State of Hawai’i’s special treatment of native Hawai’ians, evince a method of approaching U.S. territories gained via imperial strategies that is divorced from historical and lived realities. It is as if the Justices have

¹⁰ My italics. Ibid, 27–28.

¹¹ Ibid., 28.

never left their chambers, as this patronizing citation makes clear: “As our cases have consistently recognized, Congress’ plenary power over these peoples has been exercised time and again to implement a federal duty to provide native peoples with special ‘care and protection.’”

In sum, *Rice* explicitly reflects the idea that “race” in U.S. society is a negative identifier. The rationale for this view lies in the ways that whites in the United States have used the concept of race to oppress and marginalize groups that they constructed as different from themselves via the tools of law and other social structures.¹² Indeed, the concept of race itself has a specific history and usage dating back to the white need to justify African slavery.¹³ What U.S. law and legal discourse does recognize as, if not strictly positive, then permissible, is the discourse of sovereignty. In other words, current U.S. legal structures are set up not to recognize politicized identity in one sense (race), but to recognize it in another (sovereignty, albeit a particular type of sovereignty). Thus, identity connected to the individual body is denigrated, while identity related to a body *politic* is recognized.

As the decision in *Rice* makes clear, however, even as the Court recognizes a concept of identity based on sovereignty as a persuasive factor in granting distinct political rights including within the continental United States, by one means or another, it withholds sovereignty from those in the U.S. territories acquired through illegal

¹² The slave plantation is obviously a primal scene in this process. After the outlawing of slavery and the end of Radical Reconstruction, certain laws quickly began to emerge in the United States that took the place of legal slavery as a way to enforce social difference based on race, including laws related to segregation, vagrancy, convict leasing, and others.

¹³ For a discussion of this issue, see “The Invention of Race,” Center for Documentary Studies, Princeton University, <https://exchange.prx.org/pieces/218457?m=false>. For a longer conversation about these issues, see *Seeing White*, Season 2, <https://sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>, Season Two, Scene One Radio. See also Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Race and Globalization,” Chapter 5 in *Abolition Geographies* (London: Verso, 2022), 107–131, and Kenton Card, dir., *Geographies of Racial Capitalism with Ruth Wilson Gilmore*, 2022. <https://www.bfdnyc.com/>.

overthrow of a previously recognized government, as in the case of Hawai‘i, or through imperial expansion via war and negotiations with foreign powers, as in the case of Guam, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories. In *Rice*, the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged that native Hawai‘ians were aligned with “Native Americans” in the properness of their claims to sovereignty, yet dismissed indigeneity as a basis for voting rights.¹⁴

On a certain fundamental level, the U.S. Constitution cannot encompass imperialism; there simply are no provisions in U.S. law that define a relationship between the United States government and overseas territories acquired via imperial aggression, because the Constitution makes no provision for the existence within its scope of territories that are *not* administered in the same way as sovereign Native Americans. Arguably, then, the case is grounded not in an actual reading of the Constitution, but rather in racial animus as applied to the people of the territories based on what the justices themselves understood by the term *race*. This is ultimately the fatal flaw in these cases—they reflect *U.S.-based concepts of racial identity*, and they apply these concepts to contexts with radically different histories. When representatives of the U.S. government laid claim to the “territories”—previously either sovereign spaces or colonies—they apparently had only two legal options. They could have left these spaces alone, independent, or administered them in the only way conceived of by the Constitution, which would be to act, essentially and implicitly, *as if all places shared the specific social history of the United States vis-à-vis “otherness.”*

As a result of this unacknowledged conglomeration of social influences, for the Supreme Court, treating “the early Hawaiians as a distinct people, commanding their

¹⁴ Citing *Davis v. Guam*, Addie C. Rolnick has written, “Off the radar of Indigenous-rights and racial-justice lawyers, non-Native people and conservative voting-rights groups have successfully used *Rice* to undermine the rights of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. territories.” See “Indigenous Subjects,” *Yale Law Journal* 131, no. 8 (June 2022): 2390–2758. <https://www.yalelawjournal.org/article/indigenous-subjects>.

own recognition and respect” is not a good thing. Instead, the Court argues, it leads to a racist act that violates the Constitution. Reconstruction-era civil rights laws were intended to stop white Southerners from discriminating against newly free people of color, indeed people of color in general, in the South. The Southern states that had seceded were required to adopt the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as a condition for readmission to the union. Now, they are being used against native Pacific islanders attempting to cast off the oppressions of U.S. imperialism. “Ancestry can be a proxy for race,” Justice Kennedy wrote. But is race really at issue here? Is race an appropriate way to think about the dynamics occurring in Guam, or is this terminology/template applied because it is the only one that the U.S. Constitution understands and permits, due to the particulars of U.S. history? In fact, it seems that the idea of “race-based discrimination” is not precisely relevant—it is indeed the opposite of what is happening in this context.

Thus the Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement and the related decision about the voting rights of native Hawai‘ians in *Rice* suggest at least two things. One is that U.S. territories are at a significant disadvantage under federal law. There is no way for the Constitution to recognize the residents of these territories (at least while they reside there) as meriting the full rights and privileges that are guaranteed to other citizens via the Constitution. These rights may be amplified, but they will always remain partial. That is the way the legal framework is set up on an existential level. These cases also reveal explicitly that in adjudicating the situation of the peoples of territories and former territories alike, the Supreme Court itself is applying racial bias—in claiming that race should not be a consideration in voting, it is making an argument that itself is founded in racial animus.

The Ninth Circuit Court’s decision in *Davis v. Guam* confirms and expands the conclusion in *Rice* that “[a] basic premise of [U.S.] representative democracy is ‘the

critical postulate that sovereignty is vested in the people.”¹⁵ But this is precisely the problem. Sovereignty in an imperial context has a disenfranchising effect, as this case illustrates. In other words, there is a fundamental clash here between democracy and sovereignty. Michael Lujan Bevacqua has written,

The concept of sovereignty is, at its foundation, that which provides a distinction between inside and outside, those who count and those who don’t, those who govern and those who are governed. Sovereignty is generally articulated as the foundation, or a legal/theoretical cover, for an existing order, a force that reaffirms that very order. It is a concept that emerges to naturalize, or provide a rationale for, power relations; and which provides the framework for transforming power and violence into authority and legitimacy.¹⁶

This formulation makes clear how empire obviates the possibility of true democracy in a structural, but also in a conceptual, sense, as sovereignty by the already powerful restricts imagining. The law is the law of the colonizer. *Race* and *sovereignty* are the lenses that the Constitution sees through, but when they are brought together, they may become incompatible. A key part of this problem in the context of empire is that one group making up “the people” has not had access to true sovereignty since the advent of imperial control of their homeland *by virtue of the very fact that they have been, without their consent, governed by U.S. law.*

The decision in *Davis v. Guam* states,

The (Fifteenth) Amendment nullifies sophisticated as well as simple-minded modes of discrimination....So, in addition to facial racial distinctions,

¹⁵ They cite *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, 514 U.S. 779, 794, 115 S.Ct. 1842, 131 L.Ed.2d 881 (1995).

¹⁶ See Michael Lujan Bevacqua, *Chamorros, Ghosts, Non-voting Delegates: GUAM! Where the Production of America’s Sovereignty Begins*. University of California–San Diego, PhD dissertation, Department of Ethnic Studies, 2010, 41–42. <https://escholarship.org/content/qt9x72002w/qt9x72002w.pdf>

classifications that are race neutral on their face but racial by design or application violate the Fifteenth Amendment.¹⁷

Thus the law claims that excluding white voices *is the same as* excluding the voices of those whom white power structures have dominated. But the concept of race as it is understood in U.S. law is entirely dependent on the specifics of the United States's history. The law does not ask, How do the Chamoru and other Pacific Islanders understand and express notions of belonging, difference, and heritage? Does the concept of race in the Western sense have any similarities to it? More broadly, how relevant are Western notions of the law in this regard to other cultures and societies? Instead, a group that has not had true popular sovereignty due to Western imperialism is being denied that sovereignty on the basis of a law founded on the principle of popular sovereignty. And it is being denied that sovereignty in key part as a result of how that group was perceived by turn-of-the-century white Americans, when the Spanish-American War brought Guam under the aegis of the United States.

This issue is compounded each time the Ninth Circuit mentions an issue with pre-Civil War discrimination on the basis of race:

In *Guinn*, ... the Supreme Court invalidated an Oklahoma constitutional amendment that established a literacy requirement for voting eligibility but exempted the “lineal descendant[s]” of persons who were “on January 1, 1866, or at any time prior thereto, entitled to vote under any form of government, or who at that time resided in some foreign nation.”....That classification, like the one at issue here, was facially tethered to specific laws—the voter eligibility laws in existence in 1866 before the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified. In that year, only eight northern states permitted African Americans to vote.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Davis v. Guam*, Court of Appeals Decision, 21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

Discrimination against African Americans is used here as a weapon against self-determination for colonized people. The court gives no solution to this problem, nor, indeed, any suggestion that it recognizes the issue as a problem at all. Its only solution is that everyone must learn to work together—an offensive notion, considering that the native people in question were invaded by those who now seek to control them once again, this time not with arms but with laws.

The *Davis* decision goes on to say,

Nor is Guam’s argument that the classification here is political supported by the Supreme Court’s recognition that classifications based on American Indian ancestry are political in nature. Laws employing the American Indian classification targeted individuals “not as a discrete racial group, but, rather, as members of quasi-sovereign tribal entities.”....Both the Supreme Court and we have rejected the application of *Mancari* for Fifteenth Amendment purposes with respect to non-Indian indigenous groups, namely those in Hawaii and the CNMI [Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands] respectively.....Nothing counsels a different result in this case.¹⁹

Sovereignty is at issue again, the only difference being that the U.S. government at one time recognized Native American sovereignty. Specifically for this reason, Native Americans are not considered a “race” under U.S. law, and therefore it is acceptable to accord these groups special status. But CHamoru sovereignty has never previously been recognized by the United States legal system, and it is for precisely this reason, apparently, that the Court implicitly argues that it never will be. The language of the decisions makes clear that U.S. sovereignty, once asserted, can easily function antidemocratically, further privileging the already privileged.

¹⁹ Ibid., 40.

What the Guam Decolonization Commission tried to do, essentially, was to turn back the effects of imperialism—but it was prevented by the machinery of U.S. constitutional law, which deemed ancestry not a viable category around which to organize voting rights, because, as the *Rice* case states, it can be used “as a proxy for race.” The United States thus implicitly insists that the population of a place it has colonized must be forever under the sway of its laws. And these laws, shaped around the issue of chattel slavery, and adjusted in such a way as to become supposedly race neutral, thus turn into a trap for colonized people who are attempting to reimagine themselves without the presence of the colonizer. Consider this paragraph from the decision to grant summary judgment to Davis—meaning that the appeals court decided there was not even a fact in controversy, and therefore it would go ahead and determine the outcome of the case without further arguments:

Distinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are by their very nature odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality.”... Further, “it demeans the dignity and worth of a person to be judged by ancestry instead of by his or her own merit and essential qualities.”²⁰

The Fourteenth Amendment refers to the denial of equal protection of the laws. But what does “equal” mean in the context of imperial possession?

The basis of Davis’s suit in the Fifteenth Amendment is clear: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” But again, in the case of Guam, and U.S. territories in general, that right is abridged in the very act of enfranchising the imperial subject. Until social parity has somehow been achieved,

²⁰ *Davis v. Guam*, No. CV 11-00035, 2017 WL 930825, at *6 (D. Guam Mar. 8, 2017), Decision and Order Granting Plaintiff’s Motion for Summary Judgment. See <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/districtcourts/guam/gudce/1:2011cv00035/8773/149/>

there is no way to enfranchise Dave Davis without infringing on rights of the territorial subject; otherwise, the rights of the white/historically dominant group become unduly weighted. And a central problem is that the very way that social parity would be achieved is through laws created or authorized by the United States government, creating the catch-22 that we might call a constitutional crisis.

According to the Ninth Circuit decision in Davis's favor, "A basic premise of our representative democracy is 'the critical postulate that sovereignty is vested in the people.'" ²¹ This is precisely the problem. Sovereignty in an imperial context has a disenfranchising effect. The Fifteenth Amendment deployed in an imperial setting effectively silences native people. ²² U.S. sovereignty in Guam has meant that Dave Davis's voice is actually much louder than the voices of those who have been subject to colonial and imperial powers. His voice, as this case has unfolded, has been the only one that counts. And with the Supreme Court's denial of certiorari, meaning that they will let

²¹ They cite *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, 514 U.S. 779, 794, 115 S.Ct. 1842, 131 L.Ed.2d 881 (1995).

²² As Katherine Murray writes,

There are currently no safeguards in place to protect the rights of Guam's indigenous population, and based on this ruling it looks like there might never be. Congress has struck down every piece of legislation that attempted to grant special rights to the Chamorro people. As Guam argued in *Davis*, if the United States is to fulfill the "international obligations that it inherited in 1898 and continues to acknowledge today, there must be some mechanism to begin to catalog the plurality of views on the subject." Unlike a state already admitted to the union, the federal government has compelling and continuing obligations to the *original* "native inhabitants" of its unincorporated territories. ²⁸⁸ Because the future political status of the native inhabitants of Guam is an unsettled question, the United States is obligated to solicit the views of the native inhabitants of Guam, just as it is obligated to do with Native American tribes. The proposed non-binding plebiscite limited to ascertaining and transmitting the desires of the "Native Inhabitants of Guam" was narrowly tailored to that end and was completely non-binding. Yet even this minor measure giving Guam's indigenous population an outlet to express their political aspirations was struck down. The Supreme Court denied certiorari, leaving the Chamorro with no recourse within the United States system. (69–70)

See "America's Footnote: International Intervention Required to Decolonize Guam."

the lower court's decision stand, Davis has now "won the day."²³ As Julian Aguon, who represented Guam in the case, has noted,

It will now be even harder for colonized people to exercise any measure of self-determination (at least where an act of voting is involved) because the mere act of designating who constitutes the colonized class could collapse, in a court's eyes, into an act of racial categorization. It will now be even more difficult to determine the collective desire of a colonized people because we cannot even name those people in order to ask them.

The idea of the United States as a representative democracy has always been in certain ways a fiction, and under U.S. law, to stretch the meaning of *a voter* across oceans, to colonies/territories, proves completely incompatible with the original provisions of the Constitution. Empire is, by its nature, repressive. The U.S. Constitution is not equipped to adequately manage the issues it raises. It only knows how to narrowly enfranchise and monitor. It cannot include sufficient safeguards to ensure human rights, perhaps because it was set up to only selectively treat people as human. When the U.S. contains within its sphere of influence other potentially sovereign powers, it is unable to provide democratic representation. But at the same time, it is unable to acknowledge sovereignty for anyone but Native Americans, whose population it has decimated while acknowledging their right to self-governance, perhaps because the U.S. government in its early years was forced to accept the sovereignty of nations that existed before it did.

What is the way out of this trap for the colonized? Guam's example suggests that it may not lie in negotiating with the U.S. government, because the tools of the U.S. government are the tools of continued repression. This appeared very clearly when

²³ As the Center for Individual Rights website headlined its announcement of the denial of certiorari. See <https://www.cir-usa.org/cases/davis-v-guam/>

Guam used the Insular Cases to argue for the CHamoru plebiscite. The federal District Court judge in Guam had written, in the Motion Granting Summary Judgment,

Defendants argue that “Plaintiff’s attempt to characterize his ability to vote in the plebiscite as a ‘fundamental’ right is misguided from the start because the ‘right to vote’ does not necessarily mean the same thing in an unincorporated territory as it does in a state, or other integral part of the ‘United States,’” citing to the Insular Cases....The court finds Defendants’ argument to have no merit.²⁴

Then, referring in circular logic to U.S. law, she states:

The Insular Cases held that United States Constitution applies in full to incorporated territories, but that elsewhere, absent congressional extension, only fundamental constitutional rights apply in the territory.”...Congress has explicitly extended the Fifteenth Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to Guam when it enacted the Organic Act of Guam....Accordingly, Defendants’ use of the Insular Cases doctrine to support their argument in this case fails.²⁵

Imperialism, then, might be viewed as a constitutional crisis that the language of these legal decisions has no choice but to attempt to conceal. The judge continues,

The court recognizes the long history of colonization of this island and its people, and the desire of those colonized to have their right to self-determination.

However, the court must also recognize the right of others who have made Guam their home. The U.S. Constitution does not permit for the government to exclude otherwise qualified voters in participating in an election where public issues are decided simply because those otherwise qualified voters do not have the correct

²⁴ *Davis v. Guam*, No. CV 11-00035, 2017 WL 930825, at *6 (D. Guam Mar. 8, 2017), 24.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

ancestry or bloodline. Having found that the classification is racial, this court finds that the Plebiscite statute impermissibly imposes race-based restrictions on the voting rights of non-Native Inhabitants of Guam, in violation of the Fifteenth Amendment. Further, the court also finds that the Plebiscite statute violates the Fourteenth Amendment.²⁶

In a colonized context, who has the right to claim self-determination? What is self-determination? Self-determination for *whom*? In *Davis v. Guam*, the notion of belonging is used as a sword, not a shield. So how should “justice” be defined?

Legitimacy in U.S. law is based on consent. Consent of the governed is necessary to the power of the Supreme Court’s decisions. Empire gives the lie to this notion of the consent of the governed, and countless rhetorical moves have therefore been made to cover up the fact that the relationship began with violation. The issue of the Guam plebiscite shows the limits of decolonization that lie within the U.S. Constitution, such that the Constitution itself, even as it does not contemplate empire, becomes an instrument that enforces it. The Constitution, for all that it has served as the fundamental document in U.S. law, as it is applied, reveals that in an imperial context, it can serve to magnify injustice, to deaden independence, and thus to maintain empire. This effect occurs whether the Constitution is selectively or wholly applied, as the *Rice* case demonstrates.

In sum, developments in the law related to voting rights for the indigenous citizens of U.S. overseas territories make evident that the elements of the U.S. Constitution that were written in the aftermath of the Civil War in an effort to secure the full benefits of citizenship for African Americans, when applied to indigenous people, end up reinforcing the inequalities that colonialism and imperialism set in motion and/or amplified. As the courts attempt to resolve issues that have arisen in relation to

²⁶ Ibid., 25.

the rights of properly sovereign people in U.S. “territories,” they help expose the fact that the U.S. Constitution is not a document that contemplates the existence of overseas territories at all.

Moreover, the ways in which federal courts have interpreted U.S. law to apply to conflicts arising in the Pacific in particular show that provisions in the Constitution intended to promote equality have had the opposite effect when applied to residents of U.S. empire. The Reconstruction Amendments were attempts to resolve the problem raised by the fact that legal slavery had been an intrinsic influence on the foundational laws of the nation, and therefore persisted once slavery was no longer a viable, accepted means of organizing social life in the nation as a whole.²⁷ When they are applied across imperial geography, to territories and former territories, they serve as weapons wielded against marginalized groups, who are thereby further marginalized. The Fifteenth Amendment was specifically focused on making literal amends for race-based slavery and turning back the pernicious effects of white supremacy. But because the men who wrote it used race-neutral language instead of specifically identifying the group or groups that had been harmed, this Amendment became a tool that has been used by whites in order to assert their so-called “equality,” a fact that has had the effect of further disenfranchising marginalized members of the population. Without the explicit approach to sovereignty that we find in the U.S. government’s relationship to Native American nations, the choice is consistently framed in these imperial contexts as one of the indigenous culture versus the rights associated with the imperial society. The implication on the part of the federal (imperial) government is that the rights it offers are highly valuable—more valuable, indeed, than any culture based in Polynesia, for

²⁷ This is clear simply in a reading of the Constitution, including the Three-Fifths Compromise, for example, as well as the fact that slavery remains legal as punishment for a crime under the Thirteenth Amendment. A recent call to eliminate this provision from an organization dedicated to “ending mass incarceration appears here: Erica Bryant, “It’s 2024, and Slavery Isn’t Over in the U.S.,” *Vera Institute*, June 18, 2024. <https://www.vera.org>.

example, could be. The fact of domination via empire seems therefore to be embedded in U.S. law, and thus U.S. sovereignty becomes a mode of internal suppression that ends up mandating the continued vitality of empire. The tragedy of *Davis v. Guam* is that it cements this fact.²⁸

And yet—another possible future appears in the following vignette:

*On September 2, 2019, approximately two thousand people gathered for the Fanoghe March at Adelup Point, the largest march for CHamoru self-determination in Guåhan's history. The march was held in response to an unfavorable court ruling in Davis v. Guam that denied the CHamoru right to hold a Native inhabitants plebiscite on the political status of Guåhan.*²⁹

²⁸ William J. Fife, III, and Beylul Solomon offer an alternative formulation:

[I]t could be argued that Indigenous land rights are fundamental rights and should be safeguarded akin to “protected classes,” not subjected to race-based legal analysis as it is not inherently racial discrimination, as discussed by Professor Rose Villazor in *Davis v. Guam* and in her testimony before the Full Committee Hearing on the *Insular Cases* Resolution. If Indigeneity is a protected class with fundamental land rights and not predominantly race-based in order to survive strict scrutiny, the *Rice* and *Davis* standards regarding voting rights and race-based analysis would not apply and could co-exist with Indigenous land rights. (106)

See “Indigenous Rights: A Pathway to End American Second-Class Citizenship,” *Review of Law and Social Justice* 32, no. 1 (2023): 59–132.

²⁹ My italics. The citation is from Kristin Oberiano and Josephine Faith Ong, “Envisioning Inafa’maolek Solidarity:

The Importance of CHamoru-Filipino Mutual Relations for a Decolonized Guåhan,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2021). <https://manifold.umn.edu/read/ces0702-11/section/55b1c179-af46-4b4a-afd5-3203a422b4b5>.

Oberiano and Ong go on to note that,

The march also took place in the context of a 10.3-billion-dollar US military buildup on federally controlled lands, approximately one-third of the island. The Fanohge March sought to unite a coalition of organizations, political leaders, and the general community to demonstrate the wide support for CHamoru self-determination and celebrate the resilience of the CHamoru people through speech, song, dance, and chant. Among the six *maga’taotao* (honored individuals) who led the Fanohge March were two Filipina women, Nerissa Bretania Underwood and Maria Teehan, who have worked in solidarity with CHamoru self

determination since the founding of the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights (OPI-R) in the 1980s. Following their example, a group of Filipino women from Guåhan also carried a sign that read *Filpin@s for CHamoru Self-Determination*.

The purposeful presence of Filipino activists and advocates in support for CHamoru self-determination upended the narrative proposed by the plaintiff of the *Davis v. Guam* case, Arnold

“Dave” Davis, who labeled the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decision a win “for all the folks in Guåhan who were locked out of this vote, especially those of Filipino ethnic origin.” Under the guise of White benevolence and racial equality, Davis, a White military veteran, spoke for the Filipino population of Guåhan to bolster his settler claim that the CHamoru quest for political self-determination was racist and discriminatory. He also capitalized on contemporary tensions between CHamorus and Filipinos, ignoring the role US militarism has played in framing their complex history.

Significantly, Davis’s comments also erased the existence of CHamoru-Filipino solidarities that we have witnessed as founders of Filipinos for Guåhan, a community organization that supports CHamoru self-determination.

Blue Hegemonies: Confluences of Geocultural Power in the Pacific

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Abstract

Hegemonic international relations in and of the Pacific are often cast in geopolitical and economic terms in scholarly literature, diplomacy, and media. This article builds from work on “geoculture” to advance the practice of thinking geoculturally about international relations. I argue that thinking geoculturally is a useful heuristic to examine the spatial fix on the Pacific which is exemplified in “blue” environmental discourses. Blue discourses are deployed by global, continental hegemonies to demarcate the Pacific into regional formations, hegemonic development paradigms, and ongoing forms of peripheralization. Concurrently, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a multinational diplomatic entity, inverts continentalist dynamics by advancing the counternarrative of the “Blue Pacific Continent” to advocate a pan-Pacific affinity politics which is currently focused on countering the climate crisis. However, recent events within the PIF indicate ongoing hegemonies of Polynesia and Melanesia at the expense of Micronesia. The construction of “blue hegemonies” envelops Native Pacific ways of engaging with seas and oceans into imperialist discourses while blue hegemonic entities imagine and attempt to actualize different Pacific futures. The article follows Diaz (2018; 2019b) in suggesting that contracting notions of oceanic world enlargement into specific locales and depths of place holds potential for more liberatory politics.

Introduction

The Pacific is one of the most capacious bodies on earth, yet it is often peripheralized by continental, land-centric imaginations (Kauanui, 2015; Jones, 2024). Global hegemonies often cast the Pacific as a staging ground for their grander geopolitical securitization schemes or as a liquid body through which their geoeconomic power flows. Militarization, land and water grabbing, extractionism, and more-than-human displacements continue without regard for local concerns. From some corners of the continental imagination, this era also has seen to a resurgence of declarations like “it’s time to talk to, not at, the Pacific” (Powles and Wallis, 2022). This tends to take shape in the form of continental hegemonies co-opting oceanic discourses to obtain local buy-in and reproduce geopolitical and geoeconomic hegemony. In the current era, the *blueness* of the ocean continuously emerges as a conceptual frame for geopolitical and geoeconomic engagements. Diplomatic dynamics between Pacific states, China, and the United States (US) are often framed in terms of blue economy, blue partnership, and blue competition. Blue also plays a role in contemporary forms of Pacific regionalism in the discourse of the Blue Pacific Continent, a pan-Pacific framework for asserting regional concerns in a global context. However, certain Pacific hegemonies are reproduced through the historical and ongoing elision of Micronesia within regionalized formations of Pacific identity and diplomacy.

This article intervenes in geopolitical/geoeconomic framings of international relations by suggesting that a *geocultural* lens or vocabulary is a useful for dissecting the infusion of environmental discourses into diplomacy and reproductions of hegemony (de Koeijer and Shilliam, 2021). By geocultural, I refer to “geographical arrangements of culture across boundaries, how it is constituted through networks, flows, and coalitions” (Winter, 2022c, p. 10). The article has three broad aims: 1) To advocate for the utility of geocultural analysis alongside the more dominant frameworks of geopolitics and geoeconomics, 2) To show how blue environmental discourses are central to hegemonic

power relations in the Pacific, and 3) To suggest that projections of geocultural heritage and legacy symbolize different senses of Pacific futurity, or the ways in which “groups imagine and produce knowledge about futures” (Goodyear-Ka’ōpua, 2018, p. 86). After opening with a brief background of the concept of geoculture and advancing the practice of “thinking geoculturally,” the article then presents blue discourses that recently emerged as a conceptual frame in Pacific policy and diplomacy before considering Micronesia’s place within the Blue Pacific Continent.

Thinking Geoculturally at the Edge of the Lifeworld

The concept of geoculture was advanced by sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein but undertheorized in his world-systems analysis (WSA) of global capitalism, often oriented towards structurally deterministic state-centrism. Wallerstein (1991) conceived of geoculture as the culture of the capitalist world-system. Wallerstein’s use of geoculture recognized linkages between culture and ideology among powerful liberal states but deemed it as secondary to the “real” geopolitical hegemony of the capitalist world-economy (Agnew, 2021). While Wallerstein (1993) argued that national cultures are not singular coherent structures but “are constructed and regularly reconstructed mythologies,” (p. 216) his application of geoculture as the *singular* culture of global capitalism problematically reinforced spatial peripheralization of nations, places, and cultures outside imperial cores. As Pacific historian David Hanlon (1989) states, the legacy of core-periphery dualisms in Micronesia was that of subordinating the “islands’ past to the role of footnote in a world history dominated by the global expansion of European economic practices and institutions (p. 11).”

Despite the historical shortcomings of “geoculture” within a structurally deterministic approach that conflates “the global with the universal” (Behbehanian and Burawoy, 2012), I find that “thinking geoculturally” (Hannerz, 2009; Winter, 2019) is a useful analytical tool for disentangling environmental and cultural discourses in the creation of nation-state narratives and international relations. For instance, Tim

Winter's (2019; 2022b) work analyzes China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a globe-spanning development partnership framework, as a re-imagining of the Silk Road for the twenty-first century. The Silk Road was an extensive trade route stretching across Eurasia from around the second century BCE through the mid-15th century (Winter 2019; 2022c). The BRI is a contemporary framework through which the People's Republic of China (PRC) can position itself as a neutral arbiter of peaceful co-development. It does so by casting the nation's geopolitical and geoeconomic engagements through a sense heritage diplomacy (Winter, 2022a) informed by place, culture, and historic overland and maritime linkages. In other words, it advances a narrative of geocultural power specific to Chinese historical infrastructures and legacies.

To understand dynamics of power between states, it is more advantageous to consider multitudes of geocultures and their interactions rather than conceiving of a singular global geoculture (Vysotskyi et al, 2022). Engagements between China, the US, and Pacific states involve actions coming from specific places, legacies, and senses of heritage. States draw upon these factors to produce national narratives and regional identities. As oceans "are spaces in which practices of both territorialization and deterritorialization are constantly occurring" (Davis, 2020, p. 63), the vernacular of geocultural power lends to analysis that peels away the "thick veneers" (Diaz, 2010) of social construction that makes nation-states and regions appear as self-evident "things." Instead of a top-down or binary approach analyzing the imposition of hegemony, "conceptual and empirical attention must be paid to the particularities of place and the discrete conjunctures of events and conditions that occur" within the relational dynamics of interacting hegemonic forces (Shilliam, 2011, p. 6). As Larsen and Johnson (2012) note, "hegemony is challenged when otherness and difference are engaged at the edge of the lifeworld" (p. 643). Thus, Pacific peripherality is a matter of (resituating) perspective. In this article, I discuss the Pacific as a space where confluences of

geocultural power meet and interact and hegemonies are produced, reinforced, and challenged.

Marketizing and Militarizing the Pacific

In Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear's (2000) terms, the Pacific is a place "where jagged worldviews collide" (p. 85). In the current moment, blue discourses can be thought of as one of these collisions or confluences (Barker, 2019). Contemporary blue discourses and the hegemonies they uphold emerge from historical regional constructions. Since at least the 1980s, Western entities have regarded East Asia, the Pacific Rim and Basin, and Pacific Islands as a collective "Asia-Pacific" through geocultural understandings formed in relation to Cold War ideologies. This was namely through utopic fantasies of the liberal market (Wilson, 2000). Defining the region as such involved the narrative power of global hegemonies revealing "their underlying motivations in their search for a regional construct that is most consistent with the particular interest and perceptions of their purveyors (Dirlik, 1992).

The entities espousing blue geopolitics and blue geoeconomics indicate their blue geocultures; that is, their sense of place in the Pacific and what its future should look like. I refer to collective forces upholding and extending uneven forms of power through the rhetoric of blue ocean materiality as *blue hegemonies*. Blue hegemonies are reproduced in the geopolitical discourses alongside the proliferation of "blue economy" and "blue growth" development paradigms (hereafter referred to as Blue Economy/Growth). Blue Economy/Growth is derived from longstanding discourses of green economy, a Western-mediated framework which legitimized neoliberal market approaches to sustainable land-centric technologies and "clean" energy modernization while masking green colonialism (Ajl, 2021; Blanc, 2022). Under the guise of "One Guam, Green Guam" discourse, former US president Barack Obama visited Guåhan in 2010 with the broader goal of rallying support for a plan to relocate 8,600 Marines from

Okinawa to Guåhan and expand military training infrastructure on the island (Kirk and Natividad 2010).¹

Blue Economy/Growth similarly use the language of conservation and environmentalism to advance ecological modernization but obscure the frontier ideology underpinning exploitation of oceanic natural resources (Childs, 2019) and concurrent militarization. Native Pacific Islander scholars refer to this process as blue-washing (Arriola, 2023; Na’Puti and Frain, 2023; Perez, 2023). Blue-washing involves governments’ use of marine protection to obscure environmental harms and more-than-human displacements caused by the installation of military bases while exploiting oceanic resources for profit (Na’Puti and Frain, 2023). Blue-washing is conservation-as-control in a system where sustainability is “increasingly colonized by our marketized public sphere” (Perry, 2018, p. 9).² This is a central feature of contemporary US engagement in the Pacific, and it undergirds the broader US geocultural legacy, or the “teleology of continentalist politics” (Waligora-Davis, 2017, p. 194) narrativizing its place in the world: the frontier myth of Manifest Destiny masks its heritage of settler colonialism and the ongoingness of imperial expansionism.

The US has long thought of itself as a Pacific nation (Wallis et al., 2024). Today, its use of blue discourses is couched in the Western-mediated political framework of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP), reflecting a militarist-capitalist orientation for containing the so-called “China Threat.” In 2019, the US Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs at the Interior Department stated, “the US has been a Pacific

¹ This style of “green grabbing” (Fairhead et al 2012) is ongoing; in December 2024, transference of an additional 4,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guåhan was announced under the Biden administration to uphold a US-Japan agreement signed twelve years prior. 5,000 Marines are expected to be relocated to other bases, ports, and maritime patrols including some in Hawai`i and Australia. Thus, it is not only a matter of green grabbing/land grabbing, but also blue grabbing/water grabbing (Leonard et al 2023).

² Blue-washing also occurs at epistemic and intellectual levels. Some critical strands of scholarship such as new materialism, posthumanism, critical ocean studies, and blue humanities too often repackage Indigenous histories and concepts as novel or new. See Hokowhitu, 2021; Kibler, 2022; Magnat, 2022; Perez, 2020; Ravenscroft, 2018; Rosiek et al, 2020; Serra Undurraga and Wyatt, 2024; Watts, 2013.

country for a long time...and yes, maybe we've been kind of focused in other areas, but the president's Indo-Pacific strategy started focusing people back on this region of the world" (Kesling, 2019). One of Joe Biden's first comments as US President to PRC President Xi Jinping was his resolve to "preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific" (Jackson, 2021). Biden's comments reflect a FOIP strategy introduced under Trump to directly counter potential Sinocentric hegemony in the region (Heiduck and Wacker, 2020; Lyn, 2020). The US Indo-Pacific Strategy (The White House, 2022) clarifies the pursuit and strengthening of multi-lateral partnerships that affirm mutual vested interests in the region to shore up the US oceanic security state (Na'Puti and Frain, 2023), an extension of the historical settler frontier.

These partnerships are based on models of diplomacy that emerged during post WW-II development regimes, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a multi-national forum with UN-observer status. The US Indo-Pacific Strategy is spatially fixed on coastal Pacific and Indian Ocean nations which it regards as allies or potential partners. Harvey (2001) describes spatial fix as the capitalist tendency to remake spaces to resolve capitalism's inner contradictions and crises of production and overaccumulation. The emergence of the "Indo-Pacific" has thus become world's "economic and strategic centre of gravity" (Köllner et al., 2022). The Indo-Pacific concept is layered in ambiguity due to several involved countries shaping their perceptions through situated geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geocultural engagements (Li and Jiang, 2023). Neither the "Asia-Pacific" nor the "Indo-Pacific" are self-evident world regions but are strategic spaces created through marketization and militarization of oceanic spaces (Köllner, 2021).

Curtailling the "Blue Dragon"

The multilateral partnerships conceived within the FOIP framework are broadly formed in response to the perceived "China Threat" (Grydehøj et al., 2020; Machida, 2010; Ping, 2023). Thus, China considers the FOIP to be a "containment strategy

against Beijing” (Heiduck and Wacker, 2020, p. 5). As a matter of space, my focus on topics like PRC’s imperial engagements, militarism, or forms of state capitalism in the Pacific are limited here in this article. Having established that diplomatic engagements are contextualized within particular geocultural heritages and expressions of geocultural power, the broader point I wish to make here is about how China’s blue discourses advancing narratives of partnership, but are challenged through blue counter-discourses by the US and fellow adherents to the FOIP framework. As Solomon Islands scholar Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (2010) argues, much of the language around China in the Pacific is patronizing and orientalist through rhetoric of a big, bad “Blue Dragon” (Henderson and Reilly, 2003; Khan, 2023; Lanteigne, 2012; Stone, 2010). Ikenberry (2016) metaphorizes US-China conflict as a battle between an eagle and a dragon, through which US military posturing is organized around a “containment policy” across the Pacific and anchored between the two “unsinkable aircraft carriers” of Sri Lanka and Taiwan (Khan, 2023).

Since the announcement of the BRI, increased attention has been given attention to its expansion across archipelagic and oceanic spaces. As the PRC State Council (2023a) has noted, “the ocean is vast because it admits all rivers.” Referring to the current century as “the century of oceans,” the PRC’s State Oceanic Administration (SOA) states, “the status of oceans in national development dominates more than in any other period of human history” (quoted in Duchâtel and Duplaix, 2018, p. 3). Beijing is “promoting blue cooperation along the Silk Road” (Consulate General PRC, 2023). Among its objectives is forging a “Blue Engine” for sustainable development by implementing “the plan to jointly build and share maritime public services along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” and “supporting the basic maritime capacity for developing countries of the building of Belt and Road cooperation” (Consulate General PRC, 2023). “Blue partnerships” would share collected resources and knowledge around ocean and maritime issues, highlighting South-South cooperation and collaborative

action towards sustainable development, ultimately positioning China as a friend and cooperator with all countries which share the values of ocean conservation and “building a blue homeland for BRI partner countries” (Consulate General PRC, 2023).

The PRC State Council (2023b) states that “the BRI is a public road open to all, not a path owned by any single party” and “has no intention of establishing military alliances.” While cast in terms of common destiny, interest, and development, Washington views these engagements “as part of efforts to exclude the United States from the Indo-Pacific and build a new regional order emphasizing values of state sovereignty, collective order, and limited human rights and freedoms” (Lynch et al., 2020, p. 197). US blue discourses reactively bolster a multi-lateral securitization strategy within the context of the FOIP framework. Bilateral engagements remain important to the US, as with the recent renewal of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) with the Freely Associated States of the FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. The COFAs continues to “the bedrock of the US role in the Pacific” (Enlet, 2024). Compact negotiations were filled with remarks positioning the US as a universal force of peace, freedom, and stability in the region against a “threatening” and “aggressive” China. Meanwhile, the US has developed broader diplomatic ties around Blue Economy/Growth in the Pacific to more deeply entrench its hegemony against PRC influence.

Washington’s Blues

The Biden Administration initially distanced itself from the previous Trump administration’s initiatives due to their framings within right-wing populist nationalism, but one that it maintained is the Blue Dot Network (BDN).¹ The BDN was launched at a US-sponsored Indo-Pacific Business Forum held alongside the 35th ASEAN Summit in

¹ The network’s name is derived from astronomer Carl Sagan’s *Pale Blue Dot* (Goodman et al 2020), a work articulating a sense of shared, universal planetary vulnerability to advance an affinity for space sciences among Western publics.

2019. It was established as “rating agency” rather than a development project funding source. Under Trump, there was uncertainty as to whether the BDN was simply a symbolic gesture of competition with China’s BRI. From the start, there was a general sense of detached interest in developing regional infrastructure (Dongxiao et al 2020; McCawley 2019). Momentum was further stalled due to Covid-19, but the Biden administration announced a formal relationship with the OECD to certify infrastructure development projects that support free market trade in January 2021 (Borton, 2020). Despite gaining traction with institutional activity, neither the BDN nor the OECD have independent funding. Neither has authority for regulation or issuing loans, either: “Instead, the BDN is ‘selling’ a narrative and at the same time drawing upon its credibility and that of the OECD in terms of their capacity to make authoritative evaluations” (Ashbee, 2021, p. 141) on which development projects are approved.

Allegations of economic coercion are deployed by the US and its allies to enflame China Threat discourses. As US Democratic Senator Joe Manchin stated in a meeting about the renewal of the COFAs, “China has long been leveraging its economic power to undermine the autonomy of countries throughout the Pacific region by offering easy money, then applying coercive economic policies” (Manchin, 2022). The “coercive economic policies” to which Manchin refers are often called “debt traps” in political science and related literatures. Debt traps are loans designed to manufacture debts that island governments cannot repay, leading to loan default and Chinese government and bank ownership of ports or infrastructure (Davis et al 2020). The PRC’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is often associated with debt trap allegations (Solomon Islands Government Communication Unit Press 2023). But the US and its BDN are complicit in the same actions for which it accuses China and the BRI: demands for payment, imposition of sanctions, and debt traps (Nishizawa, 2023). The US Report on strategic alignment in the Indo-Pacific states, “prioritizing host country-led development activities that provide high-quality outcomes without *transactional caveats* sets the US

apart from the PRC. It also increases resilience and prosperity among nations in the Indo-Pacific region” (Committee on Foreign Relations 2023, italicization added). A central feature of US settler modernity is *debt imperialism*, a system which imposes financial indebtedness through neoliberal governance and emphasizes individual resilience in a disciplinary “payback” framework, even as the US’s own debts mount (Kim, 2022). This system is reinforced through the assemblage of military complexes that occupy Pacific waters, lands, and skies which, as “hard” power, involve their “soft” power capacities through cultural production US military and American Dream valorization.

Western economic institutions like the World Bank often point to the Solomon Islands as an example of bilateral BRI projects leading vulnerable nations into debt traps (Reuters 2022). This is dismissed by the PRC and Solomon Islands as a propagandized discourse (Solomon Island Government Communication Press 2023). In 2023, the US reactively re-established an embassy in Honiara after a 30-year absence to promote its FOIP concept “where democracy can flourish,” according to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (Piringi, 2023). The reactionary nature of such US gestures, through frameworks like FOIP and projects like the BDN, emerge when it perceives its hegemony to be threatened and uses geocultural diplomacy to veil imperialist objectives and machinations (Davis, 2015). Soft power resources are used in tandem with technologies of environmental and racial violence to sustain the settler cultural ideology of US property and possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This is evidenced by the treatment of the Pacific as a frontier space for US military adventurism (Diaz, 2019b), “militourism” (DeLisle, 2016), and (re)buildup of military bases and airfields which disregard local concerns of environmental degradation, loss and disconnection from ancestral lands (Arriola, 2020; Cagurangan, 2023; Perez, 2023; Wright, 2024).

Another blue initiative is the multilateral partnership between the US, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Japan and the U.K. called Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP). The

Biden administration states that the goal of this partnership is to follow the lead of Pacific Islands partners such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and its vision of the Blue Pacific Continent (BPC) towards foregrounding the climate crisis through multilateral engagements (Kritenbrink, 2023). However, highlighting the strategic importance of the Compact Agreements, the PBP also extends the reach of US militarization outside that which is allowable by the Compact Agreements. The PBP infused funding into International Military Education and Training (IMET) for Fiji, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea which, according to the Biden administration, helps “build enduring ties between our security forces and train future Pacific Island security force leaders” (The White House, 2023). Similarly, the proposed House Resolution 2971 “Boosting Long-term US Engagement BLUE in the Pacific” (BLUE Pacific Act) seeks to deepen US engagements across the Pacific through expanding mechanisms such as International Law Enforcement Academies (H.R. 2967).

The US military’s use of Blue Pacific presents a particular vision of the Pacific: like the discourse of Pacific regions as “American Lakes,” the Blue Pacific discursively encloses and demarcates certain spaces as US-allied or outright American, whether in the form of military bases, territory, or as blue technofrontiers. This is not merely metaphorical. In 2023, the US extended its continental shelf off the coast of Alaska in the Pacific and Arctic Oceans and Bering Sea, claiming a million square miles worth of offshore territory near Russia (Ruskin, 2023). Such extensions historically involve offshore mineral extraction, military patrol, and the development of industry to sustain bases (Black, 2018), revealing inextricable links between blue economy and blue imperialism. Amid such challenges, member states of the PIF are cohering pan-Pacific regionalism into a different Blue Pacific discourse: the figure of the Blue Pacific Continent (BPC). The emergent formation of the BPC signals how “cultural interaction at the frontiers has contributed to the making of core cultures themselves – and a new

appreciation of the ways in which political margins can be turned into cultural counter-cores” (Wigen, 1999, p. 1198).

The Pacific Islands Forum and Oceanic Continentalization

I-Kiribati and African American scholar and poet Teresia Teaiwa (2022[2007]) once wrote that “continents, metaphysically speaking, do not exist” (p. 127). To meet contemporary challenges, the PIF has offered the BPC as a counternarrative to perspectives rendering the Pacific through narratives of spatialized abstraction. Regional rhetoric “is not merely about regions” but is a forum to debate pasts and envision futures (Wigen, 1999, p. 1193). While the nation-state is a resultant formation of colonialism, peoples of the Pacific “mobilize custom to criticize the state” (Chappell, 2016, p. 21). Jolly (2019) elaborates:

When introduced technocratic and bureaucratic ways of knowledge and practice rub up against such local modalities of knowing, the result is often ‘friction’. But Pacific peoples also evince an ‘adept skill in appropriating external interests or discourses ... and then turning them into home-grown initiatives’ (p. 185, referencing Tsing, 2005).

BPC discourse emerged from meetings of the PIF, a diplomatic assemblage of 18 regional countries and territories which discuss pertinent Pacific affairs while fostering “collaboration and cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals” (Pacific Islands Forum, 2024). The BPC is an affinity-based discourse across Pacific Island polities which territorializes island polities through the figure of continent.

BPC discourse invokes the ethos of Tongan anthropologist Epeli Hau’ofa’s (2008) affinity politics from *Our Sea of Islands*, the now famous treatise on the relational ontologies of oceanic connection. The 2017 PIF meetings highlighted self-determination principles under the theme “Blue Pacific: Our Sea of Islands” while another recent meeting referred to the Pacific as “the World’s largest continent” (Bainimarama, 2021). Pacific Island states perceive the greatest threat facing not only the Pacific but the world

to be the climate crisis. The 2018 PIF meetings in Nauru saw the signing of the Boe Declaration on regional security which “affirmed that the concept of ‘security’ implied not only traditional security but also environmental security and human security” (Pizzol and Pelaggi, 2023, p. 453). As Fry (2019) states, “This new framing of the region as solidly connected large ocean states with strategic weight and a determination to ensure indigenous control of the regional agenda has been expressed clearly in the fundamental transformation of the regional architecture” (p. 302). The 2022 meeting inaugurated Phase I of the PIF’s implementation plan for the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. A communiqué from the meeting states, “Leaders recognised the opportunity of The Blue Pacific Narrative to reinforce the potential of its shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean and to reaffirm the connections of Pacific peoples with their natural resources, environment, culture and livelihoods” (Pacific Islands Forum, 2022).

At the 2023 meetings, leaders specified their role in “forewarning the world on the existential threats of the climate crisis,” (Pacific Islands Forum, 2023b) seeking also to enshrine the BPC through legal structures which ensure environmental standards and protect those affected by sea-level rise now and in perpetuity (Pacific Islands Forum, 2023a). The political, legal, scientific, and economic structures necessary for developing sustainable futures in the Pacific must emerge, as one sustainable development expert to the conference noted, from “a deep understanding of Pacific peoples, cultures, behaviours, and ways of knowing.” As the event’s keynote speaker, Tuvalu Minister of Justice Simon Kofe, stated, “our discourse is not limited to legal instruments and policies, but encompasses the survival of our people and nations” (Pacific Islands Forum, 2023b). This view contrasts that which Matapo (2017) calls the “majorative,” or universalized Western human subject which “stems historically from the great chain of being anchored in patriarchal structures and ideology...in a particular hierarchical order” (p. 3). In Native Pacific ontologies, by contrast, conceptions of individual “selves”

are relational and emerge from the cosmogenesis of place: “Pacific peoples are not individuals; there is a shared divinity with ancestors – including the waters, land and skies, all integral parts of the cosmos” (Matapo, 2017, p. 7). Pacific regionalism has been instrumental in narrativizing Pacific geocultural power and centering Pacific lifeways to assert direction in enduring the climate crisis and maintaining a livable planet.

Re-envisioning the Pacific through the landed language of the continent is, at one level, seemingly incongruent with Teaiwa’s statement that continents do not metaphysically exist; Na’puti and Frain (2023) state that Indigenous oceanic knowledge systems are “not exclusively tied to land (or distance from it) or control” (p. 119). However, it shows that all land, globally speaking, is *already* islands. In this way, the BPC can be regarded as a form of islanding through inversion of colonial and imperial power dynamics that have continuously (de/re)territorialized the Pacific for outside purposes. While it is a cogent rhetorical strategy within diplomatic processes, the question of its cultural circulation throughout communities in the Pacific remains. It should also be noted that this form of Pacific regionalism represents an elite regionalism and does not necessarily reflect liberatory regionalisms emerging from Pacific community, local ecological knowledges (Demeulenaere et al, 2021; Diawara, 2000; Diaz, 2019a; 2019b; Kabutaulaka, 2021), or climate activism (Fair, 2020; Kim et al, 2023; Teaiwa, 2018). Additionally, the PIF has historically elided certain island polities and peoples from its continentalist formulation. As Kwara’ae and Lau (Solomon Islands) scholar David Gegeo (2001) wrote of the “Pacific Way” (an earlier institutionalized iteration of pan-Pacific identity):

A Pacific voice raises new questions. Are we going to develop a single Pacific voice? Or an umbrella sort of voice that embraces a multiplicity of Pacific voices? Surely it must be the second. To opt for a single voice simply replaces one hegemony with another and repeats our colonial experience (p. 182).

It is not uncommon for Pacific Islander scholars to use identifications such as “Pacific,” “Pasifika,” “Moana,” and “Moana-Oceania” interchangeably in ways that “acknowledge the diffuse terms that Pacific Islanders use to refer to our ocean, nations, region, and part of the world” while “acknowledging the diversity of realities that exist within our region without intending to collapse this under one label” (Thomsen et al, 2022:247). However, when holding the PIF’s “Pacific voice” under the scrutiny of its praxis in disregarding Micronesian states’ voices and concerns, it raises questions of which voices speak for the Pacific. This rift highlights the fact that Pacific Island nations are not monolithic and often “do not speak as a single voice on many issues” (Shibuya, 2022, p. 45).

Micronesia’s Place in the Blue Pacific Continent

Despite movements toward inclusion in diplomatic representation, recent PIF history is fraught by the extension of hegemonies from Polynesia and Melanesia. This emerged only months prior to the 2021 virtual leaders meeting when former Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna was elected secretary-general. The last time a Micronesian held the post was between 1992 and 1998 under former Kiribati president Ieremia Tabai. Prior to the 2021 election, there was a “gentleman’s agreement” that would have installed a Micronesian leader of the PIF.¹ For Micronesian leaders, the election of Puna signified disrespect to Micronesia and the “Pacific Way of doing things” (Hasenkamp, 2021). The decision was followed by accusations suggesting Australia and New Zealand denied the agreement to install a Micronesian candidate as Forum leader and re-ignited concerns over western moderation of the PIF (Sen and Howes 2023). Soon after the decision, Palau announced its withdrawal from the PIF. The remaining Micronesian member states – the FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Nauru – soon

¹ Teaiwa et al (2021) argue that the claim of a gentleman’s agreement violation indicates how, even in matrilineal societies, patriarchal cultural formations circulate through “Indigenous forms of inequality along gendered, classed, and sexual lines.”

followed (Puas, 2022b). After reforms to the leadership selection were promised, the states later rejoined.

In peripheralizing contexts such as this, FSM leaders necessarily engage with discourses like Blue Economy/Growth to assert sustainability-centered national identity from within its precarious position “in the process of accumulation on a world scale” (Ajl, 2023, p.17). In a 2012 address to the UN General Assembly, former FSM president Emanuel “Manny” Mori” stated, “[O]ur livelihood, our economy, our culture and our way of living are tied to a blue economy” (Mori, 2012). Mori’s statement is underwritten by a quality beyond political economy. It involves involving characteristics of place and culture, or geoculture, in forming national narrative and identity tied to political economy but not subordinated to it. However, contemporary debates about Micronesia’s place in the Pacific continue to be framed in terms of blue power competition between the US and their cultural influences in the region (Donaldson, 2021). FSM leadership broadly attribute “peacekeeper” characteristics to the nation (Cagurangan, 2024). Pizzol and Pelaggi (2023) state that Pacific nations tend to “reject the logic of China–US competition that underscores the idea that smaller states are to be treated as objects of great power rivalry” and that “China’s increasing presence is generally viewed with optimism” (p. 453) as a potential partner in political and economic engagement. Chuukese scholar Gonzaga Puas (2022a) notes that “many Pacific scholars are critical of the fear mongering against China. They question whether this recent China-phobia is real, imagined, or somehow exaggerated” (pp. 1-2).

These tensions point to ways in which BPC nations like the FSM invoke geocultural heritage to face the world’s greatest threat, the climate crisis. Climate breakdown poses threats beyond geopolitical security to that of “genuine security” (Na’Puti and Frain, 2023) for the more-than-human environment. Puas (2023) cautions foreign governments and transnational institutions engaging in FSM development that tying climate change adaptation and mitigation funding to political imperatives risks a

fallout in relations. The model of engagement thus far has seen imperial hegemons “relating to the Blue Pacific region in ways that only bring it greater insecurity while proclaiming precisely the opposite” (Jackson, 2024, p. 6). As such, “the United States, Taiwan, China and other like-minded countries should be mindful of the clearly articulated needs and objectives of the FSM Government and adjust their aid and development interactions accordingly” (Puas, 2023, p. 205).

In this spirit, Inomata and Abe (2024) advocate for *Micronesian* regionalism which could be useful in advocating localized interests within PIF and broader international relations. Appreciating “interconnected, hybrid networked types of knowledge and awareness embodied in islands and Islander histories” (Dvorak, 2011, p. 238) beyond metrocentric centers of global capital can be mobilized towards developing liberatory social and environmental politics (Coleman and Rosenow, 2023; Corntassel and Woons, 2017; Shilliam, 2011). Geoculturally, foundations toward this idea were laid during the process of the cohering “Micronesia” into a nation-state entity. Those tasked with political navigation of inscribing emerging national consciousness into codified documents and systems drew upon rich historical traditions of seafaring and being-in-place. The FSM Constitution is imbued with such geocultural power, resembling what Kersten (2023) calls ecological constitutionalism. The preamble (FSM, 1979) states:

Micronesia began in the days when man explored seas in rafts and canoes. The Micronesian nation is born in an age when men voyage among stars; our world itself is an island.¹ We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. With this

¹ Exobiologists (biologists who study life beyond Earth) often invoke sociotechnical imaginaries of planets as islands and outer space as ocean (Webb, 2021). For example, a NASA publication titled *This Island Earth* likened the 1969 Moon landing to the experience of paddling a dugout canoe to explore an offshore island (Webb 2021, p. 392).

Constitution we, who have been the wards of other nations, become the proud guardian of our own islands, now and forever.

Here, the FSM mobilizes cultural cosmology linking land, waters, skies, and stars in national identity formation while critiquing the legacy of colonial state-wardship. The inclusion of place relations and cultural mobilities indicate usage of the nation-state form as a technology of cultural continuity (Puas, 2021).

While the PIF draws upon Hau'ofian "sea of islands" world enlargement in the form of the BPC, historical elision of Micronesia from meaningful engagement in the Forum circumvents collective expansiveness. Diaz (2019b) cautions that to simply "hitch a ride on Hau ' ofian expansiveness" (p. 34) without "*scaling back* to appropriate locale and place depth" (2018, p. 10, italicization in original) perpetuates Native Pacific epistemological and ontological tokenization and subjugation. This can occur even within regionalized frameworks. Diaz (2018; 2019b) argues that Hau'ofa's use of "sea" rather than "ocean" is not an idle choice: it *contracts* the notion of oceanic world enlargement to mobilize "expanded Indigenous possibilities" (2018, p. 10). The use of sea, and not ocean, in the FSM Constitution's preamble is just as significant. However, its use of "man" as a reference to universal personhood is a reminder that the process of contraction should also scale back to the locale of the body as a consideration of the differential regulations of gender identity and sexuality in governance and hegemonic social relations (Teaiwa et al 2021). As histories of Micronesian continuity have shown, the region's place in regional and global configurations will come from scaling back to appropriate locale and place depth – wherever Micronesians are – because that is where Micronesia's geocultural power emerges from.

Conclusion

As global crises enfold into one another, hegemonic politics “is about waging struggles on multiple terrains at once” (Paret and Levenson, 2024, p. 20). This article argued that dominant frameworks of geopolitics and geoeconomics often present hegemonic politics in terms of self-evident political entities and abstracted economic flows. I argued the inclusion of geocultural analysis a useful lens or vocabulary for centering place and people in analyzing and narrativizing hegemonic struggle. Thinking geoculturally offers a relational understanding between space/place/environment/nature (*geo*) and people/polities (*culture*). This article examined circulations of blue discourse as revealing of states’ underlying geocultural legacies and how this contextualizes attempts to define Pacific futures through extending their blue hegemony in conceptual space(s) and material place(s).

Blue hegemonies draw upon oceanic symbolism either as an abstract space of resource extraction and imperial expansionism or as a material body of life-sustaining connection (George and Wiebe 2020). While global hegemons’ discourses of oceanic connection aim to secure strategic geopolitical and geoeconomic advantages, politics in the Pacific have “appropriated imperial literacies to express diverse Indigenous concepts” (Mar, 2019, p. 64) like the continentalist formation of the BPC. However, regional formations also involve hegemonic circulations. Attunement to confluences of geocultural power in the Pacific will be critical in an era where a multiplicity of human-induced ecological crises form a broader planetary climate crisis. This is especially relevant in Pacific places where rising seas, coastal erosion, and inland flooding give a new meaning to oceanic expansiveness (DeLoughrey, 2018). Blue hegemonies will become more deeply entrenched as ways of imagining and producing different Pacific futures, particularly in relation to the blue spatial fix of the “new Cold War” between the US and China. Contracting oceanic imaginaries to localized geocultural contexts holds potential for more liberatory politics to ensure specific needs of Pacific peoples are not awash and adrift in hegemonic formations of expansiveness.

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Exploring the Relationship Between Colonial Mentality, Attitudes Toward U.S. Military Buildup, and Knowledge of Shared Colonial History Among Filipinos in Guam

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Abstract

The current military buildup in Guam, which aims to relocate 5,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, is the largest U.S. military relocation project in the 21st century (Davis, 2011; Na'puti, 2019). Prior research with a representative sample of people in Guam suggests that attitudes toward the buildup are divided among residents of Guam (Dalisay, 2012). Research also suggests that one aspect of colonial mentality, as well as attention to information sources, predict people's attitudes toward the military buildup (Dalisay, 2012). One group in Guam that may be especially important with regard to the relationship between colonial mentality and the military buildup is the Filipino population, the largest settler group in Guam (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). Furthermore, research has shown that colonial mentality is a salient and significant construct among Filipinos (David, 2013). Thus, the target population of this study were Filipinos because their perspective on the impacts of also being colonized by the U.S. while also benefitting from military labor – in addition to their large numbers in Guam – puts them in a unique and consequential position to either support or resist the military buildup. The present study examined the relationship between colonial mentality, knowledge of shared colonial history, and attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup among Filipinos in Guam. Consistent with previous findings, the current study found a positive relationship between colonial debt – one aspect of colonial mentality – and support for military build-up. The present study also found a negative relationship

between knowledge of shared history and one aspect of military buildup support (i.e., perceiving low environmental risks), and a negative relationship between colonial debt and knowledge of shared history. However, the hypothesized moderating effect of knowledge of shared history on the relationship between colonial debt and support of military buildup was not found. Implications for future research are discussed.

In their call for the “Asia-Pacific Pivot”, the United States Department of Defense’s (DoD) new goal was to increase military presence in Asia and the Pacific (Frain, 2016). The ongoing military buildup, which aims to relocate 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam, is the largest U.S. military relocation project in the 21st century (Davis, 2011; Na’puti, 2019). Attitudes towards the military buildup are divided among the residents of Guam (Dalisay, 2012). While some people argue that the ongoing militarization in Guam contributes to the desecration of Indigenous lands, oppression of Indigenous CHamoru people, gentrification, and environmental contamination, others support the buildup in anticipation that it would bring economic growth (Davis, 2011; Alexander, 2016; Hart, 2011; Quintanilla, 2012).

David and Okazaki (2006a) emphasized the importance of incorporating sociopolitical and historical contexts in the study of populations who have experienced colonization. They stated that considering people’s colonial history is crucial to the understanding of how these contexts affect their circumstances. As such, this study focuses on the sociopolitical and historical contexts of Filipino settlers in Guam. As the largest source of migrant labor and the largest settler group in Guam, Filipinos may contribute to the perpetuation of colonialism through militarization. While Filipinos have a history of colonization and post-colonial exploitation by the U.S., many Filipinos have gained economic power in Guam (Oberiano, 2017). However, the rise in power, increasing economic interests, and growing population of Filipinos in the island contributes to the oppression of CHamoru people by threatening their access to self-determination and

ability to assert their political power in their own lands. Filipinos' paradoxical history and modern reality in Guam places them in a unique position to either support or resist the military buildup in Guam today.

Factors that Predict Attitudes Towards the Military Buildup

According to David and Okazaki (2006a), people can internalize oppression as a result of colonization. They called this internalized oppression as colonial mentality (CM). They stated that CM in Filipino Americans is characterized by the uncritical rejection of anything Filipino and an uncritical preference for anything American. David and Okazaki (2006b) developed and validated a CM scale in which they discovered that CM has five factors: (a) within-group discrimination, (b) physical characteristics, (c) colonial debt, (d) cultural shame and embarrassment, and (e) internalized cultural/ethnic inferiority.

Research with a representative sample of people in Guam suggests that one aspect of colonial mentality – colonial debt – as well as attention to information sources – such as local newspapers – predict people's attitudes towards the military buildup (Dalisay, 2012). Specifically, Dalisay found that higher colonial debt is positively correlated with support of the military buildup. One group in Guam that may be especially important regarding the relationship between colonial mentality and military buildup is Filipinos. Comprising 26.3% of the population, Filipinos make up the largest settler group in Guam (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). Because of Guam and the Philippines' shared colonial history under Spain and the U.S., Filipinos have been migrating to Guam since the seventeenth century (Flores, 2015). Furthermore, research has shown that colonial mentality is a salient and significant construct among Filipinos (David, 2013). Thus, the target population of this study were Filipinos because their perspective on the consequences of being colonized by the U.S. while also benefiting from military labor puts them in a unique position to either support or resist the new military buildup in Guam.

To this end, the purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between colonial mentality, knowledge of shared colonial history, and attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup among Filipinos in Guam. The study's hypotheses were the following: (a) higher levels of CM will predict positive attitudes towards the military buildup; and (b) knowledge of shared colonial history will moderate the relationship between CM and attitudes toward the military buildup (see Figure 1).

Guam's Colonial Context

The island of Guam is located in Micronesia, a region located in the Western Pacific Ocean. Historically, world powers valued Guam because of its strategic location. In 1565, Spain claimed Guam as their colony because it was located between Acapulco, Mexico and Manila, Philippines (Alkire, 1977). Over 300 years later, the United States emerged as a global superpower and declared war on Spain in 1898 (Rogers, 1995). Guam was surrendered to the U.S. under the 1898 Treaty of Paris along with Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.

The U.S. valued Guam's location because of its proximity to Hawaii, Philippines, and several other East Asian ports (Kinzer, 2006). President William McKinley declared Guam as a U.S. naval station and it was to be governed by military officials with absolute power. However, in World War II the Japanese military gained control over Guam. Once again, Guam was valued because of its proximity to Japan and Hawaii. Japan controlled Guam for three years before the U.S. reoccupied the island at the end of the war. Recognizing that Guam played an important role in WWII, along with the rising Cold War tensions, the U.S. was prompted to increase their military presence in the Pacific (Oberiano, 2017). Thus, they invested millions of dollars into the construction of air force and naval bases on the island. In the process of doing so, they forcibly removed CHamoru families or offered poor compensation for their lands (Na'puti, 2019).

Six years after Guam was reoccupied by the U.S., President Harry Truman signed the 1950 Guam Organic Act which made Guam an unincorporated U.S. territory and its residents U.S. citizens (Kinzer, 2006). However, because Guam is a possession of the U.S., its residents cannot vote for president, and they have no representation in Congress. Moreover, the U.S. Congress has plenary powers over Guam, giving them complete authority to apply or deny aspects of the U.S. constitution. The United Nations (U.N.) refers to Guam as one of seventeen “non-self-governing territories”, in other words, a colony (U.N., n.d.; Bevacqua & Cruz, 2020). While the CHamoru people have been attempting to draw attention to their colonial status and their right to political self-determination at U.N. general assemblies, the U.S. has refused to recognize the U.N.’s categorization of Guam and insists that Guam is not a colony. Thus, the CHamoru people’s inherent human right to self-determination is denied (United Nations, 1948), thereby leaving them to remain colonized and subjugated by the U.S. with no say in Guam’s political status, their lands, and their resources.

Presently, Guam’s population is approximately 169,000 and is comprised of 32.8% of CHamoru people, 29.1% of Filipinos, 13.3% of other Pacific Islanders, and 6.4% other Asians (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). Additionally, there are more than 12,000 military members and their families in Guam (Military Installations, n.d.). Today, the U.S. DoD owns about one-third of the 212 square-mile island, approximately 40,000 acres. In addition, the DoD uses the sea and air to test weapons and as live-fire training ranges (Frain, 2016). The DoD is currently developing another live-fire training range and multiple barracks in Guam to accommodate the relocation of 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa.

As part of this military buildup, the DoD has claimed a sacred cultural heritage site called *Litekyan*, also known as Ritidian, to develop a live-fire training range for the Marines. Litekyan is the oldest site of permanent settlement in Guam and is the resting place of ancient CHamoru remains (Na’puti, 2019). Litekyan also sits atop Guam’s

northern lens aquifer, which is the island's main source of drinking water. Despite the DoD's Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS; Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific, 2015) report that a firing range at Litekyan will put the aquifer at risk for contamination, DoD has solidified their plans to build the firing range at that location. DoD plans to clear 315 acres of land – including 199 acres of limestone forest – restrict public access, and designate Litekyan as a "Surface Danger Zone" (Na'puti, 2019). The DoD's SEIS has also reported that the socioeconomic and sociocultural impacts of the military buildup include cultural, social, and psychological marginalization and feelings of injustice because of land acquisition and restricting access to subsistence fishing areas. Moreover, the DoD predicts that the military buildup in Guam will raise the cost of living, which will put drastic economic distress on low-income families and may even cause a rise in homelessness. Despite DoD's SEIS report, community attitudes toward the military buildup are mixed.

Many residents, government officials, and local business owners are strong proponents of the military buildup for reasons such as national security, economic benefits, and U.S. patriotism. Sablan (2017) captured these sentiments in an interview with resident Chris Diego in which he stated, "We're thrilled to be a part of that patriotic move to welcome our service members. Not only to keep our island safer in light of this [North] Korean stuff, but also keep our military as vibrant as possible and we have to welcome them as an island community" (para. 8). Cleotilde Bamba, World War II CHamoru survivor, also expressed her support for the military buildup in an interview stating, "We cannot protect ourselves here without the military. They are the only one that is going to protect us" (Hofschneider, 2016, Benefits of the Buildup Section, para.15). Furthermore, in 2017, former Guam Senator Michael San Nicolas proposed a resolution which expressed support for the military buildup for the promotion of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region" (Legislative Resolution 294-34 (COR), 2017). Large local organizations such as the Guam Chamber of Commerce, Guam Hotel and

Restaurant Association, and the Guam Contractors Association testified and wrote letters in support of the resolution, emphasizing that the buildup would boost Guam's economy by creating more jobs and tax revenues.

In contrast, the military buildup is also facing strong opposition from other residents, government officials, and local business owners. Guam's former Attorney General Leevin Camacho noted that the predicted economic benefits of the buildup are minimal and do not outweigh the costs (Hofschneider, 2016). He explained that most jobs will be filled by migrant workers. Some small business owners were doubtful about the benefits of the buildup as well. For instance, Guam resident and small-business owner Rubyjane Buhain-Redila shared that she is afraid that the buildup will bring bigger competition which would hurt her business (Sablan, 2017). She added that, as someone who was raised in Guam, she empathizes with the CHamoru people who are concerned about their land. Those in opposition of the military buildup argue that the military activities threaten environmental protection and traditional practices. CHamoru scholars Na'puti and Bevacqua (2015) argued that the U.S. imposes its military buildup with little regard for the CHamoru people and the U.S. exploits the political status of Guam and the Northern Marianas for military purposes.

Militarization and Neocolonialism

Scholars have argued that the process of militarization is a form of imperialism and colonialism, where the power of one nation is imposed on others through the exploitation of resources and peoples to gain political and economic power (Bevacqua & Cruz, 2020; Frain, 2016; Lutz, 2002; Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015; Naidu, 1985). Militarization not only involves increasing the capacity for military force through numbers in soldiers and weapons, but it also involves shifting the beliefs and values of a society so that the use of violence is justified (Lutz, 2002). In Guam, the shifting of beliefs and values occurs through the U.S. rhetoric that the island and its residents are "American enough" for a military buildup and the encouragement of local residents to

enlist in the military (Frain, 2016). However, Frain points out the hypocrisy in that rhetoric by stating that the U.S. also claims that the residents are not “American enough” to vote for president, to have democratic representation in the Congress, and to have a say in the military activities in Guam.

Guam’s colonial reality through militarization is captured well in an interview with U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Douglas, in which he stated,

People on Guam seem to forget that they are a possession, and not an equal partner... If California says they want to do this, it is like my wife saying that she wants to move here or there: I’ll have to respect her wish and at least discuss it with her. If Guam says they want to do this or that, it is as if this cup here [he pointed at his coffee mug] expresses a wish: the answer will be, you belong to me and I can do with you as best I please (Stade, 1998, as cited in Bevacqua & Cruz, 2020, p. 133).

As evidenced by Colonel Douglas’ sentiments, Guam’s colonial status as a U.S. unincorporated territory lends itself to be powerless and voiceless. Its value to the U.S. is “precisely that the island’s people have no formal control over the use of the island for military purposes” (Bevacqua & Cruz, 2020, p. 133). Further, because Guam is not an independent nation, it cannot limit DoD’s military activities as other countries have done. Consequently, the U.S. can exploit Guam’s environment in ways that might not be acceptable in other countries (Bevacqua & Cruz, 2020).

Neocolonial militarization also perpetuates hierarchies of race, class, and gender (Lutz, 2009). This is evident in the history of Filipino and CHamoru relations in Guam. While Filipinos have been migrating to Guam since the seventeenth century as Spanish soldiers, missionaries, and exiles, the end of World War II marked a significant shift in the migration of Filipinos (Flores, 2015). The U.S. military depended on Filipinos to provide cheap civilian labor for the postwar military buildup in Guam. With the Philippines being a victim of American colonization and four years of war on their lands

between Japan and the U.S., many Filipinos were dispossessed. Their economic resources were depleted leaving them with a hard choice to be imported by the U.S. military and its contractors to Guam.

The development of racial, gender, and class hierarchies during that time is apparent in recruitment practices of the military and its contractors (Flores, 2015). By the late 1940s, approximately 28,000 Filipinos migrated to Guam to serve as military civilian workers. Conversely, the military and its contractors employed only 5,831 CHamoru people even though they made up two-thirds of the population. They believed that CHamoru men were unskilled, unproductive, and incompetent while Filipinos were viewed as reliable and, perhaps most importantly, amenable to discipline. By recruiting Filipino workers, military contractors also saved money and increased their profits by paying Filipinos in pesos rather than dollars. However, Filipinos were also viewed as the most “diseased” of all civilian military workers. As such, they were subjected to more rigorous health examinations before being recruited. Overall, the military and its contractors privileged White men and women over CHamoru people and Filipinos, and they exported White male patriarchy by giving White men authority over all other ethnicities and genders (Flores, 2015).

Filipino Settlers’ Awareness of Colonial History and Events

Of the five CM factors, Dalisay (2012) selected to investigate colonial debt as a potential mediator of the relationship between the attention to information sources that support the buildup and positive attitudes toward the buildup. Colonial debt is manifested by the colonized when they begin to believe that the colonizer’s actions are well-intentioned (David & Okazaki, 2006a). This belief leads them to tolerate oppression and reason that it is the rightful cost of becoming more like their colonizer. In Dalisay’s study, he found colonial debt to be positively correlated with positive attitudes toward the military buildup in Guam. Although this finding sheds some light on this relationship, colonial debt is just one aspect of CM. Thus, more research is needed to

further examine how other aspects of CM may influence attitudes towards militarization. Furthermore, the relationship between CM and attitudes toward the military buildup may be more nuanced in that other factors may also play a role. One such factor is knowledge of a shared colonial history. Indeed, as Oberiano (2017) stated, the study of the history of CHamoru people and Filipino immigrants in Guam can provide more insight into their relationship, and that, “Through a mutual understanding of each group’s American colonial histories, the potential for CHamoru self-determination and decolonization in the future becomes possible” (p. 15). This research will attempt to empirically explore this possibility.

Present Study

The study theorizes that CM will be positively associated with higher support for the military buildup. However, it was predicted that the relationship of CM on attitudes toward the military buildup will depend on Filipinos’ knowledge of their shared colonial history with CHamoru people. In other words, it was hypothesized that even Filipinos who have high levels of CM may still have negative attitudes toward the military buildup when they also have greater knowledge of their shared colonial history. However, support for military build-up was hypothesized to be higher for Filipinos who have high levels of CM and low knowledge of their shared colonial history (see Figure 2).

Method

Recruitment and Participant Characteristics

Self-identified Filipinos, aged 18 and older and currently residing in Guam, were eligible to participate. An online flyer calling for participants were posted on various social media sites. A snowball sampling technique was used, as participants were encouraged to advertise the study to friends and families living in Guam. The Qualtrics survey software was used to distribute the surveys through emails and social media. Participants were presented a cover letter and consent form at the beginning of the

online survey. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete, and no compensation were offered to participants. This study was approved by an Institutional Review Board.

An a priori power analysis was conducted using the G*power software to test a linear multiple regression fixed model with an R^2 , a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), and an alpha of .05 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). The result showed that a total sample of 55 participants is required to achieve a power of .80. The recruitment strategy yielded a total of 82 Filipinos living in Guam who logged on to complete the survey. A total of nine participants were eliminated from the study due to missing data. The final sample size ($N=73$) exceeded adequate sample size for a path analysis to detect medium effect sizes.

The final sample of 73 participants (43 females, 30 males) had an average age of 29.90 years ($SD = 8.36$). Most participants identified as Filipino ($n = 63$) and the rest identified as Filipino-CHamoru ($n = 5$), Filipino-Chinese ($n = 2$), Filipino-White ($n = 1$), and Filipino-Chinese-Spanish ($n = 1$). Most participants ($n = 45$) reported Guam as their birthplace and had lived 23.38 years ($SD = 6.50$) in Guam. Most of the participants (approx. 96%) have close ties to the U.S. military as either an active service member, a veteran, or having a relative who are part of the military. The majority of the sample (approx. 73%) reported having a bachelor's degree or higher. The sample seems to be equally connected with the mainstream culture ($M=6.37$, $SD = 1.27$) and their heritage culture ($M = 7.66$, $SD = 1.08$) as measured by the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000). For more details on sample characteristics, please see Table 1.

Measures

In addition to the demographic questionnaire, the participants also completed the following measures to test the study's main hypotheses.

Predictor: Colonial Mentality Scale

The Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS; David & Okazaki, 2006b) is a 36-item self-report scale that measures internalized oppression as a result of colonialism in Filipino Americans (see Appendix A). The scale is divided into five subscales that measure the different manifestations of CM: (a) within-group discrimination (b) physical characteristics, (c) colonial debt, (d) cultural shame and embarrassment, and (e) internalized culture and ethnic inferiority. Each item on the CMS scale is measured using a 6-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores on each subscale indicates higher levels of the CM manifestation. Previous studies have supported reliability and the validity of the CMS (David & Okazaki, 2006b). Cronbach's alphas of .77 (within-group discrimination), .80 (physical characteristics), .82 (colonial debt), .46 (cultural shame and embarrassment), and .46 (internalized culture and ethnic inferiority) were obtained from the current sample.

Outcome: Attitudes Toward the Military Buildup

The attitudes toward the military buildup measure (Dalisay, 2012) is a self-report scale that is comprised of three indices (see Appendix B). The first index includes one item and asks respondents about the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement, "I support the buildup" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The second index includes three items that measures the attitudes related to the economic benefits of the military buildup (e.g. "The buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam"). The last index includes three items that measures attitudes related to the environmental risks of the military buildup (e.g. "The buildup will harm Guam's environment"). Higher scores for each index suggest more positive attitudes toward military buildup. Dalisay reported that the economic benefits loaded along one factor with an alpha of .86 and the environmental risks loaded along another factor with an alpha of .77. The current sample produced Cronbach's alphas of .90 (economic benefits) and .76 (environmental risks).

Moderator: Knowledge of Shared Colonial History Scale.

The Knowledge of Shared Colonial History Scale is a 12-item measure developed for the current study to assess participants' knowledge of Filipinos and CHamoru people's shared colonial history (see Appendix C). Each item is measured using a dichotomous scale (1 = *True* and 2 = *False*). The items in the survey were based on key themes in the literature on Filipino and CHamoru history (Diaz, 1995; Navarro, 1999; Flores, 2015; Oberiano, 2017; Pobutsky & Neri, 2018; Hattori, 2004). One example of a survey item is, "Americans believed it was their duty to educate and civilize Filipinos." The measure was tested for content validity and face validity using content review experts, who were Filipino and CHamoru community leaders in Guam. The content experts were provided information about the purpose of the measure and were asked questions to determine face validity (e.g., rate the degree to which the measure clearly and accurately tests what it aims to test) and content validity (e.g., rate the degree to which the measure represents the relevant Filipino and CHamoru colonial history; what questions should be added or removed?). Higher scores on the measure suggest better understanding of the shared colonial history between Filipinos and the CHamoru people. A Cronbach's alpha of .79 was obtained from the current sample.

Results

Correlations

Table 1 displays the correlations, means, and standard deviations for the study variables. Out of the five aspects of colonial mentality, only colonial debt was consistently related with the three indices of attitudes toward military buildup. Specifically, colonial debt was positively correlated with support of the military buildup ($r = .49$), with this relationship reaching statistical significance. Consistent with this finding, colonial debt was also positively correlated with perceiving more economic benefits ($r = .23$) and less environmental impact ($r = .21$) of the military buildup,

although these correlations failed to reach statistical significance. There seems to be a trend of negative correlations between the five colonial mentality subscales and knowledge of shared colonial history, but only the correlation between colonial debt and knowledge of shared colonial history ($r = -.29$) reached statistical significance. Out of the three indices of attitudes toward the military buildup, only perceived environmental risk had a statistically significant correlation with knowledge of shared colonial history ($r = -.54$), suggesting that a better understanding of a shared colonial history is related with perceiving more environmental risks of military buildup.

Test of Moderation

Given that the only statistically significant correlation found between the hypothesized predictor variables (i.e., five colonial mentality subscales) and outcome variables (i.e., the three indices of attitudes toward military buildup) was the relationship between colonial debt and support of the military buildup, only this relationship was tested for potential moderation. To test the moderating effect of knowledge of shared colonial history on the relationship between colonial debt and support of the military buildup, the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) in SPSS was used. The predictor and moderator were mean centered prior to the computation of the interaction term and 5,000 bootstrapped samples were used. Table 3 summarizes the regression results. Although colonial debt ($b = 0.84, t = 3.92, p = <.001$) was a significant predictor of supporting the military buildup, knowledge of shared colonial history ($b = -0.06, t = -0.60, p = .55$) and the interaction term (colonial debt x knowledge of shared colonial history; $b = 0.17, t = 1.21, p = .22$) were not. The results did not show evidence for a moderation of knowledge of shared colonial history in the association between colonial mentality and support of the military buildup.

Discussion

The current study explored the possibility that Filipinos' knowledge of their shared colonial history with the CHamoru people will operate as a moderator of the relationship between colonial mentality and support for military buildup. Although this hypothesis was not supported by the findings, the current study still obtained important results. First, the current study found colonial debt to be related with stronger support for military buildup, consistent with previous research (Dalisay, 2012), further underscoring the importance of this aspect of colonial mentality regarding the issue of military buildup. It is possible that colonial debt is especially relevant to the issue of military buildup among Filipinos in Guam because they may feel a sense of indebtedness towards the U.S. for colonizing the Philippines. They may feel the need to reciprocate or "pay back" the U.S. for "liberating" Guam from the Japanese occupation during World War II (Souder, 1991). Perhaps one way to balance that sense of debt would be to support the ongoing military projects in Guam. It is also possible that the relationships between colonial debt, knowledge of shared colonial history, and attitudes toward military buildup are more complex than the hypothesized simple moderation tested in the current study. Future studies may explore more complex models that also incorporate other potentially relevant variables.

The current study also found knowledge of shared colonial history with CHamoru people to be negatively correlated with all aspects of colonial mentality, although only the colonial debt subscale reached statistical significance. Nevertheless, this trend toward a negative relationship suggests that a better understanding of their shared colonial history with CHamoru people may lead to lower levels of CM, especially colonial debt. Given colonial debt's seeming importance in predicting stronger support for military buildup, these findings underscore the importance of helping Filipinos gain a better understanding of how similar and connected their colonial and contemporary experiences are with CHamoru people.

One community level intervention that may facilitate knowledge building among Filipinos in Guam is the development of grade school and college curriculum on Filipino and Filipino-American history in Guam and the U.S. Currently, the Guam Department of Education requires that all students take social studies and history courses. However, aside from one Guam history required class in high school, all social studies and history courses taught in Guam are U.S.-centric. Similarly, there are no Filipino history courses being offered at the University of Guam (UOG) or the Guam Community College (GCC). This poses a problem because Filipinos make up the second largest ethnic group in Guam public school and the largest ethnic group at UOG and GCC (Guam Community College, 2022; Guam Department of Education, 2019; University of Guam, 2022). While they become well-versed in the history and contemporary issues of their U.S. counterparts, they are taught little about their own histories and regional events.

Filipino residents may also benefit from attending community outreach events hosted by grassroots organizations such as Filipinos for Guåhan. Filipinos for Guåhan have focused on supporting CHamoru people in their right to political decolonization. They work to promote and teach the community about CHamoru-Filipino collective resistance. Independent Guåhan is another grassroots organization that has produced free, accessible media on their social media and podcast about CHamoru-Filipino historical and contemporary relations. Additionally, Prutehi Litekyan is an organization in Guam that advocates for environmental justice and protection of land, water, and air. They host community educational events to inform the public about the impacts of the military buildup. Attending events held by these organizations may help keep Filipino residents better informed about the buildup and encourage solidarity with CHamoru people.

Limitations

The current study has several limitations that must be considered. First, the knowledge of shared history measure was developed only for the current study, with no formal psychometric evaluation. As such, the measure may not be a good measure of the construct. This may explain its lack of consistent relationship with the indices of attitude toward the military buildup and other null findings. Second, the current sample has strong ties to the military and are highly educated. It is possible that a more representative sample of Filipinos in Guam may yield different results. Third, while many of the correlations in the study seem to be trending toward a particular direction, many did not reach statistical significance. Lastly, the Cronbach's alphas for the cultural shame and embarrassment subscale and the internalized culture and ethnic inferiority subscale were below the acceptable level of reliability. This may be due to a small sample size, and a larger sample may yield different results.

Conclusion

While knowledge of shared colonial history did not moderate the relationship between colonial debt and support for the military buildup, a significant and positive correlation was found between colonial mentality and support for the military buildup. These findings are consistent with previous findings (Dalisay, 2012). The present study also found a negative relationship between knowledge of shared colonial history and support for the military buildup. Additionally, knowledge of shared colonial history was also negatively correlated with colonial debt. Future research should continue to build on these findings and further explore more complex models of these relationships.

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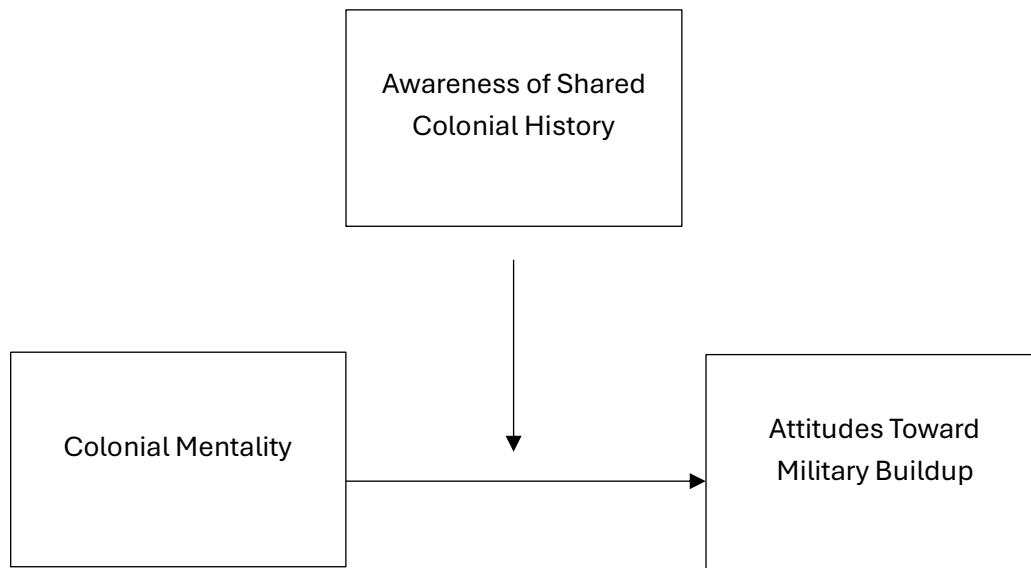
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Figure 1.

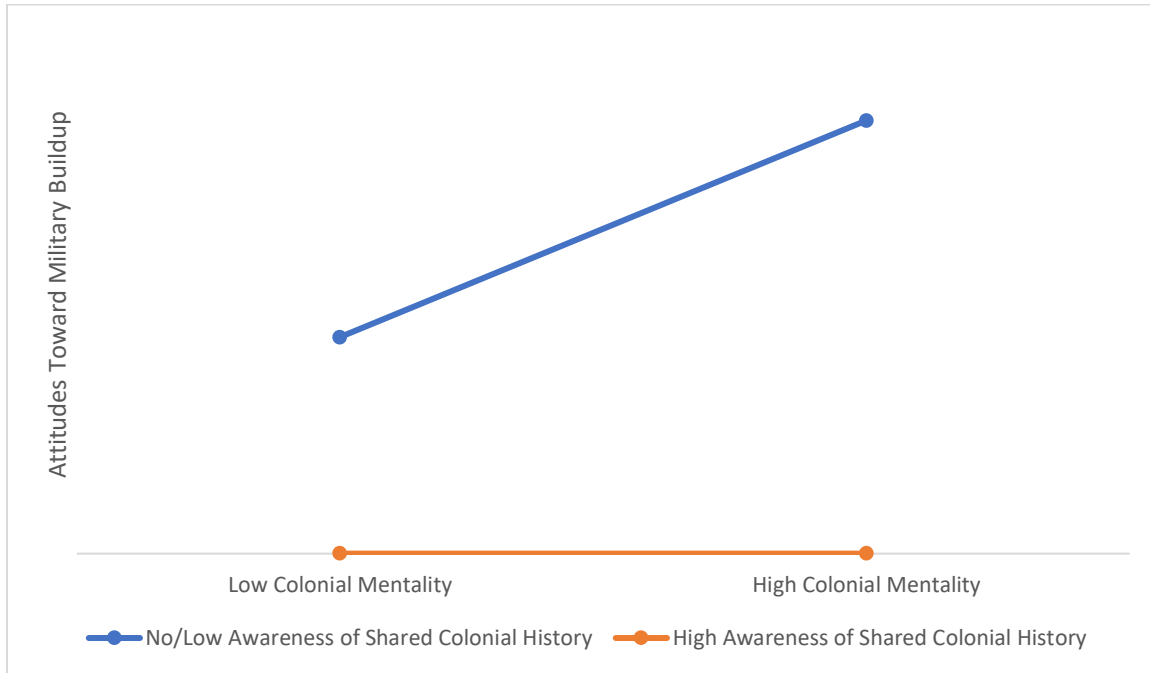
Hypothesized Moderation Model



Note. Filipinos' awareness of shared colonial history with CHamoru people is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between colonial mentality and attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup in Guam.

Figure 2.

Hypothesized moderation effect of awareness of shared colonial history on colonial mentality and attitudes toward military buildup



Note. It is hypothesized that the effect of CM on attitudes toward the military buildup will depend on Filipinos' awareness and acknowledgement of their shared colonial history with CHamoru people.

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics and Psychosocial Characteristics of Study Sample,
N = 73

Characteristics	Percent
Sex	
Female	58.9
Male	41.1
Ethnic Identity	
Filipino (<i>n</i> = 63)	86.3
Filipino-CHamoru (<i>n</i> = 5)	6.8
Filipino-Chinese (<i>n</i> = 2)	2.7
Filipino-White (<i>n</i> = 1)	1.4
Filipino-Chinese-Spanish (<i>n</i> = 1)	1.4
Education	
High school (<i>n</i> = 15)	20.5
Trade school (<i>n</i> = 5)	6.8
Bachelor's degree (<i>n</i> = 35)	47.9
Master's degree (<i>n</i> = 9)	12.3
Ph.D or higher (<i>n</i> = 2)	2.7
Prefer not to say (<i>n</i> = 7)	9.6
Military History	
Active service member	4.1

Veteran	2.7
Active duty and/or veteran family/friends	89
	$M \pm SD$
Age	29.90 ± 8.36
Lifetime spent in Guam	
Colonial mentality (range: 5-30)	
Within-group discrimination (range:1-6)	$2.10 \pm .58$
Physical characteristics (range:1-6)	$2.16 \pm .77$
Colonial debt (range:1-6)	$2.70 \pm .85$
Cultural shame & embarrassment (range:1-6)	$1.62 \pm .56$
Internalized inferiority (range:1-6)	$2.03 \pm .55$
Attitudes toward military buildup	
Support of the buildup	3.45 ± 1.58
Economic benefits	4.77 ± 1.63
Environmental risks	2.12 ± 1.18
Knowledge of shared colonial history	9.82 ± 1.93

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9. Knowledge of shared colonial history	-.21	-.19	-.29*	-.26	-.02	-.13	.01	-.54**	1.00		
										0	
10. Heritage Culture	-.25*	-.21	-.12	-	-	-.17	-.01	.12	.30	1.00	
				.28*	.31**				*		
11. Mainstream Culture	-.02	.03	.20	.02	.07	.19	.32*	.08	.22	.33*	1.00
							*			*	

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 3

Results of the Moderating Effect of Knowledge of Shared Colonial History on the Relationship Between Colonial Debt and Attitude Toward the Military Buildup

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Constant	3.53	0.18	20.09	<.001	[3.18, 3.88]
Colonial debt	0.84	0.21	3.92	<.001	[0.41, 1.26]
Knowledge of shared colonial history	- 0.06	0.11	-0.60	.55	[-0.28, 0.15]
Colonial debt x Knowledge of shared colonial history	0.17	0.14	1.21	.23	[-0.11, 0.45]

Note. $R^2 = 0.26$. CI = confidence interval based on 5,000 bootstrapped estimates.

Appendix A

The Colonial Mentality Scale

Please respond to the following items honestly and as accurately as you can. There are no right or wrong responses to any of these items; we are interested in your honest responses and opinions. All responses are strictly anonymous.

To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements? Select a number between 1 to 6. On this scale, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*

1. I tend to divide Filipinos in America into two types: the FOBs (fresh-off-the-boat/newly arrived immigrants) and the Filipino Americans.
2. There are situations where I feel inferior because of my ethnic/cultural background.
3. I find persons with lighter skin-tones to be more attractive than persons with dark skin-tones.
4. In general, I do not associate with newly-arrived Filipino immigrants.
5. I do not want my children to be dark-skinned.
6. Filipinos should feel privileged and honored that Spain and the United States had contact with them.
7. There are situations where I feel that it is more advantageous or necessary to deny my ethnic/cultural heritage.
8. The American ways of living or the American culture is generally more admirable, desirable, or better than the Filipino culture.
9. There are situations where I feel ashamed of my ethnic/cultural background.
10. I generally think that a person that is part white and part Filipino is more attractive than a full-blooded Filipino.

11. I believe that Filipino Americans are superior, more admirable, and more civilized than Filipinos in the Philippines.
12. In general, I am ashamed of newly arrived Filipino immigrants because of the way they dress and act.
13. I find persons who have bridged noses (like Whites) as more attractive than persons with Filipino noses.
14. I generally do not like newly-arrived Filipino immigrants.
15. I would like to have a skin-tone that is lighter than the skin-tone I have.
16. I think newly arrived immigrants should become as Americanized as quickly as possible.
17. I would like to have children with light skin-tones.
18. Spain and the United States are highly responsible for civilizing Filipinos and improving their ways of life.
19. I think newly-arrived immigrant Filipinos are backwards, have accents, and act weird.
20. I would like to have a nose that is more bridged (like Whites) than the nose I have.
21. Filipinos should be thankful to Spain and the United States for transforming the Filipino ways of life into a White/European American ways of life.
22. I tend to pay more attention to the opinions of Filipinos who are very Americanized than to the opinions of FOBs/newly-arrived immigrants.
23. In general, Filipino Americans should be thankful and feel fortunate for being in the United States.

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24. In general, I feel that being a Filipino American is not as good as being White/European American.
25. I do not want my children to have Filipino noses.
26. In general, Filipino Americans do not have anything to complain about because they are lucky to be in the United States.
27. I feel that there are very few things about the Filipino culture that I can be proud of.
28. The colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the United States produced very little damage to the Filipino culture.
29. In general, I feel that being Filipino is a curse.
30. In general, I am ashamed of newly-arrived Filipino immigrants because of their inability to speak fluent, accent-free English.
31. In general, I am embarrassed of the Filipino culture and traditions.
32. In general, I make fun of, tease, or badmouth Filipinos who are not very Americanized in their behaviors.
33. There are moments when I wish I was a member of a ethnic/cultural group that is different from my own.
34. I make fun of, tease, or badmouth Filipinos who speak English with strong accents.
35. In general, I feel ashamed of the Filipino culture and traditions.
36. In general, I feel that being a person of my ethnic/cultural background is not as good as being White.

Appendix B

Attitudes Toward the Military Build Up

We would like to ask you about some general opinions you have regarding the military buildup. To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements? Select a number between 1 to 7. On this scale, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree

1. I support the buildup.
2. The buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam.
3. The buildup will improve Guam's economy.
4. The buildup will bring in much needed federal funds to Guam.
5. The buildup will make Guam overcrowded.
6. The buildup will harm Guam's environment.
7. The buildup will increase Guam's crime rate.

Appendix C

Knowledge of Shared Colonial History Scale

Please read each statement carefully and select whether each statement is *true* or *false*.

1. Filipinos and CHamoru people were both colonized by Spain.
 2. Filipinos and CHamoru people resisted Spanish colonization.
 3. Spain exploited the land and resources of Filipinos and CHamoru people.
 4. Spain tried to replace Filipino and CHamoru cultural and spiritual practices with Spanish culture and Catholicism.
 5. Filipinos and CHamoru people were both colonized by the U.S.
 6. Filipinos and CHamoru people were both regarded by the U.S. as uncivilized people.
 7. Filipinos and CHamoru people were both regarded by the U.S. as savages.
 8. The U.S. exploited the land and resources of Filipinos and CHamoru people.
 9. The U.S. believed it was their duty to educate and civilize Filipinos and CHamoru people.
 10. The U.S. believed it was their duty to Americanize Filipinos and CHamoru people and rid them of their cultural practices and languages.
 11. The U.S. viewed Filipinos and CHamoru people as poor, ignorant, and inferior.
- Filipinos and CHamoru people both resisted U.S. colonization.

Social Representations of the U.S. Military Presence in Guam in the Media

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Abstract

The presence of the United States military force has been felt by the island of Guam for as long as the U.S. and Guam have interacted. This study seeks to capture Guam's shared understanding of the U.S. military presence and shed light on the different perspectives of the local population of the island by utilizing Social Representations Theory. This theory acts as the framework to string together different people's words, thoughts, and emotions into a cohesive reality. In this paper, we analyzed videos of both the local population of Guam as well as those who have served in the United States military. We found that Guam held polemic representations of the U.S. military occupation, wherein the U.S. was viewed as both a Savior and a Colonizing Force. We concluded that this divide resulted from age differences and strong familial ties and connections to the military. The polemic representations may have substantial implications for the future of Guam, as they hinder people and their desires to change the status of the unincorporated territory under U.S. authority.

Keywords: Social Representations Theory, US Bases in Guam, US Military, Guam

The United States military shapes life in Guam in various ways. We hoped to capture the (un)shared understanding of the U.S. military presence on the island among the local population by utilizing the Social Representations Theory.

Globalization of the U.S. Militarization

The U.S. military has one of the largest global military presences, with an estimated 750 foreign bases as of 2023 (Bledsoe, 2022). The institution justifies its extensive global presence by stating that it must be prepared to respond to unpredictable conflicts around the world (Thee, 1977; Davis, 2011). Especially after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, the United States shifted from a defensive posture that prioritized prevention to a more aggressive unilateralism that focused on peacekeeping, crisis response, and counterinsurgency. The U.S. claims its military presence and actions create and maintain “stability” between nations while reducing tensions between the U.S. and the nations it occupies (Harris, 2002).

However, the benefits of U.S. military globalization do not necessarily extend to the occupied nations. Antimilitarist movements against the U.S. military expansion (Davis, 2011; Vine, 2019) have highlighted the imperialist and colonialist motives of the U.S. (Na’puti & Bevacqua, 2015; Alexander, 2015; Dalisay, 2014). These antimilitarist movements have been instigated in foreign countries and U.S. territories, such as Okinawa, Japan; Vieques, Puerto Rico; Vicenza, Italy; Makua Valley, Hawaii; and Guam (Davis, 2011; Na’puti & Bevacqua, 2015; Vine, 2009).

U.S. Militarization in Guam

Over 500 years ago, Spanish explorer Magellan claimed Guam for Spain, initiating centuries of colonization. After Spain's defeat in 1898, The United States annexed Guam along with the Philippines and Puerto Rico, leading to the establishment of U.S. military bases in Guam until World War II (Alexander, 2015). During the war, Japan occupied Guam, but the U.S. reclaimed it in 1944. The U.S. Congress passed the

Organic Act of 1950, granting U.S. citizenship to the people of Guam, but Guam's colonial status remained and continues today. Guam is an organized, unincorporated and territory with no representation in Congress beyond a non-voting delegate. Meanwhile, the island's military significance expanded, as it became an ever more valuable hub in the global U.S. military network. (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015). Guam accommodates a combined military force of 9,400 personnel, not including their dependents, from various branches of the armed services (Fong & Roy, 2024), and the military occupies 39% of the island's total land area with multiple military installations, such as Andersen Air Force Base, Navy Base Guam, Camp Blaz, and the Guam Army National Guard. These bases off-limits to the majority of residents who lack base access (Lutz, 2010).

Certain groups in Guam have strongly opposed the U.S. military build-up, citing, land seizures (Kuper & Bradley, 2021), military behavioral deviance (Lutz, 2019), exploitation of Guam's vulnerability (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015), economic changes (Natividad & Kirk, 2010), and an unfair power dynamic between the military and the local government (Punzalan, 2013). For many in Guam, the military presence has done significant harm to Guam and its people.

Land Conflict

In establishing a global network of bases, the U.S. military has seized vast areas of land, which has produced conflict. In Guam, about 49,000 acres of Guam is federal land, and is primarily used by the military (Kuper & Bradley, 2021). The CHamoru people have expressed concern about the U.S. military takeover of Guam's land due to the negative impact on their environment (Vine, 2009; Lutz, 2019), especially regarding the relocation of the Okinawa Marine base to their island. Despite such negative public responses, representatives from the Navy have consistently refuted such claims (Lutz, 2019). Consequently, the "deafness" of the military to the land-related concerns of

Guam's people has led to increased tensions and sparked local decolonization and anti-build-up movements.

Cultural Disrespect

The U.S. military has displayed cultural disrespect towards foreign cultures, which sparked anti-base movements around the world (Davis, 2011; Vine, 2009). U.S. Military personnel tend to have negative reputations in foreign bases they are deployed to due to acts of cultural insensitivity and disrespect. Even the military personnel themselves are aware of their widespread lack of cultural competence and complain that the training they receive from Department of Defense (DoD) is insufficient in preparing them for cultural interactions with foreign communities (Malkawi, 2017). The DoD itself fails to demonstrate cultural respect when planning base location in Guam. The U.S. military attempted to establish firing ranges on the sacred land spaces of P̄gat (Lutz, 2019; Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015), where the CHamoru carry out traditional practices, reserve a resting place for ancestral spirits, and collect herbs and plants for traditional medicine. There are also many historically significant landmarks in P̄gat, which further highlight the insensitivity and disregard of DoD's firing range plans for this area (Na'puti & Bevacqua, 2015).

Vulnerability to Endangerment

The presence of military bases raises the likelihood of foreign forces targeting those areas, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the local populations. This illustrates the dangers the U.S. military poses for the populations who live in these countries or territories such as Guam. This danger is compounded by the U.S. embrace of operational unilateralism, and willingness to launch preemptive attacks without the consultation of the host nation's or territory's government. (Davis, 2011). For Guam, its geographic location in the Western Pacific and its U.S. territorial status make it susceptible to foreign attacks. In 2017, during a dispute between U.S. President Donald

Trump and North Korea's supreme leader Kim Jong Un, the latter devised a threatening plan to launch four missiles off the coast of Guam—the nearest U.S. territory to their nation. In turn, the U.S. would have retaliated with destructive force, sparking a devastating war with the island caught in the crossfire (Borger, 2017). This incident illustrates the ongoing potential danger U.S. military occupation poses for its host countries and territories.

Physical Environmental Change

The construction of major military projects, such as military base sites, fundamentally alters the landscape, providing both beneficial and damaging results (Lutz, 2019). The DoD properties have used their grounds for combat training and weapons testing, which ultimately left the grounds despoiled and contaminated by harmful toxins and munition pollution. To resolve these issues, the DoD has promised to clean up the locations most affected—those classified as “hazardous, toxic, and radioactive”—through the DoD's Pacific American Climate Fund (PACAM) for islands such as Hawai'i, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and American Samoa (Bordallo, 2017; Frain, 2018). Due to Guam's limited political power, however, the congressional delegate from Guam cannot effectively advocate for DoD's PACAM funding for the territory (Frain, 2018). In addition to the endangerment of the community and their health, the violation of NEPA policies threatens further degradation of coral reefs, marshlands, tropical rainforests, and limestone forests. These natural structures not only protect the land's freshwater supply and alleviate climate change but also serve as habitats for a variety of wildlife and vegetation (Frain, 2018).

Although these environmental damages are prominent in U.S. territories overseas, the same consequences and complaints can be found in almost any host country for the U.S. military (Davis, 2011). For instance, the U.S. military bases in Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines left locals with feelings of resentment and bitterness. An initial, sense of security was transformed into feelings of violation after

the U.S. military damaged local environments (Davis, 2011). For example, In Vieques, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Navy used part of their territory as a bombing range test site, which left the land decimated, even years after the U.S. military's departure (Vine, 2019).

Economic Changes

Countries that serve as host nations to U.S. bases reported economic growth, particularly in trade and investment. An analysis shows that the presence of the U.S. military in these countries produces an increase of “approximately \$28 million [in trade] per 100 service members deployed (Heo & Yu, 2017). There is no doubt about the contributions of the U.S. Military to economic growth in Guam. (Natividad & Kirk, 2010).

However, the presence of military personnel and their dependents fuels competition with the local population for essential resources, particularly housing (Gilbert, 2022). Gilbert showed that the median price for a single-family home in Guam in 2022 was \$420,000. The Guam Chamber of Commerce also reports that the approximate monthly rent expense for a 900-square-foot furnished space is \$2,200 (2022). Meanwhile, the latest U.S. Census Bureau reports that the median household income in Guam during the prior year was \$58,289 (2022). Local households without any military relations are at a disadvantage for varying reasons. Veterans, service members, and eligible surviving spouses who would like to purchase a home can apply for a VA Home Loan (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2023). Service members distort the local rental market. The DoD has set the lowest possible Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) for military personnel at \$2,736.75, including utilities (Reyes, 2016). The increasing cost of living on the island is reaching the upper limit of what most residents can afford, while the high demand for housing creates a further disruption as the market tailors its prices and its available spaces towards the US Military (Gilbert, 2022).

Power Dynamic

The presence of the U.S. military in other nations generates an almost co-dependent relationship between the two countries. Due to its political status, the local government of Guam exhibits nominal power but lacks significant authority. Guam has a delegate to represent the island in the House of Representatives. However, this elected official can only introduce new legislation but cannot vote, as per the Guam Congressional Act of 1972 (Punzalan, 2013). Likewise, the people of Guam, despite being recognized as U.S. citizens, are not eligible to participate in presidential elections, and Guam does not elect members to the U.S. Senate. The U.S. military is not accountable to the people of Guam, but it claims the authority to exploit the island and its resources for strategic imperatives.

Despite being an unincorporated territory of the United States and with no effective national representation, the residents of Guam remain divided on the U.S. military presence. One reason why the military presence enjoys significant support in Guam comes from a strong veteran population on the island. According to the 2010 Census, there were 14,047 veterans living in the four Island Areas (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) in 2010, with half of those veterans calling Guam “home” (Kromer, 2016). On the other hand, many people feel exploited, particularly in regard to land. Guam, objectively, has the highest ratio of U.S. military spending, military hardware, and land seizures from indigenous populations of any place on earth (Lutz, 2010).

That is why we propose to use the social representations theory to capture the shared meanings of the U.S. military presence in Guam. This theory offers a new way of looking at and understanding knowledge and communication (Howarth, 2006) or how social groups create reality together through their members’ everyday talk and actions (Moscovici, 1988). In this paper, our use of social representation theory will allow us to

examine how the people of Guam think, feel, and act toward the presence of the U.S. military in Guam.

Understanding U.S. Military Presence in Guam Using Social Representations Theory

The study of social representations focuses on dynamic and diverse social phenomena (Höijer, 2011). The theory of social representations examines shifts in how people view social issues or objects, and once these representations are formed, they are used as tools for understanding, engaging with, and participating within the social sphere (Moscovici, 1988). History is adopted and altered by the processes of social representation. Because of this, social histories can be understood as explanations of the past, which are arranged in the form of a shared narrative that gives a community a sense of continuity and may predict future possibilities associated with a community identity (Mathias et al., 2023). By using Social Representations Theory, we can identify and dive deeper into the relationship between Guam and the U.S. military. It will allow us to capture the shared meanings, attitudes, and emotions that the people of Guam associate with the U.S. military presence.

Hegemonic, Emancipated, and Polemic Representations

Moscovici distinguishes the difference between hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic representations to address the complicated question of how universally accepted social opinions or beliefs must be for them to be considered social representations (Hoijer, 2017). Hegemonic representations express the collective identity and are shared to a certain degree by most members of a group (Ben-Asher, 2003). The majority of a political group, a country, or any other large social group share hegemonic representations (Hoijer, 2017). An example of a hegemonic representation would be if many people in Guam held anti-military rather than pro-military views. Emancipated representations are information that has been independently produced by

subgroups within a community (Ben-Asher, 2003). It has to do with subgroups that, in relation to the interacting sections of society, construct their own interpretations with some kind of autonomy (Moscovici, 1988). For example, because some people lack exposure to oppositional views believe that the U.S. military presence is beneficial to the island of Guam. While others who have been exposed to information that portrays the U.S. military in a negative light, reject the U.S. military presence in Guam. Lastly, polemic representations pertain to social conflict, confrontations between groups, and debates within a community (Hoijer, 2017). In the heat of a disagreement or social struggle, subgroups create polemic representations; they indicate rivalry or differences within the representations (Ben-Asher, 2003). For instance, some people may be against the U.S. military presence in Guam, but there are others who are more accepting of the U.S. military occupation. Because ideas and social thinking are complex and frequently shifting, the classification of social representations into these three categories is vague.

Media and Social Representations

Media influences society, is embedded in collective memory, and generates feelings or responses (Cohen et al., 2022). According to Abric, the place of media “has long been key to the study of psychological phenomena” (Abric, 1987). Even though oral and verbal material has mostly been the focus of theoretical and methodological approaches to social representations, the connection between social representations and media has been the subject of several kinds of research (De Rosa & Farr, 2001). Some studies see the media as a source, a means of expression, and a method for the creation of social representations (Cohen, 2015; Da Silva et al., 2020; De Rosa & Farr, 2001; Sarrica et al., 2015). The impact of media on short-term memory may be higher than that of written material, as media, whether it be through videos or images can make complex ideas or events easier to understand (Cohen, 2015).

Method

This study seeks to capture the public's understanding and a population's (non)consensus on the presence of the United States military in Guam. To do so requires a qualitative study, looking at the personal and day-to-day experiences of individuals with the U.S. military occupation. Conducting this approach is advantageous to the overall research by providing an in-depth look at how individuals on both sides (civilians and military affiliates) perceive these respective social groups.

Corpus

Because we argue media is a means of expressing social representations, we have chosen the media as the data for analysis in capturing Guam's (un)shared understanding of the military presence on the island. We analyzed six videos that detail the history of the U.S. military build-up in Guam and feature interviews among military veterans, military officials, and locals who shared their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes toward the US military bases on the island.

In total, these videos spanned one hour, 59 minutes, and 48 seconds of online footage. Their length ranged from 6 minutes and 45 seconds to 56 minutes and 41 seconds. The videos selected are from YouTube channels that specialize in distributing global news onto a mainstream platform. We searched for videos using phrases such as "*US military presence in Guam*," "*US bases in Guam*," and "*US military in Guam*." Videos from media outlet channels like *The Wall Street Journal* and *AJ+* were selected, while the remaining videos were published by *PBS Guam*, the local Public Broadcasting Service network, summarizing the influence of the U.S military on the people of Guam, as well as detailing the lives of the CHamorus during and after World War II. The statements that were taken from the videos to be used as codes were only those that pertained to Guam's relationship with the United States and its military. The breakdown of the video listings is as follows:

Social Representations of U.S. Military Presence in Guam

Video #1: *PBS Guam: Island of Warriors*

Video #2: *Over 1/4 of Guam Is Made Up of America's Military*

Video #3: *An Inside Look at the U.S. Strategy in Guam to Counter China's Growing Threat* | *WSJ*

Video #4: *How The U.S. Territory Of Guam Became An American Colony* | *AJ+*

Video #5: *Should U.S. Territories Like Guam Be Independent?* | *AJ+*

Video #6: *PBS Guam: War for Guam*

Data Analysis

We analyzed the spoken words in the videos using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2016). With six videos adding up to roughly two hours' worth of footage, each video was assigned a number, and each team member was assigned at least two videos to analyze. We watched each of the videos a few times, paying close attention to the words spoken by the narrator and the interviewees. Each member of the team analyzed their assigned videos, and then we met together to combine our individual analyses.

The first step in our analysis was generating initial codes. For each video, we coded the statements or accounts that we perceived as capturing aspects of the interviewees' understanding of the military presence in Guam. The second step involved reviewing our codes and grouping together those that express similar ideas. Some codes became subcodes of more general ones. Codes that did not belong to more general codes were set aside but not discarded. The third step was examining the grouped codes and labeling them as themes and subthemes. We engaged in team discussions and refined our classifications until all our themes and subthemes made sense to us. The fourth step entailed reviewing our themes to identify patterns and create a cohesive picture of how

the military buildup in Guam is understood based on our data. We created a table for each video to facilitate easy interpretation.

As we analyzed the videos and captured social representations, we kept in mind Moscovici's words (1988, as cited in Codol 1982): "It is not so much the individual or group contribution to these representations that allows us to call them social representations; it is the fact that they have been shaped by an exchange and interaction process." As such, because group members discuss and deliberate on the issue, their interactions and communications enable their individual thoughts and feelings to converge, transforming something individual into something social. Those converged ideas are what we captured in our themes. We discussed these in detail in our results section.

Results

After conducting a thematic analysis of the videos, we found two prominent mega themes of how the U.S. military presence in Guam is viewed: as a "Savior" or as a "Colonizing Force." The mega theme of the "U.S. military as a Savior" was supported by only two themes of patriotism amongst the CHamorus and protection against foreign threats. The mega theme of the "U.S. Military as a Colonizing Force" tells a progressive story with its five themes, which were "Deception," "Resource/Population Exploitation," "Negative Consequences of the U.S. Military Occupancy," "Failure to Acknowledge Guam," and finally "Advocacy for Guam's Independence."

U.S Military Viewed as a Savior

As the data of this study were analyzed, it could be deduced that the island of Guam, as depicted in the media, views the United States and its military as its savior mainly due to the historical relationship between the island and the U.S. Patriotism for the island, and in turn, for the U.S., developed due to the gratefulness of the CHamorus

for liberating the island from Japanese occupation. The “patriotism” from the events of the Second World War has been passed down through the generations and inspired younger individuals to be enlist in the military. On the other hand, Guam’s tactical location resulted in a profound military buildup on the island after its liberation. This gave the island access to an arsenal that could aid its defense from foreign threats.

Patriotism

A large portion of Guam’s older generation showcases a strong sense of patriotism, which is due to a feeling of gratitude toward the U.S. military for liberation from the Japanese occupation in 1944. Codes from those indigenous to Guam during the occupation included thinking the U.S. marines that saved them “Had to be God,” (Leon Guerrero, 2015, 35:20) and that the camps burst into song, thanking Uncle Sam, a patriotic U.S. government icon, for his return to the island. As the years went by, this patriotic generation passed down this fervor for the military, instilling their sense of patriotism into their children and grandchildren. In most families, that ideal of being patriotic has found its way into their family customs, as the young men in some families from Guam want to enlist to follow in the footsteps of those who enlisted before them, “CHamorus indigenize their own military service, creating such a strong sense of identity.” (Bevacqua, 2021, 3:13 in Video #2).

Access to Defense

After liberating Guam, the United States built up its military forces on the island during the Cold War, deeming Guam as a tactical location for forces to defend against the Soviet Union and to roll back communism in Asia. The end of the Cold War did not lead to a significant pull-back and in recent years the rise of China’s military power and ambitions in the region has prompted the U.S. military to add additional forces and capabilities to the island, equipping Guam with air defense systems designed to prevent short-ranged ballistic threats by firing missiles to intercept said threats. Rear Admiral

Nicholson states, “...it makes it easier for us to defend the area [Guam] when we have additional resources here” (2021, 4:44 in Video #3). Moreover, individuals from Guam who are actively in the military share the same sentiment, with lines like “Free Guam so we can get bombed?” (Rivera, 2018, 8:48 in Video #2) and “Guam could have a defense agreement with the military...” (Bevacqua, 2018, 8:56 in Video #2), showcasing that Guam views the military presence as a resource in terms of defense from other nations.

U.S. Military as a Colonizing Force

Although some might agree that the U.S. military is indeed a savior to the island, some people of Guam view the United States military as a colonizing force that impacts the island negatively. Through the media data, it can be deduced that the U.S. military deceived the people of Guam with the supposed “shiny” benefits that come with joining the armed forces. Additionally, the rapid and extensive military buildup on the island resulted in the exploitation of resources and population. The negative consequences of the U.S. military go beyond the aforementioned situations and also impacts medical care for veterans, and the cost of living for the general population of Guam. Finally, the United States’ ignorance of Guam is palpable, contributing greatly to the ongoing debate over Guam’s status as a territory.

Deception

From being liberated and introduced to the power of the U.S. and its forces came a perception of the U.S. military as a powerful source of defense, economic fortune, and opportunity. Our findings, however, revealed many feel the U.S. military has consistently tricked the people of Guam to exert dominance as it prioritizes its interests over Guam civilians. The initial U.S. annexation and later “liberation” has resulted in the continuous occupation of Guam by yet another foreign entity, contradicting the perception of the idea of it as a liberator and provider. As explained by Michael Bevacqua, the people of Guam look at the “shininess and niceness of the military” and

see “a clean green place that offers all these economic possibilities and opportunity” (Bevacqua, 2014, 7:24 and 7:47 in Video #1). Furthermore, that sense of patriotism discussed in the section above, combined with the traditional CHamoru values of generosity and reciprocity, led to the CHamoru people feeling indebted and favorable towards the U.S. military. These positive sentiments opened the door for the U.S. military to strike deals and influence the people of Guam to support their self-interest. According to Jose Garrido, his grandfather, who felt that he owed the U.S. military for liberating Guam, had given up his land to them for as little as \$7.10 (Garrido, 2021, 37:55 in Video #6). The people of Guam, in their optimism and pride, perceived the U.S. military as great and felt obligated to support it, doing so by offering their lives and land. Many, however, have since decided they have been met with unfair compensation and exploitation.

Resource, Population Exploitation

Tying in with the deception of the CHamorus by the U.S. military, locals were exploited for both their land and people. Many locals had to surrender their property to benefit the U.S. military to prove their patriotism and to prevent dire consequences. Jun Stinson, an Al Jazeera journalist, states how “CHamorus who had just survived a brutal war were coerced into signing over their lands by threats, the need to prove their patriotism, and fear of military backlash” (2018, 7:05 in Video #4). CHamorus were “coerced” into sacrificing their land after the events of a traumatic event, that being World War II.

In addition to the exploitation of the CHamoru people’s patriotism, those who decide to serve in the U.S. military are taken advantage of by their pride, most noticeably after traumatic world events that aim to benefit the military entirely. When asked if she would rejoin, local veteran Maggie Aguon mentioned, “I would go again. In a heartbeat. And become a soldier. For my country, for my island. It’s called pride” (2014, 24:21 in Video #1). Although her statement appears patriotic, her pride can also

be seen as having been exploited. Aguon was one of the first soldiers deployed following the events of 9/11— a woman of Guam once again called upon following a traumatic event to make a sacrifice for a nation’s global ambitions, and one that denies Guam its full right.

The CHamoru people do not have the same rights as U.S. citizens residing in the states. With Guam having one of the highest U.S. military recruitment rates in the nation, residents are still unable to vote for president, showcasing once again how the small population is given unfair advantages but remains subservient to their higher power while being exploited in unseen ways. Maria Hinojosa, a PBS journalist who interviewed Guam veterans, states “[Guam veterans] can enlist in the military, but they can’t vote for the president who will send them to war,” (2014, 9:03 in Video #1). This lacking state-level rights, including representation in the Congress and the ability to vote for the president of the United States.

Negative Consequences of the U.S. Military Occupancy

Following years of increased U.S. military presence in Guam, the island and its residents experienced varying adverse effects. The surge in militarization contributed to a significant rise in the cost of living and an increasingly unaffordable real estate market, transforming life in Guam into a source of economic strain. Securing everyday essentials became a difficult task, which contributed to a rise in Guam’s poverty level that was “50 percent higher than the national average” (Hinojosa, 2014).

These negative consequences not only impacted the local population but also resulted in adverse consequences for the dedicated service members from Guam. Following their service, veterans are not afforded the promised proper treatment, leading to prolonged settlements and increased obstacles when seeking medical care. In Video #1, multiple veterans spoke out about the lack of funding for the VA’s office, as well as a distinct lack of accessibility to treatment centers that specialize in PTSD, with

the nearest treatment center being in Hawaii or Alaska. Former governor Eddie Calvo advocated for the local veterans, stating, “The federal government has not done its part to assist a very patriotic group of American citizens” (PBS, 2014). Although Guam has one out of eight of the adult population as a veteran, one of the highest in the U.S., Guam is third to last in medical spending per veteran. The money that is spent on the local veterans does not align when comparing the recruitment rates and assistance they receive upon return.

Another negative consequence of the U.S. military is making the ultimate sacrifice. Due to the few opportunities, and rising cost of living standards, more than a few people end up enlisting in the U.S. military. However, during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Pacific Islanders had the highest rate per capita of casualties and deaths, which was six times higher than the rest of the country (PBS, 2014).

Failure to Acknowledge Guam

The U.S. Military’s ignorance of Guam can be observed in other facets. When asked about the military’s opinion on Guam’s political status, Major Timothy Patrick states that “[the question has] nothing to do with the military” (2018, 5:18 on Video 5). The Public Affairs officer then expressed that the Department of Defense also has no opinion regarding the subject (2018, 5:27 on Video 5). The absence of insight into an important matter for the island further exhibits the U.S. military’s undivided focus only on the resources that the island can provide and nothing more.

Unfortunately, the ignorance of the supposed “savior” nation goes beyond its armed forces. Individuals from the mainland U.S. often fail to locate Guam on the map. Many assume the island is anywhere but the Pacific, typically in Central or South America, or even Africa (2014, 9:21 on Video #1). It is a disheartening realization that the island seems invisible to the mainland U.S. population despite its significant and strategic contribution to the U.S. efforts in global defense. Nevertheless, the palpable

ignorance of the U.S. military and its adverse effects equates to a reevaluation of Guam's political status and the island's association with the United States.

Advocating for Independence

Given all these negative consequences of the U.S. military presence, ranging from deception to exploitation to ignorance, the desire for independence from the U.S. military arose amongst the CHamoru people of Guam. To be free from U.S. military dominance meant that the CHamorus would gain back their sacred lands, identity, and freedom from being caught in the crossfire of international conflicts between the U.S. and its enemies. With a lack of autonomy came the lack of the authority to refuse the U.S. military from grabbing their sacred lands for firing practice ranges. Ritidian, or Litekyan, once a site frequented by locals exploring its historical significance and collecting medicinal plants, now stands inaccessible. As Michael Bevacqua, scholar and activist for Guam's independence, states "...You can't say, 'I would like to go and visit a sacred site to my ancestors,' because there's a fence, there's a gate, there's a pass procedure" (2018, 7:12 in Video #5). To some CHamorus, independence meant a return to an identity that more closely aligns with their ancestry, free of U.S. influence which has thoroughly permeated into Guam's culture. Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero, an activist with Independent Guåhan, stated that "Independence is a way for us to redefine ourselves and to return to who we were intended to be by our ancestors" (2018, in Video #5). Perhaps one of the most significant motives behind the independence movements was to escape being caught in between US military conflicts with its enemies, which threatened the lives of the people on the island. Leon Guerrero stated that her purpose in supporting local independence movements was to make Guam a safe and enriching environment for her children: "So if this is the place that is their [her children's] home, I want to make it safe" (2018, in Video #5).

Discussion

The results of our study shed light on how people in Guam experience the military presence, such as deceptive benefits of US occupancy, trauma bonding between Guam and the U.S. military, modern-day colonialism, as well as the division and disempowerment of the CHamoru people. The findings showcase that many modern-day CHamorus view their relationship with the U.S. military as almost parasitic. A significant group on the island advocate for some changes to U.S.'s dominating presence in Guam. These ideas are discussed more in-depth in this section as we explore the motives behind those interviewed to look at how the island of Guam views the presence of the U.S. military presence.

The “Benefits” of U.S Occupancy

At first glance, it appears that there are benefits to the U.S. military occupation of Guam through the social representations of the people in Guam as portrayed in the media. Despite Guam being tiny and isolated, they are protected and defended by one of the strongest militaries in the world. Enlisting in the U.S. military includes many incentives for Guam residents, particularly economic mobility. Furthermore, those born in Guam have received U.S. citizenship since the 1950 Organic Act. A considerable number of CHamoru take pride in their association with the powerful American nation. This connection has given rise to family traditions, fostering a profound sense of relief and security that originates from being freed from the Japanese occupation during World War II.

None of these benefits, however, were seemingly for the people of Guam, and were more of a byproduct of the U.S.'s necessity to build up the island as a military force. Patriotism in Guam emerged and is maintained organically, and the United States did not instill nationalism within them. Yet, the U.S. still benefits from the island's patriotism and uses it to pursue its global power projection. While Guam does receive

substantial protection from potential invaders, that defensive prioritization by the U.S. is driven by its strategic importance as a key outpost in the Pacific. Whatever benefits the U.S. seemingly gives to Guam, they do so with the ideology that Guam is of some use to them, resources or otherwise.

Trauma Bonding

Those feelings of liberation and security led to many Guam residents viewing the U.S. military presence as essential to the physical and economic survival of their island. In the case of any foreign confrontation, many believe that Guam would not be able to defend itself. The U.S. military, however, has coerced CHamorus into giving up land, exploited the island's space and people to in pursuit of its global strategy, and has frustrated political movements on island that advocate for independence and land preservation. The clear imbalance of power in the relationship between Guam and the U.S. military reveals a trauma bond. This irregular cycle of reward and punishment by the U.S. military to the people of Guam can be seen through the contradiction of helping them to then taking advantage of them.

Despite the power asymmetry and political disregard, some people of Guam see the US as "Savior," defending them from any foreign invasion and economic hardship. Reid (2024) refers to this paradoxical psychological response, where "victims" develop an emotional attachment to their abusers as trauma bonding. This cyclical state involves complicated interactions, abusive control dynamics, power imbalances within the relationship, as well as inconsistency in administering punishment and rewards (Raghavan & Doychak, 2015). On one hand, Guam and its people are promised citizenship, defense, and resources, but on the other, they are politically disregarded and economically inferior, and their wishes for the land to be respected and defended are instead taken and used for military advancement.

Modern Day Colonialism

Guam's and the United States' relationship since World War II illustrates the military's impact on the current state of the island. As an unincorporated territory, Guam lacks representation in the U.S. government. Its people cannot vote for their commander-in-chief, and yet, they hold one of the highest military recruitment rates. These individuals show pride and patriotism for their island and country. And yet, they receive the least in return, especially when it comes to mental health assistance. Additionally, CHamoru landowners and descendants share their stories of how they were paid an unfair price for their property to build U.S. military infrastructure. Underrepresentation and exploitation of land and people are the most common aspects of colonialism, being utilized as a method of control over the region. Guam can be described as a colony, given the island's overall status. However, reverting to other terms, such as "unincorporated territory," masks this notion.

Division and Disempowerment Caused by Colonialism

Given the positive and negative representations of the U.S. Military presence in Guam, these polemical representations can be thought to divide and disempower the people of Guam, especially between older and younger generations. As mentioned in the results, the older generation of CHamorus held captive by the Japanese during World War II perceived the U.S. military as a savior. Consequently, they demonstrated patriotism toward the U.S. by enlisting in the military, giving up their lands, and instilling patriotism within their children. As the years passed, however, the younger generations' attitudes toward the U.S. military shifted to some seeing it as a colonizing force. They noted the negative impacts on their land, people, living conditions, and security as caused by the U.S. Military's exploitation of Guam's colonial status. Because of these starkly different representations, there is bound to be conflict and disagreement amongst the CHamorus on the future of their island, whether they advocate for statehood or complete independence. As they are divided, they are disempowered; they

will have greater difficulty uniting to make unanimous decisions on political matters. Being stuck in this state of disagreement will keep them stuck in the most detrimental state with the greatest consequences on their island—colonialism.

Social Representation Theory: Theoretical Implications

Social Representation Theory enables us to examine in more detail the complex relationship between Guam and the U.S. military. By applying the Social Representation Theory, we were able to capture the collective understandings, attitudes, and emotions of Guam residents toward the U.S. military presence here in Guam. While most codes we found dealt with themes of “Resource/Population Exploitation,” “Failure to Acknowledge Guam,” or “Advocating for Independence,” we also found themes of “Patriotism” and “Access to Defense.” The CHamoru people who experienced World War II felt relieved and thankful to the U.S. military for rescuing them from the Japanese, viewing them as saviors. Those who were born later than the war and the generation of people who had their parents and/or grandparents taken advantage of after the war often viewed the U.S. military as a colonizing force that exploits the people of Guam and has caused so much economic and social stress. By using the theory of social representation, we have come to recognize a “double-edged sword” understanding of what the U.S. military presence means to the people of Guam. We identified polemic representations, which are usually viewed in the context of an opposition or a struggle between groups. The results of our study suggest that many people view the U.S. military as a threat and express resistance towards continued occupation, while others feel a sense of gratitude for the U.S. military presence in Guam and are proud to be a part of the United States. The value of media as capturing social representations of the U.S. military in Guam proved to be very significant. Using media as a source, we were able to give a more in-depth glimpse into the military in Guam, where regular civilians might be restricted. Having unlimited access made it easier to expedite the process of

analyzing the themes. It made it very accessible to gather data and refer back to them throughout the research.

Shared Meanings of US Military Presence in Guam: Practical Implications

Significantly, both social groups are heading towards alleviating the existing tensions. Both sides must understand each other to lessen the conflicts of that society—one in which both U.S. military personnel and indigenous CHamorus can live peacefully alongside each other. From Video #5, Bevacqua mentions that independence does not mean separation; rather, a defense agreement could be met wherein military bases could continue to stay in Guam if the US promises to defend the island from rising international threats. This would enable Guam to have a greater degree of economic and political freedom. Hence, we hope this research reaches individuals involved in the field of politics and the military as well as those who are planning to enlist in the military, as our findings may further educate them on the matters that Guam currently faces, moving them in a way to take a step further and bring a change to the island's existing situation.

Given the insight from the perspectives of numerous Guam veterans, advocates, military personnel, and interviewees, we aim to convey that our discoveries and analyses contribute to a sense of empowerment and encouragement. Additionally, we aspire to spread awareness of the local advocacies that the indigenous CHamorus fight for until this day. Not only do we hope this paper reinforces and inspires more CHamoru advocates but also educates members of the U.S. military (whether or not they reside in Guam) of the challenges and hardships that militarization brings to the island.

Limitations of the Study & Future Implications

Several limitations were raised during the course of this research study. Because our data set consisted of primarily media content, each video contained its own narrative bias that would shift and present itself in a way that limited the authenticity of

the responses. Although our results were fruitful, we felt there was insufficient data to accurately depict the social representations of the CHamorus in Guam towards the U.S. military. Future improvement on this study would require an additional research design method, such as surveying, interviewing, or focus group discussion, to gather more in-depth data from the people themselves. This would allow for a rich source of close data responses reflecting the social groups more effectively.

Reflexivity

The authors of this study, despite coming from diverse backgrounds, have reasons that affect our drive to pursue this subject matter. The U.S. military presence in Guam exerts an impact on our lives, whether it be through direct or indirect means. As residents of Guam, nearly all of us share a unique connection with the U.S. military, influencing our lives in various ways.

For example, some of the authors have immediate and/or extended family member(s) who have served or are currently serving in one or more branches of the U.S. military. Additionally, some have close family members who have experienced war as soldiers or civilians. Another one of us has plans to join the military solely to secure a financially stable future and to pursue college at a graduate level. They were inspired by both friends and family members who are currently serving in the Air Force. They see the military as a gateway to success, as evidenced by close ones. Some individuals participated in a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program and earned certification upon completing three years of the program during their high school years. One of them enlisted in the United States Air Force, fulfilling a four-year active-duty contract before transitioning to the United States Air Force Reserves in Guam and is still currently serving. Meanwhile, some of the authors provided an “outsider-looking-in” perspective because they have no relations profoundly affected by the military. Having a contributor with this background provided a valuable perspective that helped us maintain a balanced standpoint and avoid leaning too heavily toward bias.

The diverse backgrounds of the authors involved in the study underlie the multifaceted nature of the impact of the U.S. military presence in Guam on the lives of its residents. Whether through direct personal experiences or an “outsider-looking-in” perspective, the intricate connections between the people of Guam and the military influence their lives in unique and complex ways. The multiple array of backgrounds enriches our understanding by providing a balanced viewpoint that mitigates potential biases. As we navigate the complex relationship between Guam and the U.S. military, this study serves as a testament to the various and significant ways in which the military presence has shaped the experiences and perspectives of the island’s residents.

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Methods and strategies used to recruit betel nut chewers for research in Micronesia

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Introduction

Guam is an island in the Northern Marianas home to the native CHamorus and a diverse population of Pacific Islander subgroups. According to the United States Census Guam (2020), Guam's population was 153,836, and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders were the largest groups. Areca/betel nut chewing in Guam is prevalent in CHamoru, Yapese, Pohnpeian, and Micronesian communities (Paulino et al., 2011). According to the Guam Epidemiological Profile, 4.5% of CHamorus and 27.9% of Micronesians chew betel quid daily. Additionally, 33.9% of CHamorus and 69.6% of Micronesians add tobacco to their chew (David et al., 2023). Chewing betel nut can cause oral cancer, and adding tobacco in chew can increase the risk of oral cancer (World Health Organization. 2012). According to the 2013-2017 Guam Cancer Facts and Figures, mouth and pharynx cancer was the seventh most common cancer site for new cases and the seventh most common cause of cancer deaths in Guam (Lee et al., 2022). Health disparities are prevalent in Pacific Islander communities. There is a need for acknowledgment of the diverse populations within the Pacific Islander communities to allow for health disparities and inequities to be detected (Ro & Yee, 2010). Addressing the lack of research and representation of Pacific Islanders is vital to reducing health disparities within these communities.

The University of Guam (UOG) collaborated with the University of Hawaii Cancer Center (UHCC) to conduct research investigating the presence of areca (betel nut) alkaloids, buccal cells (short-term exposure), and hair strands (long-term exposure)

among betel nut chewers. Eligible participants were individuals 18 and older who chewed betel nut with or without tobacco for at least a year. Participants were classified into two groups: Class 1 chewed betel nut without tobacco, while Class 2 added tobacco to their chew (Paulino, 2014, 2020). The team advertised the study using various methods, and interested individuals reached out. Participants were required to answer a questionnaire and provide hair and buccal cell biospecimens. All qualified participants consented to the project, and there were no dropouts after obtaining consent. From May 2021 to May 2022, 128 betel nut chewers in Guam were enrolled in the study. The purpose of this paper is to share the methods and strategies used to successfully contact and recruit hard-to-reach populations such as betel nut chewers to improve productivity and guide future researchers focusing on Pacific Islanders. Several recruitment methods were used: online (social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, emails), phone calls, presentations, onsite recruitment, incentivized referrals, collaborations with UOG research studies, and broadcast and print media.

Online

Social Media: Facebook and Instagram

The rising Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Guam greatly restricted in-person recruitment; thus, the team focused on online recruitment. These methods included the use of social media (Facebook and Instagram), email, and WhatsApp. The team created social media posts, including study information and tailored visuals to reflect the community.

An Instagram and Facebook account for the project was created to distribute information and present the project's flyer. Weekly posts on Instagram and Facebook included betel nut and cancer facts, project information, and monthly raffle giveaways. On Instagram, keywords such as betel nut, pugua, and Guam were used as hashtags to target betel nut chewers in Guam. Buente et al. (2020) observed that #betelnut is a

hashtag that has grown throughout the years and drives social engagement. These hashtags ensured that those interested in betel nut could see the posts.

Locals in Guam use Facebook to interact with various organization project pages or groups to interact with the community. For example, there are Facebook groups for selling or trading items, making announcements, Guam jobs, and neighborhood watch groups. After getting permission from the Facebook page admins the project flyer and information were posted in various Facebook groups. The benefits of using Facebook for recruitment included reduced cost, shorter recruitment periods, better representation, and improved participant selection in young and hard-to-reach demographics (Whitaker et al., 2017).

The team also contacted various cultural organizations, such as the Micronesian Resource Center One Stop Shop (MRCOSS) by directly messaging their Facebook page. They helped distribute project information by reposting the project flyer on their social media accounts. MRCOSS is an organization that provides services tailored to the Pacific Islander communities in Guam. They are familiar with communicating with hard-to-reach communities in Guam, especially the Chuukese and Micronesian communities, who are likely to be or know any betel nut chewers.

Email

The marketing and communications team at UOG sent a mass email to the UOG Triton community. Current students, alumni, and staff at UOG were informed of the study through this method. Mayors from each village were also contacted through email. The mayor's staff provided referrals and allowed the team to conduct in-person recruitment at their offices. This method allowed us to communicate with government, schools, and companies around the island. However, emails are limited as they may end up in junk mail and have a long response time. Nevertheless, emails are reliable,

professional, and effective in communicating with large organizations or in a more formal setting.

WhatsApp

Another method of online recruitment was through the messaging app called WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a free app that relies on internet connection and can be used on smartphones and computers. Many in Guam use WhatsApp to create group chats among organizations, communities, families, and friends. WhatsApp group chats tend to be informal, which makes it more comfortable for others to ask questions and chat (Jailobaev et al., 2021). WhatsApp was used to distribute project flyers to student organizations at UOG and other personal group chats.

Team members could also communicate, readily answer interested individuals' messages, and send data collection reminders to participants. Although this method allows for quick ways to share information and gain immediate response, keeping track of where the information travels is hard.

These online methods are easy, free, and can reach a broad audience. Social media targeted younger adults and made it easy and quick for others to share information and project flyers. Pictures and graphics from social media posts captured attention and ignited interest in the study. Simple and short information on flyers ensured that information was easy to read and understand. However, not everyone has a social media account, smartphone, or internet access. Only 15% (n=19) of the sample was recruited online.

Phone calls

Interested individuals called to inquire about participation in the study. Phone calls allowed the researchers to prescreen eligibility and schedule and remind participants of data collection sessions. Finally, phone calls allow a direct connection with participants. However, a limitation to this technique is that phone numbers may be

changed, and those with pre-paid phones may have their number go out of service due to missed phone payments. Also, some individuals may only be contacted at certain times of the day because they share a phone number with family members or use landline phones.

Presentations

Virtual and in person

A research associate conducted virtual and in-person presentations about betel nut and tobacco use. On Zoom, the project was introduced to students in the UOG health science research classes. Additionally, an in-person presentation about the effects of tobacco and betel nut usage on youths was conducted at the Tully Foundation. Project flyers were also given to those in attendance.

Presentations allowed the team to pitch the project and inform others of how the study will help Guam's community and benefit their participants. When researchers show how the study can bring positive results to the community, participants will gain trust in researchers (Mendez & Arat-Cabading, 2016). The students may also be more engaged during presentations and ask questions which can lead to them referring their friends or family to enroll in the study. The team made efforts to show the benefits and importance of betel nut research and the positive impact it can bring to the community.

Onsite Recruitment

The team attended community outreaches that were CHamoru and other Micronesian cultures to conduct onsite recruitment. First, team members attended mass in different villages and distributed flyers and UOG tote bags after mass. The mass in Dededo and Tamuning was conducted in Chamorro, while the mass in Yigo was conducted in Palauan. Because the mass was in native languages, it ensured that those in attendance were individuals whose culture may practice betel nut chewing. Also, members of the church have a communal relationship. When those in the same

communal group advertise research, participants become more open and cooperative in the recruitment process (Mendez & Arat-Cabading, 2016). Several studies found that communicating with faith-based leaders is an important part of recruiting Pacific Islanders and that churches are an ideal place to discuss health information (Cassel et al., 2020; McElfish et al., 2019).

The team coordinated community outreach with UOG nursing students at Zero Down in Yigo. Zero Down is a subdivision with government housing for low-income families. During a Town Hall meeting, the team introduced themselves and distributed project flyers, tote bags, and drinks to residents. This method allowed the team to meet hard to reach populations.

The most successful onsite recruitment location was at the Inarajan Mayor's Office. The team held several data collection sessions at the Inarajan Mayor's Office. The project banner and other participants from data collection attracted passing residents, which led to them enrolling in the study. The team also visited each village's Mayor's Office and posted flyers on bulletin boards. Promotional items were also given to the mayor's staff. In the southern villages, the mayor's staff identified and referred households that are known as betel nut chewers. Community-based organizations allowed us to conduct outreach at convenient sites for participants (McElfish et al., 2019).

Onsite recruitment allowed for a more hands-on or traditional approach to recruitment. Several other studies have also taken a proactive approach to onsite recruitment, allowing for more targeted recruitment (Murphy & Herzog, 2015; Murphy et al., 2019; Dalisay et al., 2019). The advantage of onsite recruitment is that team members found places where the advertisement of the betel nut study would most likely reach betel nut chewers.

A team member explaining the project created a more reliable and engaging atmosphere between interested individuals. Also, participants are more cooperative when they can identify those in charge of the project and have an established relationship with those who endorse it (Mendez & Arat-Cabading, 2016). Onsite recruitment is free and allows the team to find the targeted population and form connections. Nevertheless, traveling to all the villages in Guam is time-consuming, and travel funds are costly. Another limitation of this method is that all team members had to wear complete personal protective equipment (PPE), which may be uncomfortable as Guam's weather is hot. Although onsite recruitment contributed to 7% (n=9) of the sample, the team was able to create connections with locals and organizations within the community.

Incentivized Referrals

Individuals who successfully participated in the study were rewarded with a \$40 gift certificate for gas or a local grocery store. A study in Hawaii found that participants preferred gift cards to local grocery stores (Cassel et al., 2020). In addition to the participation reward, incentivized referrals were advertised to recruit betel nut chewers. Similar studies in Guam have also issued incentives for participation and referrals ranging from \$20 to \$175. (Moss et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2019; Sotto et al., 2020). The most successful way of recruiting Class 1 betel nut chewers was by incentivized referrals. According to Dalisay et al. (2019), "Seventeen out of 20 participants reported having at least one close friend who chewed betel nut" (p.7). Participants who recruited someone into the study were rewarded with a \$10 gift certificate to either Payless, a local grocery store, or 76, a local gas station for each person they recruited. When the recruitment of Class 1 chewers was low, referrals were increased to \$20 gift certificates for each person recruited. This increase in incentives further motivated recruiters to give referrals, which helped complete Class 1 recruitment. Incentivized referrals and participation also ensured that the individual referred to the study was more likely to

finish the sample and survey collection process. The team recruited 78% (n=99) of the sample through incentivized referrals. The limitation of this method is that funds are needed to purchase incentives for recruiters.

Collaborations

Past and present UOG research studies helped recruit participants. Past betel nut research, such as the Betel Nut Intervention Trial (BENIT) study (Paulino et al., 2020) was used as a basis for recruitment. Past participants who stated they were interested in future research were contacted, and some enrolled in the new study. Most Class 2 chewers were recruited from this method. The team collaborated with other UOG research studies by attending outreach together and sharing project information to their participants.

The strength of collaboration between research studies is that culturally competent researchers are familiar with recruitment. Additionally, past participants already have an existing connection and trust with the staff, which creates a comfortable recruitment process. Responses are received when participants have established relationships with those in the study (Mendez & Arat-Cabading, 2016). The recruitment process will also be more efficient as they may be more familiar with consent and data collection.

Broadcast and Print Media

Radio

The study was advertised on two local CHamoru stations, KSTO 95.5 FM/KISH 102.9 FM, for the entire month of December 2021 and was aired in the morning and afternoon. The radio ad targeted Class 1 chewers only as this demographic was challenging to recruit. Class 1 chewers tend to be older (Murphy et al., 2019). Older adults are likelier to listen to the radio and discover the project through radio ads. However, the ad was only aired for a month since the radio ad fees were expensive.

Television

A UOG Cancer Research Center representative had an interview on KUAM, a local television broadcasting channel. The interview helped share information about the study and provided contact information for interested people. The interview can be viewed on KUAM's website, YouTube account, and the Betel Nut Biomarker project's Facebook page. Having a face to the project creates a connection with interested individuals and gives them someone to relate to and trust. In addition, older adults are more likely to watch the local news on TV, which may help recruit Class 1 chewers who tend to be older in age. However, a limitation of this method is that not everyone in Guam has cable or television.

Newspaper

Local newspapers such as the Pacific News Center and the Pacific Daily Newspaper posted articles about the project and project flyer on their websites and printed them in newspapers for free. Newspapers are easily accessible and can reach those not active on the internet and hard to reach populations. Free newspapers are available in some restaurants and cafes. However, because the newspaper article was not a paid ad, it was only available in print for one day. Additionally, those with a lower reading level or with English as their second language may have trouble understanding a newspaper article.

Conclusion

The different recruitment methods of online, phone calls, presentations, onsite recruitment, incentivized referrals, collaborations with other UOG research studies, and broadcast and print media allowed the team to successfully recruit 128 betel nut chewers in Guam. The most effective recruitment method was incentivized referrals (78%), followed by online (15%), and onsite recruitment (7%). The success of recruitment through referrals made by recruiters, participants, and staff may be

attributed mainly to the established relationships between recruiters and participants. A study that explores the ties between culture and clinical research in Guam underscores the importance of individuals within the group of interest encouraging participation, which fosters collaboration and a willingness to participate of more individuals (Mendez & Arat-Cabading, 2016). The successful use of incentives is also consistent with another study on Guam, where recruitment was a challenge (Dalisay et al., 2019). The gas and grocery incentives may have motivated individuals to participate due to the financial stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online recruitment was the second effective method due to limitations conducting onsite recruitment posed by the pandemic. While traditional methods such as phone calls, presentations, and broadcast and print media did not yield high results in recruitment. Despite limitations, our findings present several strategies that aid in recruiting a hard-to-reach population. We shared these methods to contribute to the community of researchers in Guam and those also targeting these specific demographics. The results from this pilot study will be published in a forthcoming paper in collaboration with UHCC.

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A reflection of Guam undergraduate students in recruiting research participants

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Introduction

Recruitment of ethnic minorities, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), in mental health research is challenging (Waheed et al., 2015). AAPIs have lower levels of participation in health research and are less likely to receive mental health services, which may be linked to barriers such as social stigma (Liu et al., 2019; Office of Minority Health Resources Center, 2021; Subica et al., 2020). One way to address these challenges is to increase the representation of these groups in research using reliable and effective recruitment strategies. Recruitment strategies are essential not only for optimizing researchers' time, effort, and resources but also for ensuring the successful enrollment of participants in qualitative research studies (Negrin et al., 2022).

While studies have examined the mental health of AAPI students in the Western Pacific, there is currently no published material that provides an in-depth discussion on recruitment strategies pertaining to these populations. Ran et al. (2016) investigated the mental health of college students in Guam, briefly discussing areas for methodological improvement, such as a larger and more diverse sample. To achieve this desired sample and increase the representation of Guam AAPIs in research, researchers can benefit from publicly available knowledge on recruitment strategies and challenges relevant to this population. By giving a detailed account of the researcher's experience in recruiting

college students in the Pacific for mental health studies, valuable insights can be gained regarding successful participant recruitment for future research endeavors.

This paper serves as a reflection of two undergraduate students' research experiences conducting a mental health study in Guam during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategies discussed can help guide future undergraduate researchers in recruiting participants from two colleges in Guam, the University of Guam (UOG) and Guam Community College (GCC). The purpose of the study was to assess the mental health status of Guam college students during the COVID-19 pandemic by measuring prevalence rates of depression, anxiety, and stress through an online survey.

We used social media, campus recruitment, and incentives to recruit participants to our study. These recruitment methods resulted in the successful recruitment of 519 participants and 360 completed surveys. This paper offers a practical and introspective analysis of the successes and challenges we encountered in our recruitment process.

Utilizing social media

The study flyer was initially shared on social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to reach the population of interest. It included a brief description of the study, eligibility criteria, a link and QR code to access the survey, details about incentives, and contact information. We used this strategy due to prior experience in another research study where we observed that sharing flyers on social media could effectively reach a wide audience. Social media recruitment was also a practical choice during the COVID-19 pandemic because it provided a convenient and accessible means of reaching a large, diverse student population while being cost-effective and time-efficient (Purewal et al., 2021). Leveraging social media platforms for recruitment was convenient, straightforward, familiar, accessible, and did not incur any additional costs.

Reflection on Guam Students Recruiting Participants

WhatsApp was an easy and effective tool to disseminate research information as it was a widely used messaging platform within our student network. This platform allowed for convenient and immediate communication with mobile users (Jailobaev et al., 2021). As undergraduate students, we had access to ten chat groups of the UOG student organizations of which we were already members. The members of these organizations were primarily students in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors. We, however, encouraged other students to share the study information with other groups and college students of all majors.

In addition to WhatsApp, we shared the study flyer to Facebook groups and our Instagram profiles to maximize our reach in social media. We searched for Facebook groups that were widely followed and accessible to Guam residents, such as buy and sell groups. Permission to post an electronic flyer was gained through the group administrators (Tully et al., 2021). Though social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram allowed us to reach many people within our community and social circle, we found it challenging to track where the flyers had been shared to.

Overall, social media was an excellent tool for advertising our study since it was easily accessed by college students. These platforms could serve as recruitment tools given an understanding of how to access the study population, whether through being an insider or knowing individuals willing to share study information within their social circle (Marks et al., 2017). Using a combination of the different social media platforms enabled us to reach a wider audience of potential participants. As undergraduate researchers, this allowed us to have flexibility with our time and to work on our tasks remotely.

Campus Recruitment

Advertising through college websites and email

Student centers and media teams of the two colleges in Guam were contacted through email to gain permission to post flyers on the schools' websites. These centers and teams served as gatekeepers within the colleges who were able to facilitate the recruitment process as they were well-trusted within their networks (Tully et al., 2021). All students enrolled at UOG and GCC received a school email where they get important information from the colleges. This process allowed the study flyer to reach all students from a legitimate and verified source. The team observed an increase in inquiry and interest during the week of mass email communication.

At the start of the project, advertising remotely was convenient due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which placed restrictions on campus and when most classes were still online. Email was an easy and effective way to ask instructors to share information and encourage students to participate in the study. This method was less time-consuming than a face-to-face meeting, but allowed us to still directly communicate with instructors. Through this method, we were able to distribute flyers to students.

Face-to-face recruitment

Recruitment drives at UOG and GCC campuses were an active and effective way to meet college students. Flyers were strategically posted around UOG and GCC campuses and passed out at recruitment events. The QR code on the flyers allowed students to easily access the survey.

We approached students waiting for class, conversing with friends, or who were simply walking through campus. Students who did not appear to be busy, such as those in the library, were easier to approach and could complete the survey readily. The library was also a good place to recruit, because students had access to computers and wifi. When speaking with students, we emphasized the study survey's importance, aims, and deadline. However, students were informed they could complete the survey on their own

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time. Reichel et al. (2021) had a similar face-to-face approach, encouraging students on campus to complete surveys on their devices.

We found this recruitment method was successful as it allowed us to build connections and rapport with students through conversations and offering of promotional goods. Being approachable, respectful, and having familiarity with the target population was helpful in increasing recruitment (Patel, Doku, & Tennakoon, 2003). Students who saw the team several times stated they would share the survey with friends and classmates.

Some challenges of campus recruitment were a misinterpretation of other people on the project team as vendors selling snacks, schedule conflicts, and fewer students around the campus when the study team was available. A clear sign depicting the study could help with this challenge and attract more attention (Reichel et al., 2021). Unfamiliarity with class times and limited window time for recruitment decreased the opportunity to meet study participants.

In the classroom

While recruiting during class times, we sought to communicate information about the study concisely and in a way that would earn support and mutual trust (Negrin et al., 2022). We introduced ourselves as undergraduate researchers and briefly described our study and its significance. Presenting to students was nerve-wracking, but it was good practice in explaining our research project. Instructors were eager to help and explain to students the importance of participating in research and how they might also do research in the future. The challenges, however, were coordinating with professors, delays in professors' response to email requests, and scheduling around classes to present.

School events

During school events where students would gather in one area, we asked student organizations to have our flyers at their booths. Through these face-to-face interactions, students from different areas of the campus could be reached more effectively (Reichel et al., 2021). As students and as members of several participating organizations ourselves, asking other student leaders to advertise our study at their booths was easy. They offered to share our study flyer within their network and WhatsApp group chats. For this method, approaching students directly when they were at the booth or in line was effective. The hectic environment of these often crowded and noisy events did prove challenging. Despite these difficulties, it was still an effective way to advertise to many people.

Use of incentives

We are grateful our research was supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Building University Infrastructure Leading to Diversity Enhancing Cross-disciplinary Infrastructure and Training at Oregon (BUILD EXITO) and the Pacific Island Partnership for Cancer Health Equity (PIPCHE) grants. The grants allowed us to offer incentives to study participants, which could significantly increase the response rate in survey studies (Abdelazeem et al., 2023). During marketing and recruitment, students were informed that those who participated in the study could win prizes. Prizes included UOG promotional items, gas cards, and grocery gift certificates. Reichel et al. (2021) found that college students liked monetary and non-monetary incentives. We found gas certificates were the most popular. Raffle draws were conducted monthly during the entire time of data collection. Using incentives allowed us to advertise more confidently and students were motivated due to the opportunity to receive incentives. However, one issue we experienced was that several prize winners did not respond to our emails or did not show up to the meeting time to collect their prizes due to schedule conflicts. As students, we had to work around our class schedule and the winners' schedules which sometimes conflicted.

Conclusion

Using a multi-modal approach to recruitment including social media, face-to-face recruitment, and incentives allowed us to successfully recruit 360 students to our study. Social media allowed us to reach a broad audience, while face-to-face recruitment ensured personalized interactions with the students.

We also faced barriers to recruitment, such as time and resources. The hardest part of recruitment was approaching students and waiting for their survey completion. This experience taught us that multiple strategies were needed to complete our study sample. First, set goals and timelines. We set a specific number of recruits each time we had a recruitment drive. We also planned events and maximized our time for research and school by managing our time well and balancing school and research work. Second, approach the students confidently and professionally to establish a connection. Students were more receptive to participating in the study after meaningful conversation. Third, use eye-catching and culturally relevant visual aids and flyers to promote the study. Signage is important in catching the attention of potential recruits as it shows them what we are doing and encourages them to approach.

Future improvements include having more members in a team, such as other undergraduate researchers, research associates, volunteers, and collaborations with student organizations. Having more team members would allow for more frequent recruitment drives. As students, it was hard to work around our class schedules and exams. We recommend canvassing the campus at which you plan to recruit and finding which days and times students are more likely to congregate in hallways or during break times.

Despite the challenges, we successfully recruited 360 students to complete our study. Our experience allowed us to gain confidence as researchers and reflect on the successes and challenges of our recruitment strategies, which can guide future

undergraduate researchers in recruiting understudied populations. Research as an undergraduate student can be challenging, but the experience taught us valuable lessons not learned in books.

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Acknowledgments

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Understanding and Sensemaking of Institutional Assessment: A Collaborative Autoethnography of Perceptions and Experiences with Assessment Work

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Abstract

The focus of this article is to convey the findings of our individual and collective perceptions and experiences with assessment work. We intentionally employed collaborative autoethnography as the methodological approach to evoke storied accounts of our understanding and sensemaking of institutional assessment. We reflected on this phenomenon in relation to our respective academic community context and cultural context. The narratives extend our academic story illuminating the results of our sensemaking about assessment. Our discovery of major themes and subthemes address the guiding research question: “describe my/our experience(s) and perceptions of assessment” to four research strands/prompts about (1) understanding assessment, (2) work of assessment, (3) impact and significance of assessment, and (4) implications of assessment. We provide rich descriptions, storied accounts, to support the themes and subthemes across the four research strands/prompts. Discussion of the findings, implications and further research suggestions, and conclusions on scholarly significance of the research are offered.

Keywords: Assessment, Higher Education, Academic Community, Cultural Context, Collaborative Autoethnography

Introduction

This article describes in rich detail our collaborative research work that examines the phenomenon of assessment in higher education. Guided by an overarching research question with four research strands/prompts, three faculty members in a higher education context in the Western Pacific region sought to qualitatively explore our individual and collaborative understanding and sensemaking of institutional assessment. The results of our investigation yielded rich narratives depicting common and unique revelations of an understanding and interpretation of assessment as a function of institutional data evidence generation, but more so remarkably with such diverse academic and cultural experiences, the commonalities surprised the researchers.

Our stories, unfolded in this article, are presented in an academic research report style. Yet it is the voices of our stories that situate our findings to our unique experiences about assessment given the context of our institutional setting, the people, place, and process of assessment. We first orientate readers to select literature on the concept of assessment and how we situate the term in the study. Next, we describe the methodology and thereafter describe our findings depicting the major themes and subthemes with detailed quotes in support of the themes. Our discussion of the results follows with noted literature connections to support claims. We close our writing on our collaborative research by conveying implications, proffering further research suggestions, and concluding remarks on the scholarly practice and significance of the research.

Perspectives on Assessment

In this section, we provide a brief orientation to the topic of assessment, the phenomenon of focus in our research. Assessment as a topic in higher education has been well researched and is a commonly known and used term within an institution. As Ghaicha (2016) notes, “Educational institutions worldwide, across all educational levels,

are involved, to some extent in the development and implementation of some kind of academic assessment” (p. 213). Assessment as a tool ultimately provides evidence to show areas of success and areas of improvement related to teaching and learning. Thomas et al. (2019) state, “Assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning in higher education” (p. 546). While Munna (2021) notes, “Assessment in higher education always considered as one of the systematic process[es] of documenting empirical data and knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that encourage and improve student learning” (p. 426). Ewell and Cummings (2017) describe the “evolution of assessment” (pp. 3-14) and noted that “... the term *assessment* meant different things to different people” (p. 8). They wrote that primarily there were three definitions of assessment that underscored/undergirded “the traditional use” of the meaning (p. 8.). Further, Ewell and Cummings (2017) expound the first understanding referenced “continuous feedback on individual performance,” (p. 8) the second meaning concerned “large-scale assessment” stemming from K12 practice “... in the name of accountability, ” (p. 8) and the third meaning described it “... as a special kind of program evaluation, whose purpose was to gather evidence to improve curricula and pedagogy” (p. 8). In our study, we refer to the term assessment and specifically institutional assessment as an overarching phrase that encapsulates the many levels or layers of assessment processes and functions in a higher education context. Our reference to this phrase as an all-encompassing term was purposeful to explore our research question and this phenomenon of assessment, without boundaries, to evoke storied accounts of our experiences and perceptions of assessment.

Literature on assessment in higher education germane to our investigation is situated across many subcomponents of the intent and uses of assessment. Across the broad review of an institution’s academic programs, assessment of programs such as academic program reviews are helpful to generate evidence to continuously improve programs, and data as support evidence for institutional accreditation reports. Moreso,

assessment data is useful to support decisions for resource allocation (see Rizvi & Jacobsen, 2018). Rizvi and Jacobsen (2018) discuss the value of and need for creating an institutional assessment plan that reinforces and integrates the multi-level decision-making processes across micro-, macro-, and institutional-levels that can inform outcome assessment (pp. 59-64). They (Rizvi & Jacobsen, 2018) explain, “Outcome assessment is all about improvement and using our [institutional] resources more efficiently” (p. 59).

There is also a broader concept of assessment as a term that ushers or embraces the phrase “culture of assessment” (see Walker, 2020). Walker (2020) describes this “culture of assessment” as “[t]he broadening assessment culture moving beyond academic assessment means the inclusion of strategic planning, assessment, institutional effectiveness, and regional accreditation in a manner that is fluid, inclusive, and continuously evolving” (p. 1).

Further, we operationalize the phrase “institutional assessment” to mean a holistic view and understanding of the academic health of an institution, and the processes and functions used to collect data and analyze such data for continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Also, at the foundation of carrying out these assessment processes, practices, and functions are the people doing the work and engaging in collaborative work to move forward on a path of continuous improvement. As Miller noted, “It is easy to take for granted the idea that assessment has to look one way or follow a specific methodology to be valid, when, in reality, it is about relationships and people” (p. 6). Hence, our investigation of this phenomenon “assessment” unfolds in our story provided herein this article.

Methodology

Study Purpose and Guiding Research Question

The purpose of our research was to explore our individual and collaborative understanding and sensemaking of institutional assessment. We had a guiding research question in which we addressed four research strands/prompts:

Guiding Research Question/Prompt

Describe my/our experience(s) and perceptions of assessment about:

- Understanding of assessment
- Work of assessment
- Impact and significance of assessment
- Implications of assessment.

Approach and Design

For this research study, because we wanted to understand our individual and collective lived experiences, and individual and co-sensemaking about institutional assessment (the phenomenon of our research focus), we followed the qualitative methodological approach of *Collaborative Autoethnography* as outlined by Chang et al. (2012). This approach is defined “... as a qualitative research method in which researchers work in community to collect their autobiographical materials and to analyze and interpret their data collectively to gain a meaningful understanding of sociocultural phenomena reflected in their autobiographical data” (Chang et al., 2012, pp. 23-34). Further, collaborative autoethnography (abbreviated as CAE in Chang et al., 2012) allows for “each participant [to contribute] to the collective work in [their] distinct and independent voice” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 24). First-person voice is inherent when doing/following the CAE approach.

Institutional Context

We reflected or recalled our experiences in higher education contexts which grounds the foundation for reflection of the phenomenon of “institutional assessment.” We delved deep into critical reflection about our current institutional context, a higher education institution in the Western Pacific region. For the purposes of our study, we have unpacked “institutional assessment” to encompass the various subtopics of assessment including individual performance, program performance, and accountability. Our individual perspectives bring in classroom (student), program, unit, and institutional experiences to our reflections and contributions.

Data Sources

Participants as Researchers [Researcher/Participant]

We three faculty researchers were the sole participants in the study. Hence, we are the researchers and the research participants. No other participants were asked to participate in this study, which followed the specific methodological approach of collaborative autoethnography.

Researcher Positionality

We came into this study and our collaborative research effort by way of a connection to assessment and a discussion of our individual experiences with assessment. The first author has worked in higher education for 17 ½ years and has varied experiences with assessment for instructional purposes and at the program and institutional/university levels. Recent experiences include assessment for new degree/new program development and presentation at a national accreditation conference. The second author has over 30 years in education with more than 20 years involved in higher education assessment and accreditation. Participation in institutional-level assessment implementation and committee work, and attendance at national assessment conferences has molded this researcher’s perspectives and guided subsequent contributions. The third author brings 18 years of experience in the field of

education with five years in higher education. This researcher's assessment roles span instructional (student and course), committee, and program assessments. Together we found numerous diverse experiences yet interwoven with common language, similar emotions, and a common appreciation for the commitment to doing assessment.

Data Collection Procedures

To emphasize, our topic emerged as a “hallway conversation” – casually discussing our role and involvement in assessment and the focus of our contributions. This collegial chat sparked an idea of studying this phenomenon of “assessment” and we noted we each had common experiences and yet there was more to explore and share.

Following the research process/research approach of collaborative autoethnography (CAE) as described by Chang et al. (2012), we independently reflected and journaled and then collaboratively shared our initial writing, engaged in conversation and sensemaking of our reflections, and then continued to write and reflect independently, to further collectively examine, question, and probe for meaning and meaning-making about institutional assessment. We approached our data collection by addressing/answering the guiding research question, noted above, as the foundation to begin our reflection and writing/journaling about institutional assessment. The data collection process of reflection, journaling, sharing, sensemaking, journaling again is an iterative process of meaning-making. As Chang et al. (2012) note “...the combination of individual and group works adds rich texture to the collective work. When the group works together, individual voice is closely examined in community. Others’ questioning and probing add unique depth to personal interrogation” (p. 24). Further, Chang et al. (2012) suggests a data collection process for doing CAE. Yet, this process is fluid, and we can return to each step as many times as needed, as reflection and meaning-making is evoked by the sheer nature of doing qualitative research and the process to understand the phenomenon of interest from the perspectives of the participants. To reemphasize, the process is iterative: “Each step combining individual and group activities can be

repeated for as many iterations as necessary. Also, researchers can return to a previous step to enhance data collection, analysis, or interpretation” (Chang et al., 2012, p.24). The specifics of our data collection process and data analysis are described in the following section.

Our Data Collection Process and Data Analysis

Following the research approach of CAE as noted in the work of Chang et al. (2012), we convened a plan for individual and collective data collection. We received institutional research approval for the study in late December 2022. We decided to embark on carving out intentional “conversation time” to discuss our individual story. We conversed and then set a schedule for individual journaling then group discussion, group writing, then back to individual, etc. This process is dubbed by Cohen, Duberley, and Musson (2009, cited in Chang et al., 2012, p. 92) as “interactive introspection.” A woven series of conversations, questions, and sensemaking of our own perceptions and of each other’s as we voiced our stories to each other and with each other. We listened, questioned, reflected, and engaged in co-shared writing and further individual reflection and writing, and repeating these actions; truly an iterative pattern of shared meaning and understandings emerged that shaped our interpretation of the phenomenon while “data collecting.”

Our data collection period spanned over several months during the calendar year of 2023 through May 2024. Being faculty members in academia and our dual role as researcher/participant in the study, added to the dynamic of planning time for research and attending to our faculty roles for teaching and service. Overall, we met collectively over 32 weeks to parcel out individual and collective data stories on our research question and the four strands/prompts. “[D]ata collection [in CAE] is not a mechanical or linear process. ... it involves multiple negotiations with your research colleagues [in sensemaking about the phenomenon]. It will take many rounds of conversations with them to reach creative compromises...” (Chang et al., 2012, p.73).

The types of data that informed our research question consisted of self-reflection on the phenomenon, recollecting lived experiences with the phenomenon, self-analysis of our individual story about the phenomenon, interviewing each other, and self-observation as we engaged in conversation and cross-conversation with one another about the phenomenon. These types of data are usual data that encompass doing collaborative autoethnography. As Chang et al. (2012) typify there are a variety of CAE data that can be collected, and this includes data from: self-reflection, personal memory, interviews, self-analysis, self-observation (p. 74, “Table 4-1 Autoethnographic data types”). Collection of data from multiple means, multiple sources serve to anchor the credibility of our storied accounts with the phenomenon. “... rich data coming from multiple sources will contribute to the “thick description” of your life and sociocultural context and will enhance the credibility of your stories and interpretation through triangulation of data sources” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 74).

At the heart of our data collection process, we engaged in collaborative reflection, and this process was enmeshed with simultaneously engaging in collaborative analysis of data. Thus, punctuating that our process of data collection centered on “conversational and interactive data” (Chang et al., 2012, pp.85-86). As Chang et al. (2012) purport, “interaction” is a source of data as they describe that the “[c]ollection of conversational and interview data must engage one or more partners in conversations; therefore, interaction among research teammates becomes a unique source of data for CAE” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 85).

Data Analysis

Data analysis and sensemaking of our individual and collective data were intertwined with our data collection process. Again, we followed the general research principles of collaborative autoethnography as espoused by Chang et al. (2012). This data analysis, much like the data collection, was an iterative process. It began with individually coding each strand by identifying quotes and recording initial impressions

and then collectively, with further interviewing or probing, identifying emerging ideas. A second round of coding was completed individually and then with each other to cross-check and “reconcile” emerging themes, deepen understanding, and participate in collective meaning-making. We often repeated this sequence of data analysis from individual to collaborative and collaborative to individual. The overall “doing” autoethnographic research from start to end is described by Karalis Noel et al. (2023) as phases that are “intricately interconnected” (p.7).

We also approached data analysis from a micro and macro level of sensemaking. From the micro-level, we reviewed our individual writing within and across the research strands and made initial impressions. We also reviewed each other’s data stories and made initial impressions. “In other words, [we] read different researchers’ autobiographical materials separately to gain a deeper understanding of each case” (Chang et al. 2012, p. 103). At the macro-level, we reviewed data from the three means of collection (i.e., the data types and collection periods): 1) our individual writing; 2) the interactive interview process; 3) the collective sensemaking – thus, we engaged in a holistic and time intensive examination of all our data. As Chang et al. (2012) state, “At this [macro-] level, you do an uninterrupted and undisturbed review of your entire data set to gain a holistic sense of what your data are about” (p. 102).

The macro-level led us to form initial codes of our analysis. We read data literally, line-by-line, as part of the initial coding of the individual and collective written narratives. “This micro-coding ensures that every sentence of data is examined carefully and included in initial coding” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 104). We next merged categories of coded data and/or regrouped categories. “These activities of segmenting, categorizing, and regrouping iterate in a dynamic process [of data analysis]. [And with the intent] to reach a manageable number of categories that can show topical distinctiveness from each other” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 105). Thereafter, “[t]he purpose of reducing topical categories to the essential minimum is to serve the ultimate goal of

data analysis—identifying themes” (Chang et al., 2021, p. 106). The following section presents and discusses the themes of our research study.

Results/Findings by Themes

“Finding themes is an important task in data analysis, enabling [researchers] to explain to the community of scholars what you have discovered from your data and how your data support your claims” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 110).

To recapitulate, this collaborative autoethnography centered on sensemaking of “assessment” – the phenomenon of focus and specific to our professional practice. Our guiding research question evoked our storytelling about institutional assessment, specifically we asked ourselves and each other to: Describe my/our experience(s) and perceptions of assessment about: (1) understanding of assessment, (2) work of assessment, (3) impact and significance of assessment, and (4) implications of assessment. Themes are presented across each of the four research strands/prompts and within each strand. Echoing earlier explanation of data analysis, the themes emerged from our collective sensemaking of the data collected and analyzed.

Figure 1 below presents a visual of the thematic representation of the data findings organized by each strand/prompt of the research question.

Figure 1: Major themes and subthemes of each of the four research strands/prompts.

Our Experience(s) and Perceptions of Assessment			
Understanding of Assessment	Work of Assessment	Impact and Significance of Assessment	Implications of Assessment
<u>Major Theme</u> Intentional Authentication Subthemes <i>People</i> <i>Process</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Multi-dimensional Process Subthemes <i>Empathetic</i> <i>Ongoing reflection</i> <i>Holistic</i> <i>Approach/Holistic</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Communication of Perspectives Subthemes <i>Interconnectedness</i> <i>Communicates</i> <i>Excellence</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Guide/Playbook for Educational Arena Subthemes <i>Ethos of Education</i> <i>Educational</i> <i>Process</i>
<u>Major Theme</u> Empowerment and Trust Subthemes <i>In the Process</i> <i>In the People</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Sensemaking/ Reflective Lens Subthemes <i>Evolution</i> <i>Feedback Loop</i> <i>Demystify Purpose</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Shapes Brand or Image of Academia Subthemes <i>Credibility, Standing</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Push and Pull Effect Subthemes <i>Resources</i> <i>Involvement</i>
<u>Major Theme</u> Evolution: Purposeful and Continuous Subthemes <i>Of People</i> <i>Of Process</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Catalyst for Continuous Improvement Subthemes <i>Involves Actions</i> <i>Communicates the Focus</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Insight & and Awareness of Academic Performance Subthemes <i>Reflective Actions</i> <i>Far-Reaching Effects</i> <i>Shaping Practice</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Relevancy or Aversion Subtheme <i>Perceptions</i>
	<u>Major Theme</u> Grand Event Subtheme <i>Big Picture to Granular Details</i>	<u>Major Theme</u> Illuminates the “Value” Subtheme <i>Educational Environment</i>	

Through individual reflection and robust and rich cross-dialogue and collaborative sensemaking of the data (journals/individual reflections and collective notations and reflections), salient major themes emerged, with subthemes, providing nuanced exemplification of the guiding research question to each of the four research

strands/prompts. To reinforce or support the themes, excerpts/quotes are provided and italicized to denote it as data (quotes).

Research Question Strand/Prompt 1: Understanding of Assessment

The first strand or prompt of our guiding research question called for us to recollect on our lived experiences of “Understanding of Assessment.” Three major themes with subthemes emerged from the sensemaking of our data and represent perceptions of understanding assessment as viewed at the institutional, collective, and individual level.

Intentional Authentication (Major Theme 1)

Intentional Authentication was evident at our individual-level of data sensemaking and our collective interpretations of cross-data examination (sharing individual data with each other and further coding as collective sensemaking). At its root definition, we discoursed that our data about “understanding of assessment” yielded responses of *intentional authentication*, that we interpret and define as the deliberate or intended use of assessment as confirmed or endorsed by its specific process and the people involved in the data/assessment process. As one of our data quotes capture this definition:

It [assessment] is collectively defined. If I am the assessor, and there are others, we all [the people involved] should understand what we are assessing and what it [the assessment process] is defined as.

Terms or phrases that stirred a connection to people embedded in the intentional authentication of assessment surfaced as we cross-reflected on our data and engaged in concentrated dialogue and sensemaking of our individual and collective “understanding of assessment,” our research strand/prompt one (1). Our word equation or word summary captures both people and process as interlocked in this notion of intentional authentication.

Intentional work, shared collective work, human process, formal process, reflection on process, individual and shared connotations = Intentional Authentication

Thus, our distinct subthemes emerged as *people* and *process*. Our data excerpts/data quotes presented below are illustrative examples of how people and process are intertwined in this notion of intentional authentication.

Subtheme: *People*.

*It [the process of doing assessment and understanding assessment] is also complicated, depending on who is the recipient, ... it can be messy – in people’s response to it – **we cannot separate the people from the process [bold for emphasis]** because the people are doing the process. [The process is an] action and a movement of producing work and knowledge but as a person [or persons] we are nested in the work. I view assessment as an avenue in which individuals can reform, celebrate, or enrich themselves. It serves as tools in which people can gain an understanding of where they are within the norms [of the] assessments.*

Everybody’s role is important, and they bring value [in understanding assessment.]

Subtheme: *Process*.

Coming back to the idea that “assessment” is intentional work. It is identifiable work with a specific purpose. It follows the scheme of assessment and planning of ideas, stakeholder input, analysis, and action steps for continuous improvement. This rationale undergirds our sensemaking of the subtheme *process*. As the following data excerpts/data quotes support this finding:

Understanding and Sensemaking of Institutional Assessment

I've seen assessment and related data influence change in course requirements, change programs, and change teaching strategies. Using the language of assessment and linking outcomes and data to continuous improvement can really begin to drive everything you do.

Assessments not only serve as a tool for analyzation for excellence, but when thoughtfully designed, [the assessment process] can motivate students to engage with course materials and strive for academic excellence.

It is about documents/documentation, and it [assessment] provides us tangible effects and results, and all involved have something to go back to reflect on and actions [to take for improvement.]

Empowerment and Trust (Major Theme 2)

The second major theme that emerged under the prompt “understanding of assessment” was empowerment and trust. Through a review of our reflections and discourse, it was evident that the use of data can strengthen and empower the user to advocate for or against a practice or program. The converse of that empowerment needs to be trust or certainty that the data is authentic, and the use is for improvement. Terms or phrases that were evident in our storytelling of “empowerment and trust” resonated as:

Facilitator of improvement, reassurance, and expansion, validation of engagement, facilitation based on trust and the growth mindset = Validation and Empowerment Through Assessment

Thus, our nuanced subthemes emerged as *in the process* and *in the people*. Our data excerpts/data quotes presented below are illustrative examples of *in the process* and *in the people* as intertwined in this notion of empowerment and trust.

Subtheme: In the Process.

We need to be very intentional with our selection of artifacts or evidence when it comes to assessment. We also need to be intentional with our review of the data. If the philosophy behind what we do is continuous improvement, then the evidence and outcomes should be reviewed with that in mind.

It [assessment] serves as a sense of validation of the parties engaged in the use of the evaluation process based on skills taught and obtained.

Trust in the process supports validating the roles of stakeholders and the process.

Subtheme: *In the People.*

Understanding assessment is coupled with understanding that there are people doing the assessment, as the following quotes capture this notion of *in the people*.

Once people began to understand it and the acceptance and initial change in culture began to take effect, the attitude began to change from compliance to maybe more of an understanding of its purpose [understanding assessment].

Flow of commitment (trust) and empowerment of the assessment process and the stakeholders to support the movement/catalyst towards continuous improvement.

Evolution: Purposeful and Continuous (Major Theme 3)

Like the meaning or definition of assessment, its purpose has changed over time. The understanding of assessment by people and the process has also evolved intentionally. The quotes below highlight the researchers' reflections on their understanding of assessment through the purposeful and continuous evolution.

Subtheme: *Of People.*

Having a common language [using] student learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, means of assessment and criteria of success, and closing the

loop really leveled the playing field and provided everyone an opportunity to discuss data, review results, and look at next steps.

When I present assessments in my classroom it is portrayed as a "superpower," a "secret weapon," and a "compass." This reveals my effort to make the abstract concept of assessment more concrete and meaningful. It's apparent that I was striving to convey that assessment is not just about grades; it's a tool for self-discovery and improvement.

Subtheme: Of Process.

There was pushback and frustration [during implementation]. There wasn't a clear understanding, and there was resentment of the prospect that administration was just adding one more thing to the faculty/program's plates. But with more training, discussion, and overall awareness it seemed to create more buy-in.

Assessment is a tool used to provide perspective of a skill being evaluated. It serves as a facilitator for opportunity for analysis of need for improvement, reassurance, and expansion on a given proficiency... [it]serves as a sense of validation of the parties using the evaluation. Not one assessment format validates the measurement of one's abilities. Assessments should serve as an adaptable instrument that meets the needs with a set criterion that gives the student a chance to validate their need for improvement, reassurance, or expansion of the given skill. Assessments should be inclusive not discriminatory...

Further capturing this sense of understanding assessment and the purposeful nature of the process, our data quote below supports this theme and subtheme of process:

[It] serve[s] as a critical tool for measuring learning, promoting equity, motivating students, and driving continuous improvement; ultimately contributing to the overall quality and reputation of the institution.

Overall Summary: Key Findings of Research Question Strand/Prompt 1: Understanding of Assessment

This strand explored the researchers' understanding of assessment. Three key themes: intentional authentication, empowerment and trust, and purposeful evolution emerged in the sensemaking process. Within these themes, the *people* and the *process* were integral and consistent in the researchers' understanding of assessment.

Research Question Strand/Prompt 2: Work of Assessment

The second strand or prompt of our guiding research question called for us to recollect on our lived experiences of the "Work of Assessment." Four major themes with subthemes emerged from the sensemaking of our data. The major themes included: multi-dimensional process, sensemaking/reflective lens, catalyst for continuous improvement, and grand event. The subthemes will be discussed under each major theme.

Multi-dimensional process (Major Theme 1)

The work of assessment is a multi-dimensional empathetic process embedded with a feedback loop for continuous improvement and reflection.

Subtheme: *Empathetic* [involvement of participants].

I take pause and reflect on my agenda in the process of assessment [as a] tool and reflect on the current state of the individual of who I am assessing.

Identifying the personal needs of the students and stepping into their shoes at the moment of the assessment.

Subtheme: *Ongoing Reflection.*

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I invoke the CHamoru metaphor “atan y espehos” (look in the mirror) meaning reflect on yourself. This metaphor was intended to communicate that assessment doesn't just show strengths but also highlights weaknesses, and this can be a means of personal development. This personal growth aspect was something I wanted to emphasize, highlighting that assessment is a two-way street that benefits both educators and learners.

In consideration of the work of assessment at the classroom level, one of us reflected:

I need to go back and reflect on what was different [in terms of results] and what I missed for that ‘one’ student.

Subtheme: *Holistic Approach/Holistic.*

The work of assessment involves examination of all data evidence; it is a holistic approach. Our data excerpts/data quotes support this perspective:

The work of assessment is and should be holistic. Looking at or reviewing all the pieces of data evidence that explain the focus of review.

.... [C]ultural responsiveness has shifted away from conventional considerations and has evolved towards more holistic approach. One that prioritizes meeting the distinct needs of every individual, irrespective of their backgrounds, precisely when they require educational and social-emotional support... I find myself grappling with delicate balance between maintaining objectivity and understanding the unique circumstances of each student...assessment doesn't become a mere checklist of standards but remains a holistic evaluation.

Sensemaking/Reflective Lens (Major Theme 2)

Inherent in the nature of the work of assessment, is the act or process of sensemaking the data collected, reflecting on what was collected, how and when it was collected and for what purpose(s).

Subtheme: *Evolution.*

The subtheme *evolution* of assessment work entails understanding the work and participation of the people involved in assessment. The quotes below capture this essence of the meaning of the work evolves with participation in the work.

When the college began to be recognized for the work, while not perfect and not everyone, there really was more of a sense of pride than a sense of burden. The work of assessment involves actions conducted at the individual level and collective actions with others. The meaningfulness of the work rests in both individual actions and collective stakeholder actions that can extend in the time doing the work.

Subtheme: *Feedback Loop.*

Assessments, when designed well, provide valuable feedback to both students and instructors. This feedback loop is essential for continuous improvement. Professors can use assessment results to refine their teaching methods, update curriculum, and enhance the overall quality of education.

Being an educator, I think our lens on assessment is different from many others on campus, at least in terms of the intent behind gathering scores and closing the loop. This [annual] report demonstrates how we meet our program learning outcomes (PLOs) and allows us to reflect on what we will do with the results of that data.

Subtheme: *Demystify Purpose.*

The work of assessment is specific to roles and process. Specifying roles can demystify the work and minimize confusion of the intent and purpose of doing assessment. As the quotes illuminate:

The work of assessment and the intent behind it needs to be transparent. While we know assessment can bring about change, that change can be positive or negative and ultimately the philosophy behind the intent will make the biggest difference in buy in. Assessment serves as [a] compass striving to convey its purpose as a self-discovery tool for improvement.

Clear and specific roles of stakeholders enhance the validity and applicability of the work of assessment and can serve to demystify the actions of engaging in the work and minimize confusion about the process and the intent.

Catalyst for Continuous Improvement (Major Theme 3)

Our individual and collective sensemaking absolutely support this finding of our reflection of assessment as a catalyst for continuous improvement.

Subtheme: *Involves Actions* [individual actions and collective].

[It] serves as a critical tool for measuring learning, promoting equity, motivating students, and driving continuous improvement, ultimately contributing to the overall quality and reputation of the institution.

The work is significant when each stakeholder uses the results of assessment to inform the current state and identify aspects of success and areas for improvement.

Subtheme: *Communicates the Focus* [aspects or facets of “doing assessment”].

Communicates the focus resonated on the individual level and collective level of the people or stakeholders involved in the doing the work of assessment or assessing academic practices. The quotes below illuminate this notion:

As a professor, I find it important to periodically step back and put myself in my student's shoes. This practice allows me to reflect on the expectations I have for them and, in turn, review these expectations to ensure that I don't diminish the importance of any aspect of the coursework. It's crucial to me that the activities and individual assignments I design scaffold the development of essential skills in each course. When I mention not wanting to "devalue," I mean that I want to avoid giving the impression that certain elements of the courses.... hold unequal values.

The work is further magnified as significant when the stakeholders invest in action steps or next steps that fruitfully benefit and improve the phenomenon and its impact on the collective stakeholders for whom the assessment is intended for.

Grand Event (Major Theme 4)

Our individual and collective sensemaking of the work of assessment signified this imagery of a "grand event." This concept infers there is a time investment in the process, and it involves viewing or moving from the big picture to granular details. As the data excerpts below demonstrate.

Subtheme: Big Picture to Granular Details.

What is interesting is when you have data from the big picture aspects, and you review [it] for anomalies and those anomalies help you identify gaps that you can work with.

Assessment can be like a funnel; the mouth of the funnel is like the program outcomes and as it narrows you can really dig in and look at specifics.

**Overall Summary: Key Findings of Research Question Strand/Prompt 2:
Work of Assessment**

The second strand or prompt explored the researchers' "work of assessment." Four major themes are: multi-dimensional process, sensemaking/reflective lens, catalyst for continuous improvement, and grand event. A number of subthemes emerged under each theme and data to support the themes and subthemes was provided.

Research Question Strand 3: Impact and Significance of Assessment

The third strand or prompt of our guiding research question called for us to recollect on our lived experiences of the "Impact and Significance of Assessment." Four major themes with subthemes emerged from the sensemaking of our data.

Communication of Perspectives (Major Theme 1)

Assessment communicates a message of academic performance to stakeholders – internal and external. As the impact and significance of assessment predicate that "assessment is the foundation of academic improvement."

Subtheme: *Interconnectedness.*

Aspects of this interconnectedness are illuminated in the following data excerpts/data stories.

[We must be] committed to continuous improvement in the educational process...embracing a student-centric and growth-orientated approach to assessment, I can truly harness the transformative impact of assessment. It affects all stakeholders internal to the academic community but most importantly external community as it ... [communicates] the quality of work we are doing and its far-reaching effects into the communities – into shaping the professional practice.

Subtheme: *Communicates Excellence* [progress towards excellence of academic function].

The impact is broader than an internal to do list. The impact is a notice to the public that we are as good as any other institution, at least in terms of educator preparation.

Assessment really can tell you and others what needs to be improved upon or even what needs to be continued.

Shapes Brand or Image of Academia (Major Theme 2)

Assessment used to support recognition of academic excellence goes a long way in communicating the image of academia. An image to the external community that can resonate positive characteristics of academic quality, credibility, and standing.

Subtheme: *Credibility, Standing* [of academic programs/institution].

There is both an internal and external perception of the academic image of an institution that can be bolstered by assessment outcomes. The following quote captures this sentiment.

Assessment brings credibility to programs. Identifying outcomes; measuring the ability to meet those outcomes; and then reviewing, revising, and refining the curriculum to better meet those outcomes the next time, can really make for a stronger program and hence, a stronger impact.

Another data quote exemplifies:

Internal to external ... it [assessment] has the hallmark or stamp of endorsing quality of programs and institutional operations of academic functions to a broader community of academic peers and experts.

Insight and Awareness of Academic Performance (Major Theme 3)

Assessment adds to or is part of the continuous improvement processes that communicate excellence or progress towards excellence of academic functions. This

communication of using valid assessment tools aligned to professional or industry standards enhances the brand or image of a program and the institution.

Subtheme: *Reflective Actions.*

As an assessor you try your best to ensure that the tools crafted to meet a standard should be free of bias. However, many times aside from trying to ensure the tool is inclusive you also need to step back and think about the mindset of you as the assessor.

This is when emotional intelligence comes to play. Assess the atmosphere and the individual, re-evaluate your approach to the given circumstances in which the assessment is delivered, and the circumstances of the individual being assessed.

Assessment can really tell you and others what needs to be improved upon and what needs to be continued. [Assessment provides insight] looking in and beyond.

Subtheme: *Far-Reaching Effects.*

Assessment evidence, data and action steps have an impact on making higher education functions (i.e., curriculum and student success or progress) transparent to all (internal and external to an institution).

Subtheme: *Shaping Practice.*

Assessment serves as a means to an end for academic improvement and to shape/influence academic achievement and student success.

Illuminates the “Value” (Major Theme 4)

Our data stories advanced the theme of “illuminates the value” when we considered the data that supported/addressed the prompt of our experiences and perceptions of assessment. Nested with this theme is the focus on the value of the “educational environment.” The data excerpt below supports this focus.

Subtheme: Educational Environment.

Capitalize on the deeper understanding for growth of educators and the learners... Moreover, my exploration extends to the broader context of education. I reflect on the impact of assessment practices on students' motivation and self-esteem. It becomes evident that a student's perception of assessment can significantly influence their approach to learning. This leads me to question how we can further refine our assessment methods to inspire and empower students rather than induce stress or anxiety.

Overall Summary: Key Findings of Research Question Strand/Prompt 3: Impact and Significance of Assessment

In this third strand, we recollected on our lived experiences of the “Impact and Significance of Assessment.” The major themes that emerged included: communication of perspectives, shapes brand or image of academia, insight and awareness of academic programs, and illuminates the “value.” Subthemes are discussed under each major theme.

Research Question Strand 4: Implications of Assessment

The fourth strand or prompt of our guiding research question called for us to recollect on our lived experiences of the “Implications of Assessment.” Three major themes with subthemes emerged from the sensemaking of our data.

Guide/Playbook for Educational Arena (Major Theme 1)

Assessment is an indispensable component of education that unveils the depths of comprehension or knowledge and embracing the pedagogical importance embedded within the arena or realm of assessment.

With more and more focus on accountability, the importance of assessment and continuous improvement isn't going anywhere.

Subtheme: Ethos on Education.

This subtheme resonates to the essence of the beliefs of the education system (i.e., people and process). As the following data excerpt captures:

Assessment may have implications on the community perceptions of valid and credible personnel in such academic programs and the institution. [Further] implications towards student interest in such programs and/or the institution.

Subtheme: Educational Process.

To whom and for whom and where does this assessment information go – the communication loop (not just the improvement loop). Some best practices and reminders – it is essential to communicate those pieces that are going to add value to those receiving the information. Part of the responsibility must be taking care of assessment messaging. Where we've been and where we're at – those conversations need to be had to move toward the "now what."

Push and Pull Effect (Major Theme 2)

The data pinpointed the push and pull effect concerning assessment data and its uses, as the quote exemplifies:

What do we do with the data? It should be what we do with the data – [it should be] shared to be valuable and require a conversation with others. ... [we are] missing rich discussion [with] pushback on the evidence... [we have a] shared

responsibility [to] post the assessment – [for] continuity or flow of improvement.

Subtheme: Resources.

Resources surfaced as a subtheme of the push and pull effect of assessment as it considers aspects of people, operations, program improvement, and supporting program continuance.

If the intent is to eliminate programs [as opposed to improving them] people won't believe in the process and there will be the possibility of data being altered so a "program" doesn't look bad.

Implications of assessment can be [considerations of] sustaining operations, aborting operations.

On the resources needed to support academic programs, students, student personnel services, tuition, faculty, staff ...

Subtheme: Involvement [people with process(es)].

The process and the people need to be involved [in the process] for the continuous improvements. By and large – would anybody do assessment without being told to do it? The external prompt, the urgency that evokes us to do it.

[There is this] bureaucracy of doing assessment – we're bringing in the symbolic, empathetic, cultural aspect that is germane to just doing human work. We can't prompt the individual to engage in the changes or reflections, but we can entice them to, we can encourage them to, to make it [assessment] meaningful – everyone has to be in that community of advancement [mindset].

Relevancy or Aversion (Major Theme 3)

The doing of assessment and the actors involved should be a facilitated process

Subtheme: *Perceptions*.

The implications of assessment results may trigger misinterpretations of the data.

As the quote illuminates,

The public is drawing conclusions based on the results of assessments that many may know nothing about. They won't understand the data, they won't understand the variables and yet they're going to make significant comments and in some cases recommendations that will have an impact on the teachers and the students.

Another quote on this aspect of *perceptions* expounds,

Assessments provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of education being offered, thereby promoting institutional excellence. Higher education should prepare students for real-world challenges and careers. Assessments, when designed appropriately, stimulate real-world scenarios and tasks, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to excel in their chosen fields. In conclusion, assessments are linchpin in higher education for professors who strive for institutional excellence, maintain high expectations, and embrace a culturally responsive approach.

Overall Summary: Key Findings of Research Question Strand/Prompt 4: Implications of Assessment

We, the researchers, recollected on our lived experiences of the “Implications of Assessment” in this fourth strand/prompt. Three major themes emerged: guide/playbook for educational arena, push and pull effect, and relevancy or aversion; and specific subthemes presented and supported with quotes/data.

Discussion

This discussion section articulates our response to the question “so what, now what?,” and addresses questions of “what do these findings mean?” “how are the

findings useful to understand the phenomenon we investigated?” and “how does it connect to literature on the overarching topic of assessment?” Data interpretation is the storytelling or storied accounts of sensemaking or meaning-making to address: what is going on here? Frankly answering the question: “So what does all this mean?” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 110). Data interpretation substantiates results/findings to the broader community. In doing collaborative autoethnography (CAE), “...the task of data interpretation is critical because it allows you to discuss matters beyond yourself and to connect yourself with others and the sociocultural context” (Chang et al., 2012, p. 110).

The “So What, Now What?” Question. As we reflected on the themes holistically across all four research strands/prompts, we knew that our initial separation of the research strands/parts served the process of recollecting experiences and journaling to each strand to address the guiding research question. Yet, the big picture takeaway from the findings is that assessment is about the process and the people. All the major themes and subthemes embody the people aspect and the process aspect that together confirm our experiences and perceptions of assessment. People drive the process. People propel empowerment of actions. People collaborate and develop trust in the process and in each other. People are the receivers and actors in the assessment process. People shape the conversation and communicate the data from assessment. People represent the institution and carry out actions to continuously improve academic functions. No surprise in our findings, for research strand one, that assessment is about understanding and supporting the people and the process. And illuminated in our data excerpts/data quotes for overall major themes and subthemes of our research, depicts and highlights people inherent in the assessment work and process. As Miller (2023) emphatically notes, “... it [assessment] is about relationships and people. . . . The better determinants of the success of assessment are related to trust, collaboration, transparency, and relationships” (p. 6). Miller’s viewpoints on assessment as rooted in “people” confirm and support our understanding of assessment and anchor to people. Further, Munna (2021) states “Assessment should be designed in such a way so that the

assessment becomes meaningful to the people involved in it because the assessment has a vital role in learning. The assessment generally has a mission to improve standards, not just measuring students” (p. 427). Our findings, connect to Munna’s work, as we highlight the evolution of assessment as purposeful and continuous.

Interestingly, our findings illuminated ideologies of assessment in practice and raised thoughts on aspects related to the impact and significance of assessment and the value of assessment. Wall et al. (2014) posed “Assessment for Whom” (pp. 5-17) and concluded that, “Assessment practice should be constructed as a place of inclusive, sustained, and informed dialogue ...” (p. 17). While Lance et al. (2023) state, “Institutional assessment processes are most meaningful when campus stakeholders can learn about each other’s needs in this effort” (p. 15).

We summarize from our findings that assessment creates an intentional imprint on the community - the people internal and external to the institution. Assessment is also about shared accountability and each of our major themes and subthemes allude to this aspect. Shared accountability when the data confirms academic progress, and shared accountability must be rallied in support of actions for improvement. As one of us reflected that assessment and all the components of assessment is like “a woven basket,” noting:

It [assessment] can take various forms and shapes based on its utility.

Metaphorically assessments at the level of higher education can be viewed as individual leaves that are carefully intertwined to create a corroborative and utilitarian structure, serving the suitability and growth of all stakeholders within the educational setting. Each layer of assessment like a leaf has a specified role and purpose to contribute to the holistic design and quality of the learning process. ...just like a [woven] basket, it can take various forms based on its purpose, differentiated (culturally relevant) assessments are crafted to meet the diverse needs of the assessee and the assessor.

We close this discussion section by reflecting on what is missing from our data stories, what aspects we did not fully address. As Chang et al. (2012) state “... searching for meaning is looking for what is obviously missing in your data. . . . Data interpretation gives you an opportunity to pay attention to cues that may be potentially critical in gaining a fuller understanding of the phenomena” (p. 112). We stated earlier our roles are as researchers/participants in our study. We also noted we are faculty members in a higher education institution in the Western Pacific region. Our data story is situated and informed by our experiences in our community and cultural community context. Expanding on such dialogue of our storied accounts of the phenomenon can lend itself to another round of data analysis that intentionally further explores how this contextual aspect evoked our unique accounts of understanding and experiences with assessment. As Chang et al. (2012) note, “Examine how contextual factors—cultural, social, economic, political, organizational, and interpersonal— might have affected your findings, and speculate about how the findings might have turned out differently in different contexts” (p. 112).

Implications and Further Research Suggestions

Implications of our primary findings support advancement and introspection on the effect or intent of assessment within a context and the emotional connection that comes with the work. This effect is nested in the community and cultural community context of which the phenomenon was both situated and investigated. Our next step is a reexamination of the findings and with intentional emphasis on the cultural and interpersonal aspects inherent in the original data findings. A suggestion for other researchers is to employ a collaborative qualitative approach to examine how institutional assessment is understood in terms of the participants involved and the outputs to your institutional stakeholders and communities.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to describe in detail our collaborative research study that examined the phenomenon of assessment in higher education. As strongly evident in our findings, assessment involves working with multiple stakeholders and is intertwined with people and the process. The major themes of authentication, empowerment and trust, evolution, multidimensional process, sensemaking, perspectives, and educational arena clearly involve people enveloped with the process. The overall findings with subthemes support both the process and the people as we explored the research question on our experiences and perceptions to four research strands: understanding of assessment, work of assessment, impact and significance of assessment, and implications of assessment. Literature on assessment (see for example: Miller, 2023; Munna, 2021) affirms that people are crucial in assessment. Thus, the work, impact, significance, and implications of assessment are about people. The meaningfulness of assessment work and its implications for people and its focus for continuous improvement cannot be underestimated. Much care and attention should be given to the “meaningfulness” of assessment work. As this notion of “meaningful” assessment is specifically addressed in the work/writing by Munna (2021) and Lance et al. (2023).

In reflecting on using collaborative autoethnography (CAE) to understand assessment, we evoked academic stories by way of our individual story and our collective stories to elucidate interpretations and co-sensemaking of assessment. In essence, this research highlights our shared story or (re)storying – combining our individual lens into a co-joined lens to re(story) together about the phenomenon. Through this work, the researchers have appreciated the in-depth examination of the phenomenon of institutional assessment, and the insights the findings illuminated to spark a reframing of the ways we can further participate in and engage in respective assessment work in meaningful dialogue with people. Following the methodological approach of CAE provided us with a valuable introspection on assessment through

unifying multiple experiences and our understandings of the intricacies and complexities of the process and people doing assessment. By capturing and sharing our understandings and experiences on assessment, we open a lens with which others may view their own practices. It is our hope that this research is insightful for others who aspire to qualitatively make sense of assessment within their own institutions and academic communities.

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Two Novels About Vulnerability

Reviewed by PAULETTE COULTER

The Vulnerables, by Sigrid Nunez. Riverhead Books, 2023.

Before the Coffee Gets Cold: A Novel, by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. Translated by Geoffrey Trousselot. Hanover Square Press, 2020.

The novels *The Vulnerables*, by Sigrid Nunez, and *Before the coffee gets cold: a novel*, by Toshikazu Kawaguchi, have a number of fundamental similarities, especially their depictions of human vulnerability, despite many interesting differences.

The settings are distinctly different. Nunez's novel is set in a New York City apartment during the lockdown for the COVID-19 epidemic. Kawaguchi's novel is set in a 2015 (though very old) Tokyo coffee shop.

Nunez's novel is narrated in the first person by a female writer, which makes for some confusion as the reader wonders sometimes who is narrating: Nunez or her narrator? The I's sometimes seem crossed. On the other hand, Kawaguchi's narrator is a third-person, non-interfering, reasonably objective voice.

For this reviewer, New York City may be as much a foreign country as Japan. The narrator is housesitting for a friend, has given up her own apartment for a physician visiting New York when the epidemic occurs, is taking care of a pet macaw, while the first friend and her husband have moved to their country home for the duration of the COVID lockdown. While some people in Japan may also have country homes, in Kawaguchi's story, their country home is simply their home.

Nunez has a number of other characters: several female friends all named after flowers and the young man who is also supposed to be housesitting and caring for the same city apartment and macaw. None of the woman's friends is named hydrangea, for

Nunez/narrator discourses on this flower and the fact that it represents aging and old age. She also describes hydrangeas' color variations but does not account for that variation. The latter is actually quite simple: the acidity and alkalinity of the soil affect the coloration. Acid soils often produce blue flowers while alkaline soils result in pink flowers.

While Nunez's narrator cares for the macaw reasonably well, the bird is much more attached to the young man who was supposed to be housesitting. The narrator calls this young man "Vetch." She watches the interaction of the young man and the bird and realizes some deeper bond exists between them. The young man believes the macaw's wings should not be clipped; neither should people's metaphorical ones.

Under the influence of marijuana (still illegal in New York at the time), conversations and a semi-friendship develop between the narrator and Vetch. They learn of each other's inhibitions, the young man's differences with his parents, his ability to see through the superficiality of their always-agreeable conversation, his departure from college, his time spent in a psychiatric facility. Eventually the young man takes the macaw to live with him in a large warehouse where the bird can essentially live free. Maybe the young man may too. The narrator is disappointed, but the apartment owner is aware of the situation, and the physician is soon to leave the narrator's place.

Fear of contamination and infection accompanies the narrator on her daily walks in the city, and one day a bicyclist deliberately spits at her during her walk. She is able to take such walks, however, and also has a secure place to live.

For many people, the COVID experience increased fears and made us aware of our vulnerabilities. During lockdown, most people were restricted to home, and communication was limited to phone, online, and other media. Nearly everyone felt vulnerable. Would we get COVID? Would we live? Would we die? Would we have money for food and rent if we could not work? Would we be okay? Humans are vulnerable under ordinary circumstances.

Two Novels About Vulnerability

The humans in *The Vulnerables*, though, seem to be people who own condos and country homes. They are people of status with college educations. The young man's father has not even turned off his credit cards.

In Kawaguchi's novel, the lives of the characters in *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* are entwined through their visits to a coffee shop in Tokyo. This is not part of a trendy coffee-shop chain, but a separate, standalone entity, an old building tucked between others. It is, however, the subject of an urban legend that people are able to time travel from this site.

To be able to do that, people must obey a set of absolute rules, beginning with occupying "*that* chair," a chair occupied by a woman in a white dress who sits there all day and all night, reading a book and drinking coffee. Anyone who wishes to sit there must wait for her daily trip to the rest room. The remainder of the rules are equally stringent: The time traveler must remain in *that* chair for the entire trip, may only meet others who have visited the coffee house, and must accomplish their mission in the time before their cup of very special coffee has gone cold.

Despite these and other rules, among the most severe of which may be that the trip cannot change the present, a number of vulnerable persons attempt this journey. They include a woman who has not yet told her departing love that she loves him, another whose husband has written her a letter but never given it to her, a third who wishes to speak to her younger sister after the latter has died, and a mother who knows that she will die giving birth to her child.

While this sounds preposterous (but didn't COVID?), each of the four people returns safe and sound. They do not change the present, but, having experienced deep emotion, change themselves.

The changing of the self, of encountering something of oneself formerly unknown, changes not everything, but one's understanding, which may be the greater share of human experience. We are all vulnerable, whether we live in New York or in Tokyo and whether we like it or not, in fact and in fiction. We can change the world,

especially our own world, despite COVID, despite personal tragedy, if we change ourselves.

A Borrowed Land

Reviewed by KOHAKU FLYNN

A Borrowed Land, by Peter Onedera. University of Guam Press, 2024.

Peter Onedera's *A Borrowed Land* is a poignant exploration of identity, belonging, and historical trauma on Guam. The novel follows Zenpei, Jiro, and Onedera himself, each grappling with the complexities of their Japanese-CHamoru identity amid shifting political and cultural landscapes. Onedera's commitment to preserving his family's history through oral testimonies and archival gaps offers a moving account of resilience. The novel reflects on colonialism, racial tensions, and the painful legacies of war, yet ultimately gestures toward healing and reconciliation. Onedera's narrative is both an act of cultural preservation and a meditation on the enduring struggle for belonging in a post-colonial Pacific.

Onedera's novel begins with a reflection on the practice of "talk story," an oral tradition that not only provides the framework for Onedera's narrative but also serves as a vehicle for recovering and preserving histories of the Guam Nikkei during World War II. The book opens with Onedera's childhood memories of post-war Guam, where tensions between Japanese-CHamoru families and their neighbors still linger. In the preface, Onedera recalls a village neighbor frequently shouting obscenities at him as he walked by, later revealing that the man's hostility stemmed from witnessing the brutal beheadings of his family by Japanese soldiers during the war. This encounter signals the central tension that propels the narrative, and it is in this deeply conflicted space that Nikkei families occupied during and after the war, where cultural identity became fraught and often dangerous.

A Borrowed Land is not just a historical novel, but a complex meditation on identity and belonging. It follows three generations of the Onedera family: Zenpei, Onedera's grandfather, whose immigration from Japan and assimilation into Chamoru culture unfolds sometime before 1900; Jiro, Zenpei's grandson, who endures the horror of Japanese occupation and internment during the war; and Onedera himself, who seeks to reconcile his Japanese-CHamoru identity while documenting and preserving his family's history. The book, sectioned into four parts, begins with the inspiration behind the project, which grew out of Onedera's childhood experiences with racial tension, decades of conversations with family members and elders, and a class assignment at the University of Guam in 1987 that led him to gather stories from 14 issei and nisei- all stories that formed the roots of *A Borrowed Land*.

The second part of the book is told through Zenpei Jito Onodera, the family patriarch, who arrives in Guam from Tochigi-ken, Japan sometime before 1900. Zenpei, recruited to work in the copra plantations in Togcha (south) and Hinapsan (north), quickly assimilates into CHamoru culture- learning the language, converting to Catholicism, and marrying Nānan Li'a' (CHetton-Baliteres). This section traces Zenpei's journey, highlighting his initial impression of the island, experiences working under Tātan Kācha (Jose Katsuji Shimizu), learning Chamorro, finding love and raising a family with Nānan Li'a. Zenpei's story portrays how the Nikkei are respected as contributing members of the CHamoru community and details the cultural blending that occurs before the onset of the war. For example, some fervently believed in CHamoru spirits like *duhendes* and *taotaomona* but also held onto Buddhist rituals. This balance foreshadows the difficulties that the family will face as political tensions grow. Although the narrative is markedly strong in male characters, we do get glimpses of women like Masumi Sasakura, a *maiko* in Japan who moves to Guam prewar and establishes a retail business in Tamuning.

Part Three begins with Zenpei's grandson. Enter Jiro- born in 1930 and raised by his grandparents, Jiro lives through the Japanese occupation on Guam. This section

contains poignant scenes of he and others being publicly kicked out of wedding receptions, name called, ridiculed, and ignored at social gatherings as rumors spread of a Japanese invasion. For fear of retribution, many repress the Japanese language and even change their surnames. And on an island where the first question is always, “What’s your last name?,” this is particularly telling of the ostracization that they faced. Jiro then recounts the horror of the Japanese invasion: “The families were instructed to always applaud with masked expressions of joy, while deep inside they were remorseful, sad, in despair, and sorrowed. Nikkei families were summoned to witness parades, but also, beheadings” (130). As war progresses, so does the brutality of the Japanese commanders; the bombing of Sumai, a forced *seppuku* ritual of twenty issei, and the march to the Manenggon concentration camp where approximately 18,000 CHamorus are forced north (many die on the way) to labor in Japan’s last-ditch effort to maintain control of the island. Following the U.S. bombings that flatten the island, Jiro depicts the internment camps that the U.S. build to hold all Nikkei families. Reminiscent of Miné Okubo’s account of the internment camps in Utah and California (*Citizen 13660*) and Mitsuye Yamada’s *Camp Notes and Other Poems*, Guam Nikkei were also forced into stockades with name patches. The difference here is that these camps were set up *after* the war had ended further distancing Guam from the events occurring stateside.

Yet it is in the book’s post-war chapters that Onedera’s narrative achieves its greatest power. The multi-generational trauma, passed down from Zenpei to his descendants, resonates with a quiet devastation, highlighting the lingering aftershocks of war. The fourth part of the book focuses on Onedera’s own experiences as he grapples with his identity as a Japanese-Chamoru and the difficulty of trying to piece together some semblance of familial history. Discrepancies in census documentation due to the infancy of English in the 1920s and the singed state of Guam post bombardment resulted in a paucity of records from this period. Yet, it is a well-crafted narrative to fill this silence in the archive.

As witness to the boom in Japanese tourism in the early 90s and into the 2000s, it is a marvel to think that just sixty years prior, the same island had been ravaged by war with families like the Onedaras forced into stockades, torn between two identities, and vilified by both sides. While the contrast between the island's history and its current reality is striking, *A Borrowed Land* ends in a sort of reconciliation. In his final reflections, Onedera writes of connecting his dual identity as both CHamoru and Japanese, symbolized by his journey to Japan to visit with long-lost relatives. They work to piece together a family tree filled with *familia siha* all with starkly different experiences but connected through ancestors who were willing to fight to keep their last name alive.

It is Onedera's neighbor who yells "you Japs are all living on Guam on borrowed land that you stole," which begs the larger question of how much of yourself, and of your family, do you have to give to belong to this sacred place? In one chapter of *Navigating CHamoru Poetry*, Craig Santos Perez concludes that Onedera's poetry embodies the structure of a latte stone and thus can be theorized as an architectural space that rearticulates guma' latte housing design, serving as a narrative home for CHamoru cultural identity. One poem in *Tamanu na Ina*, "Tinaotao," features *nāya* (yet; for a moment) style stanzas in which we get glimpses or impressions of select people in his life. But in *A Borrowed Land*, we see Zenpei and Jiro as fully fleshed out characters each with a fierce determination to remain in the place of the latte, even if it may result in death. Still, even as he traces this generational determination, Onedera acknowledges a futility in tracing and an acceptance to flux and unity. He concludes, "Time may erase all these distinctions, and we will all just be Guamanians" (187).

For the Nikkei and others, Guam was both a home and a place where they were never fully accepted, a land they had to continually prove their right to live. The title also speaks to the broader history of colonization in the Pacific, where indigenous peoples have long struggled to reclaim their land and identity from foreign powers. Here, Onedera does not attempt to sanitize the pain and trauma of his ancestors' experiences,

nor does he shy away from the complexities of identity in a post-colonial Pacific. Instead, he invites the reader into the uncertainty, the unresolved tensions that still linger today. In one of the final scenes, Onedera reflects on a childhood game they used to play. For him, it “wasn’t cowboys versus Indians, but Americans against Japanese” (161). It is a haunting image, one that neglects CHamorus and others living on the island caught in the crossfire and it encapsulates the confusion of growing up in a place where the scars of war are never far from reality.

Perhaps the most assuring takeaway from this book is how Onedera demonstrates what true indigenous research looks like. It means meeting his interviewees where they are, speaking in fluent CHamoru, attending multiple memorial services and countless gatherings throughout his lifetime, it means listening, patience, a readiness to meet a range of interviewee emotions from their trauma, documentation with whatever means, and it means the utmost *respetu* to tell the story of Guåhan through the voices of those who lived through this tumultuous time, most of whom have since passed away.

Onedera’s commitment to recovering the voices of his ancestors and amplifying the stories of Guam’s Nikkei is both an act of defiance and a gesture of deep respect. In this way, the book serves as a reminder that in the Pacific, the land and the *people* are history. Talking story is not just a way of preserving history but a means of healing, of bridging the gaps between past and present, between Japanese and CHamoru, between the living and the dead.

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The Wide Wide Sea

Reviewed by DAVID GUGIN, University of Guam

The Wide Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact and the Fateful Final Voyage of Captain James Cook by Hampton Sides. New York: Doubleday, 2024.

After reading Hampton Sides' *The Wide Wide Sea*, I can state with confidence that Captain Cook should be recognized as one of history's greatest navigators and explorers. I can also state with confidence that many people in the world, especially in Polynesia and the broader Pacific region, would vehemently disagree with that statement. Indeed Captain Cook may be the most vilified of all the famous (or infamous) names now associated with the centuries-long, global wave of European (and later American) expansionism. In his opening "Author's Notes," Sides directly addresses the controversy surrounding all three of Cook's voyages, especially the last one, when he was killed in Hawai'i. Cook himself was neither a conqueror nor a colonizer, but rather an explorer-scientist-cartographer steeped in the philosophies and paradigms of the Enlightenment. For over 200 years after his death in 1779 he was celebrated, even venerated for what he had accomplished. However, as Sides reminds us, what follows exploration and map-making is almost always conquest. And "in Cook's long wake, came the occupiers, the guns, the pathogens, the alcohol, the problem of money, the whalers, the furriers, the seal hunters, the plantation owners, the missionaries" (xv). What also follows is the rejection and erasure of indigenous voices and perspectives, the inevitable one-sided control of portrayal and representation.

At one level then *The Wide Wide Sea* is a very useful, entertaining narrative history of Cook's world, Cook's life, and the three-year voyage of his HMS *Resolution* and its consort ship the HMS *Discovery*. At another level though, Sides focuses on that third voyage to provide a necessary, compelling case study of the origins of "the

systematic dismantling of traditional island cultures,” what Alan Morehead has called “the fatal impact [. . .] that fateful moment when a social capsule is broken into.” This leaves contemporary Western readers in particular with much to ponder, to critique: “Eurocentrism, patriarchy, entitlement, toxic masculinity, cultural appropriation, the role of invasive species in destroying island biodiversity” (Sides *xvi*). In fact, Sides ultimately shows how human beings can be the most invasive species of all. Yet there still remains the remarkable achievement of Cook’s voyages – the skill, the fortitude, the courage it took to do what he did when he did it.

Sides’ title is taken from Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and he begins with an excerpt from that poem: “Alone, alone, all, all alone/Alone on a wide wide sea/ And never a saint took pity on/My soul in agony.” But he prefaces his “Prologue: And Louder Grew the Shouting” with an ancient Hawaiian chant that begins “Your bodies, O Lono, are in the heavens.” This alternating pattern of the Western and the Indigenous that Sides employs throughout *The Wide Wide Sea* serves to reinforce the inerlocking duality of cultures and experiences he is emphasizing. The Prologue itself, based on indigenous oral accounts collected by Hawaiian historian Samuel Kamakau, is written from the point of view of the inhabitants of Kaua’i, where the *Resolution* and *Discovery* first made landfall in Hawai’i in January 1778. Were Cook and his crew initially viewed as gods? Was Cook himself viewed as Lono? These and other questions have been fiercely argued, and Sides returns to them on numerous occasions. It seems safe to say though, that in his words, the people gathered on the shore “sensed something ominous was happening, that their island world was about to change forever” (4). Two small ships, with a big impact.

In terms of readability, it can be helpful to look initially at the “architecture” of a given text, its design and structure. *The Wide Wide Sea* is well-organized, with full-length maps on the inside of the front and back covers, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. “Book One The First Navigator of Europe” begins in January 1776, six months after his return from his second voyage, his second circumnavigation of the

globe, a journey that had lasted 1100 days. At the time there was a prevailing belief among European scientists in the existence of a Terra Australis Incognita, a southern supercontinent, much larger than Australia, which balanced out the known land masses of the Northern Hemisphere. Without such a continent many of those scientists claimed the world would be top-heavy and wobble off into space. Cook's mission had been to find it, and to explore and chart the Southern Ocean, the high southern latitudes, which had not yet been done. Reaching a latitude of 71 degrees South, he became the first captain to cross the Antarctic Circle, though some theories suggest that the Maori may have sailed that far south in the distant past. Cook never saw Antarctica itself, but he got within one hundred miles and correctly concluded that it had to be ice-bound. However, his main contribution on this voyage was his detailed map-making and what Sides calls "negative discovery [. . .] finding nothing where something was widely presumed to be" (8). Given his penchant for exactitude, his insistence on accuracy, Cook was adept at disproving false hypotheses.

Born in 1728, Cook had almost no formal schooling. As a teenager, he moved to Whitby, in northern England, "a tight hamlet of shipbuilders, whalers, and fishermen hunkered by the cold North Sea" (Sides 12). Beginning as an apprentice in the merchant marine on small collier ships carrying coal and timber, at age 27 he was about to be promoted to commander of his own vessel when he suddenly quit and joined the Royal Navy. Starting all over again as an ordinary seaman, he quickly rose through the ranks. His largely self-taught skills and talents as a surveyor, an astronomer, a mathematician and a cartographer proved invaluable during the French and Indian war of 1756-1763. He charted the St. Lawrence River from its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean all the way to Quebec City, where the final battle of that war was fought, ending in a British victory that gave them all of Canada. After receiving the title of king's surveyor, over several summers Cook produced a map of Newfoundland, an island with an extensive, geographically complicated shoreline. According to Sides, "comparing it against modern satellite images of Newfoundland, one can see that his chart was a cartographic

masterpiece of almost chilling precision” (13). By the late 1860s it was clear to the British Admiralty that Cook had much to offer. His first voyage to the Pacific would be his reward. On that voyage, on the HMS *Endeavor*, he sailed first to Tahiti to observe and study the “transit of Venus,” a rare astronomical occurrence that was of great interest in Europe. He then explored a wide expanse of the South Pacific, including the east coast of Australia, and both North and South Island of New Zealand, adding over 5000 miles of previously unknown shoreline to existing maps of the Pacific.

Referring to Cook as “a kind of proto-anthropologist and ethnographer,” Sides claims that in these voyages Cook had a much different mindset than other European explorers of the time. While undoubtedly believing in European technological superiority, his “descriptions of Indigenous peoples were tolerant and often quite sympathetic.” Most unusually Cook “never attempted to convert Native people to Christianity and rarely moralized on the supposed shortcomings of their customs and beliefs. In his writings, he was neutral, objective, and agnostic” (14). There had been some violence, but his encounters with indigenous people had been surprisingly peaceful. He also knew, of course, that he was “doing the work of empire,” playing a not insignificant role in advancing England’s global strategic interests in competition with other European nations. Sides believes though that on a personal level Cook’s interest “was more inquisitive than acquisitive, more empirical than imperial.” He also believes that Cook was much more motivated by “moments of pure discovery, moments when he felt called upon to study, measure, and document something entirely new” (15).

However, that was not always the Cook of the third voyage.

Ironically, Cook was not initially meant to command that voyage. At 46, fairly old for an English naval officer, and now famous throughout Europe, he had been officially retired to an honorary assignment as a captain of the Greenwich Naval Hospital. But Cook was typically restless on land, even with two children and a pregnant wife. Eventually, one of the most powerful men in England, John Montagu, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich (hence Hawai’i originally “renamed” the Sandwich Islands) persuaded him to

take command, though it does not appear that Cook needed much persuasion. The remainder of Book One discusses the preparations for the voyage (which as it turned out were poorly handled, Cook being distracted by the necessity of writing his account of his second voyage), as well as its two-fold mission. First of all, he was to take back to Tahiti the first Polynesian to ever set foot in England. Mai, a Polynesian who had come back to England in July 1774 with the return of Cook's first voyage, is an oft-forgotten figure of some historical importance. Rightfully so, his story has a prominent place in *The Wide Wide Sea*, almost as prominent as Cook's, although Sides is careful to remind readers that the one point of view he cannot provide is Mai's own, since it is simply unavailable. Sponsored by the famous naturalist Joseph Banks, who had sailed on Cook's second voyage, Mai continued a long tradition of English upper-class society's fascination with "human pets" (Pocahontas, brought to England from Virginia in 1616, is another example). But what Sides successfully shows is that Mai had a good deal of agency, with an agenda of his own, namely, revenge on the Bora Boreans who had murdered his family. Along with Mai, by order of King George III, Cook was also to transport a whole host of English farm animals, over 50 in all, turning his ship into a veritable Noah's ark. The idea, which Cook heartily disapproved of, was to introduce English agriculture to Tahiti specifically and Polynesia in general.

Once Mai and the animal cargo were safely and productively established somewhere on Tahiti, Cook would then turn to the second objective of the voyage. He was to sail to New Albion (the Pacific coast of North America) above then Spanish-owned California. His mission was to find and navigate the elusive Northwest Passage, the presumed shortcut through the North American continent that had been the Holy Grail of European exploration for nearly three centuries. For England it had become an obsession, for reasons of commerce, geopolitics, and national pride. All previous attempts to locate the passage, which had cost considerable amounts of money and countless lives, had been made from the Atlantic Ocean. But they had failed miserably in the high latitudes of eastern Canada, finding only, as Sides puts it, "dead ends, tangled

landscapes, fantasies and false leads” (43). Cook would be the first to approach the problem from the west, from the Pacific Ocean. Conventional wisdom was that salt water could not freeze, and “the ice of the high north [. . .] was solely the product of frigid rivers and streams emptying into the sea” (45). If that were true, the Arctic Ocean should be relatively ice-free. Cook could reach the Atlantic and return to England by sailing over the top of the world. An interesting theory, to say the least. But what was also interesting about Cook’s instructions from the Admiralty was that they did not mention Hawai’i at all, since no European knew it existed.

The Wide Wide Sea proceeds chronologically, focusing on the various stages and events of Cook’s final voyage. The cumulative effect is to put the reader right onboard the *Resolution*, sailing with Cook, his officers (including a young William Bligh of mutiny on the *Bounty* fame) and his crew. “Book Two The Weight of My Resentment” follows Cook south from Plymouth, England, to Tenerife in the Canary Islands, to Cape Verdes, where Cook made an uncharacteristic mistake and almost wrecked his ship on the rocks lining the entrance to the harbor. Sides nicely juxtaposes the rigors and dangers of the voyage with the beauty and wonder of the African coast. In addition, he illustrates how these ships were always “chasing the wind,” not hugging the coastline but sailing west almost to Brazil before cutting back diagonally to Table Rock and Capetown, South Africa, marking the fifth time in his career that Cook had crossed the equator. Reprovisioning and refitting before facing the tumultuous Cape of Good Hope, Cook spent several months in Capetown, owned and operated by the Dutch United East India Company. Sides relates an instructive anecdote about a side trip some of his officers took to Stellenbosch, a small Dutch community nearby. They were all fascinated by the farmhouses, the orchards, the vineyards, the natural surroundings, the hospitality of the settlers. However, Sides comments that they seem to have missed something: “These gracious farms and tiny villages had been built by chattel labor [. . .] The Cape Colony, so rich and fecund and trim, was a product of more than a century of

bondage and toil” (86). The *Resolution* and the *Discovery* left Capetown on November 30, 1776. England would hear nothing more from them for over three years.

Cook was now sailing in the “Roaring Forties,” where the warmer water of the Indian Ocean merges with the much colder water coming up from the Antarctic, where “the winds whip their way around the planet without landmasses to impede or divert their force.” With those winds routinely reaching more than 100 miles per hour and 60-foot waves not uncommon, Cook sailed, or rather crawled, through what was and still is “some of the most tempestuous seas on earth” (Sides 88). After spending Christmas on the desolate Kerguelen Island (now Grande Terre), Cook continued to struggle eastward, passing to the south of Australia and making for Tasmania. Here Cook met the Palawa, the Aboriginal people of Tasmania. Sides notes that “this was probably the first time these particular people had encountered Europeans, or for that matter, any other race [since they] had been separated from the mainland of Australia for at least 10,000 years” (100). Sides then writes a lengthy, illuminating account of this First Contact event, including the Palawans terrified response to English firearms and Cook’s misguided decision to introduce pigs into the native ecosystem. Although this was one of the few places the expedition did not spread sexually transmitted diseases, those and other European diseases would come soon enough. It is believed the last Aboriginal Tasmanian died in 1876, meaning the Palawans were extinct within one hundred years of Cook’s arrival.

Sides uses his narrative of Cook’s third voyage in *The Wide Wide Sea* to present a variety of insightful anthropological, zoological and geographical information as well. The concluding pages of Book Two are a good example. Even though behind schedule, he sailed to New Zealand in February 1777 to investigate what was referred to as “the incident at Grass Cove,” reports of which had shocked and scandalized England in the summer of 1774. Ten English sailors from the HMS *Adventure*, Cook’s consort-ship on his second voyage, had been killed by the native Maori then dismembered and cannibalized. Cook wanted to find out who was ultimately responsible. When all the

evidence he gathered indicated that the English sailors had escalated a fairly minor disagreement into a fatal confrontation Cook declared he was satisfied and pursued the matter no further. But Sides also uses this account of Cook's actions to offer an extended explication of Maori creation/origin myths, Maori culture and civilization, New Zealand's geological formation, as well as the varied and often unique animal species of the islands, especially its birds. He effectively foregrounds Cook's third voyage against a rich contextual background, which in turn allows him to maintain a more balanced, nuanced approach, avoiding a strictly Euro-centric point of view.

Beginning with Cook's return to Tahiti in August 1777, "Book Three Faraway Heaven," summarizes the main thematic discussions that Sides develops throughout *The Wide Wide Sea*. Another name for Tahiti at the time was Aphrodite's Island and Cook's crew (many of his officers as well, though never Cook himself) viewed the island as a sexual paradise. Here the numerous sexual exchanges appeared to be largely transactional, with red feathers honoring the Tahitian deity Oro the most in demand. But of course, where there was sex there was inevitably gonorrhea and syphilis, "the French pox," diseases introduced by European explorers and traders, a deadly pattern repeated throughout the Pacific islands. Here too the peculiarity of Mai's hybrid appearance is most obvious, Sides describing how he cantered his English horse on the beach in front of the Tahitians, "wearing his medieval helmet and plate armor in the full heat of the tropics, fir[ing] his pistol over their heads to clear the way [as] the crowds dispersed in terror" (144). Following his instructions, Cook would eventually resettle Mai in Tahiti, but now neither Polynesian nor English, for Sides his journey can be seen as "an allegory of colonialism and its unintended consequences, doom[ing] him to a jumbled, deracinated existence" (191). He would die in 1780, collateral damage from the Age of Exploration. The larger issue Sides raises is the cultural impact of the Age of Exploration on the indigenous people, how it changed their diet, for instance (which pre-Contact was quite healthy), and notions of ownership and private property. It would

be hard to conclude that these changes were beneficial. But it is also hard to imagine how these islands could have remained “undiscovered” forever.

His first objective, Mai’s relocation, completed, Cook sailed to the Pacific Northwest, recrossing the equator back into the Northern Hemisphere. He thought he had 5000 miles of empty ocean in front of him, so it came as a surprise when he found Christmas Island (now Kiritimati), the largest atoll in the world, another example of Cook’s uncanny ability to come across islands that no one knew existed. It came as an even bigger surprise when in January 1778 he found Hawai’i, specifically Kaua’i. A few scholars disagree, but the general consensus is that Cook was the first European to set foot in the Hawaiian Islands. In these pages, Sides provides a very good geological and geographical overview of Hawai’i. He also points out that although they were 2800 miles from Tahiti “not only were the languages similar, but Cook would soon see other similarities in dress, facial features, canoe design, and customs.” He had accidentally arrived at the apex of the Polynesian Triangle, proof that “in ancient times the Polynesians must have been expert long-distance voyagers, pioneers of the high seas, far more adept and ambitious than he had first realized” (202). A man who was quite familiar with long-distance voyages, Cook developed a great respect for what the Polynesians had achieved. In addition to their maritime skill, he soon came to admire their engineering, their agriculture, their art, and indeed their entire civilization. These were clearly not a “primitive” people. How those people viewed the first Europeans they had ever seen is a matter of considerable debate. At this point, they did appear to view Cook as at least some kind of high-ranking chief and treated him accordingly. Aside from the perennial problem of “theft” (a strictly European legal concept), iron in particular, the relationship was relatively conflict-free. Perhaps most importantly, like almost all the indigenous people and cultures on Cook’s voyage they assisted him in restocking and repairing his two ships, something they may have regretted later.

Cook was fascinated by Kaua’i but could not stay there long. He knew that his window-of-opportunity for exploring the North Pacific coastline was restricted to late

spring and summer. “Book Four New Albion” covers this leg of the voyage, starting with Cook’s 2500 mile sail to Oregon, arriving there in March 1778. *The Wide Wide Sea* consistently shows both the worst of Cook and the best of Cook, and it is difficult not to admire the seamanship (and leadership) Cook displayed throughout these months. Weathering some of the roughest seas and most violent storms of the entire journey, he turned north after sighting Oregon, passing the mouth of the Columbia River, then Puget Sound in present-day Washington state, finally making landfall at Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island. Since none of this territory had been charted before, it was simply an empty space on Cook’s maps. The descriptions here of the great Northwest Forest, which once stretched all the way across Canada and the northern United States, are excellent, and Sides captures well the sense of wonder that Cook and his men felt. But Sides does not neglect the ecological and cultural destruction that would occur in the wake of Cook’s voyage. For example, highly coveted sea otters, later known as “soft gold,” were abundant in Nootka Sound, and would be hunted to virtual extinction in just a few decades after his visit. As Sides says, that fur trade would “cause enormous dislocations among the Mowachaht and other tribes living [there] – for the Europeans brought the deadly triad of alcohol, guns, and disease” (245). History is paradox, none more so than Cook’s.

By May 1778, Cook was back at sea, heading north by northwest to southeast Alaska, to Kayak Island, passing the 18,000-foot Mt. St. Elias, into Prince William Sound, which Cook believed might be the long searched-for Northwest Passage. Again, Sides’ descriptions of the incredible diversity and beauty of these environments are well done. Realizing eventually that much to his disappointment he had not discovered the Passage, Cook had to sail south by southwest, opposite of where he wanted to go, until he somehow found his way through the Aleutian Islands at Unaga Island into the Bering Sea. He then undertook one of the supreme cartographical achievements of the Age of Exploration, accurately mapping the western coast of Alaska up to Cape Prince of Wales, the extreme western edge of the North American continent, making possible the first

correct measurement of the entire width of North America. By this point Cook was beginning to understand how huge Alaska actually was, thus how unlikely a Northwest Passage was. But after a sudden decision to cross the Bering Strait to Kamchatka Island in Russia, he recrossed the Strait and continued north up the Alaskan coast, leaving the Pacific and sailing into the Arctic Ocean. On the rooftop of the world now, Cook had entered “a vast space where no European [. . .] had ever been. [He] had become history’s uncontested master of the Pacific. He had ventured farther to its south than any known navigator before him, and now he had crossed that great ocean’s northernmost limits into unknown waters,” the first captain (and the *Resolution* the first ship), to traverse both the Arctic and Antarctic Circles (Sides 277). For a brief moment, he and his men were convinced that success was at hand.

But it was not to be. Sides writes that suddenly “without warning, without even a few stray bergs to act as emissaries, a rampart of ice appeared ahead. Ice as far as the eye could see, crunching and groaning, reacting to the pressures of current and wind” (278). It was apparent to Cook that conventional wisdom had been wrong, salt water could freeze. Yet he was determined to press forward in the hopes of finding an end to the icepack or a way around it or through it. On August 18 he got as far as Icy Cape, at a latitude of just over 70 degrees North. With the ice slowly trapping him in the shallow water near the shoreline, with the temperature dropping precipitously, he was still somehow able to extricate his two ships. Sailing blindly in a thick fog, there were times the only way he could “guess the location of the ice was by listening intently for the braying of unseen herds of walrus that were hauled up on the shelves, resting in great masses.” Putting it mildly, Sides calls this “a strange and nerve-racking way to navigate” (280). Three days later, they escaped to relative safety. Cook then sailed west for several weeks an astonishing 400 miles along the edge of the icepack, still trying to find a way through. However, upon sighting Cape Schmidt on the desolate Arctic Coast of the Russian Far East, Cook knew there was nothing more he could do. He could have begun the long journey home, to report his second great “negative discovery” – that the

Northwest Passage did not exist. Instead he chose to remain in the Pacific, to winter in Hawai'i, and return to the Arctic earlier in the following summer to search one more time.

The culminating, aptly titled “Book Five Apotheosis” focuses on the events leading up to Cook’s death. After a 2500 mile journey from the Arctic, he had initially reached Maui, but circled the island rather than landing, setting up a “maritime market” in an attempt to cordon off the two cultures, trying to protect the Mauians from STDs in the process. He had come to understand how harmful (and one-sided) the intercultural relationship was becoming, but after six weeks cruising the need for repairs to his ships was unavoidable. Having spotted the magnificent Big Island of Hawai'i in the distance, in January 1779 he sailed into Kealahou Bay – the Pathway of the Gods, “the seat of royal authority on Hawai'i, the residence of the god-kings” (Sides 289). At the height of the Makahiki religious festival, at first all was fine. However, overstaying their welcome, the mood gradually changed, tensions increased, so in February Cook gave the order to sail. Sides adroitly summarizes the Hawaiian mindset, “*Thank you for coming, but thank you for leaving, too*” (his italics, 318). But history is capricious, too, and on February 8 a storm struck, disastrously snapping off the *Resolution’s* foremast, forcing Cook back to Kealahou two days later. No longer festive, the atmosphere was ominous now. When a cutter, one of his critical smaller boats, was stolen, Cook flew into a rage. Against the advice of his officers, he came up with an ill-conceived plan to kidnap the Hawaiian high chief and hold him hostage until the boat was returned. Using both English accounts as well as indigenous oral histories, Sides gives a detailed, riveting description of surely one of the more dramatic moments of the Age of Exploration – the killing of Captain James Cook on February 14, 1779, on a beach 6000 nautical miles from England. He had just turned 50 years old.

The Wide Wide Sea is history not hagiography. Four other British Marines and at least 20 Hawaiians died on that day along with Cook. What was ignored in Europe but has not been forgotten in Hawai'i was the subsequent massacre at a nearby village,

The Wide Wide Sea

where “British soldiers went on a rampage,” the Hawaiians experiencing for the first time “the full homicidal power of musketry, cannon fire, and steel bayonets” (Sides 340). With the *Resolution* finally repaired, the expedition sailed for England, arriving in London on January 11, 1780, after a voyage lasting 1548 days. Sides though does not end his journey, or the reader’s, there in London in 1780. Having visited the site while writing *The Wide Wide Sea*, in the last three paragraphs of Book Five he returns to the present-day, to the obelisk memorializing Cook that the British erected in 1874 on the spot where he was killed. Clearly, contested ground, protesters had written on the monument in blood-red paint “YOU ARE ON NATIVE LAND” (his emphasis, 350). He then circles back to his opening Prologue and concludes with an evocative “Epilogue: Lona’s Tears.” Hampton Sides has written a book I would recommend to any reader. He reminds us that the key is not to erase the past, but to learn from it, to do better than what was done before.

Fire and Rain: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Wars in Southeast Asia

Reviewed by Dr. SEAN SCANLON, The National WWII Museum

Fire and Rain: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Wars in Southeast Asia, by Carolyn Woods Eisenberg. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Much of the voluminous literature on the American war in Vietnam focuses on the early years of the 1960s, when the American military presence was growing and fighting in South Vietnam was at its heaviest. Less has been written about the final years of the war, when U.S. policy was dominated by President Richard Nixon and his influential national security adviser, Henry Kissinger. The first major history of this important chapter in the Vietnam War appeared in 1998, just as important U.S. archives were opening up to researchers.¹ Twenty-five years later, historian Carolyn Woods Eisenberg has written *Fire and Rain*, a history of U.S. policy in Vietnam under these two important policymakers. A professor at Hofstra University whose previous book analyzed the division of Germany after the Second World War,² Eisenberg aims to provide both a new interpretation of the Vietnam War during the Nixon administration based on archival research, and a detailed narrative history that moves beyond the corridors of the White House and the Pentagon to explore how American policy impacted people on the ground throughout Southeast Asia. She is mostly successful in both these ambitious goals.

Elected in a close race in 1968, Richard Nixon entered the White House promising to withdraw American troops and bring the Vietnam War to a swift end, but he and his team quickly encountered the same challenges that had bedeviled American

¹ See Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas Press, 1998).

² See Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944–1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

policymakers for nearly a decade. In *Fire and Rain*, Eisenberg explores how the Nixon administration conducted the war in Vietnam against the backdrop of dramatic negotiations between the United States and its longtime Cold War rivals, China and the Soviet Union. Early on, she notes how the Nixon administration's policies in Vietnam signaled a major break with previous administrations, whose actions in Vietnam were dictated by Cold War fears of communist expansion. Unlike its predecessors, she writes, "the administration's mounting difficulties in solving its Vietnam problem increasingly shaped interactions with Moscow and Beijing."³ Drawing on recently declassified documents from American archives, Eisenberg argues that the war in Vietnam played a major role in negotiations between the Americans and the Soviets and Chinese during the early 1970s, negotiations that the Nixon administration held up as major successes and contributed to Nixon's landslide electoral victory in 1972. In effect, Nixon and Kissinger were trying to use diplomacy with two longtime communist rivals to conclude a war that American officials had long justified on the grounds that it was, at the end of the day, a war to contain those same communist rivals.

Analysts of the Nixon administration's foreign policy understandably devote enormous time and attention to figures at the top, especially President Nixon himself and Henry Kissinger.⁴ But in Eisenberg's telling, one understudied policymaker who emerges as a major figure in the administration's Vietnam policy was Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. A conservative Republican from Wisconsin, Laird served in the House of Representatives for nearly two decades before agreeing to lead the Defense Department. Throughout his four years at the Pentagon, Laird was a consistent advocate for reducing the American military presence in South Vietnam. Laird had grave doubts about whether the United States could prevail militarily, and came to see it as his

³ Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Wars in Southeast Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 8.

⁴ See for instance Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007); David F. Schmitz, *Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War: The End of the American Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); and Robert K. Brigham, *Reckless: Henry Kissinger and the Tragedy of Vietnam* (New York: Public Affairs, 2018).

mission to eventually bring all American troops home. Laird's efforts to bring American troops home from South Vietnam infuriated Nixon and Kissinger, and contributed to a secretive atmosphere in which the president's circle of advisers steadily shrank. Despite his position as Secretary of Defense, Nixon and Kissinger excluded Laird and senior officials at the State Department (including Secretary of State William Rogers) from important discussions about major initiatives, including their planning for the 1970 invasion of Cambodia. But despite their doubts about many of Nixon and Kissinger's policies and despite being excluded from important decisions, Laird, Rogers, and many other senior officials eventually went along and refused to break with the administration or criticize the president and his advisers publicly.

While much of *Fire and Rain* focuses on high-level policymakers in Washington, Eisenberg makes an admirable effort to follow American policy down to the ground level in Southeast Asia to look at how policies adopted at the highest levels of power impacted the lives of people in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, people the United States was ostensibly trying to protect from the evils of communism. One such passage comes in Chapter 4, when she relates the story of a blue-ribbon panel dispatched to South Vietnam to observe conditions in South Vietnamese prisons. After observing horrific conditions in several prisons controlled by the Saigon government, the U.S. Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom in Vietnam released a highly critical report, condemning conditions in these places and the policies of the government that the United States supported. Eisenberg writes that, "As in the Johnson years, such obliviousness to the harshness of the South Vietnamese regime impeded sensible decision-making."¹ Eisenberg has an excellent eye for telling anecdotes, such as the time when days of protests of protests broke out in the South Vietnamese provincial capital of Quinhon following the shooting of a twelve-year-old student named Nguyen Van Minh by American soldiers.² These and many other examples highlight the immense gap

¹ Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain*, 70.

² Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain*, 233.

between what American officials were trying to achieve in Vietnam and the consequences of their actions to people the Americans were supposedly fighting to protect.

In addition to following the policies formulated in Washington down to their violent and destructive implementations in Southeast Asia, Eisenberg also delves into the domestic side of the Vietnam War during the Nixon years, specifically the interplay between the administration and the antiwar movement. She describes how the Nixon and his aides worked to give the impression that they were trying to end the war and bring American troops home, while secretly prolonging and expanding the war, especially using American airpower and in neighboring “neutral” countries Laos and Cambodia. Despite some of the largest antiwar demonstrations of the entire conflict in 1969 and 1970, Nixon and Kissinger recognized that they could continue the war as long as a critical mass of American voters still supported it. This meant that thousands more American soldiers and many, many more Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians would die in a war that was already more than a decade old when the Nixon administration took office.¹⁴⁰

Nixon and Kissinger believed that intensified military operations would produce something resembling an American victory in Vietnam, which would both allow the U.S. to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam and preserve the pro-American regime in South Vietnam. This involved intensified bombing campaigns against North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and two joint American-South Vietnamese ground offensives into neighboring Cambodia in the spring of 1970 and Laos in 1971. Eisenberg points to the latter offensive, a South Vietnamese-led operation known as Lam Son 719, as both a microcosm of American failures in Vietnam and a turning point after which the administration could no longer hold out any hope for military victory.¹⁴¹ This realization intensified Nixon and Kissinger’s efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement to the

¹⁴⁰ Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain*, 192.

¹⁴¹ Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain*, 250 and 264.

Vietnam War by bringing pressure on the North Vietnamese from their Soviet and Chinese allies. This effort was integral to the administration's broader project of reshaping American relations with its Cold War communist adversaries, a strategy that historians have labeled *détente*. But while this effort yielded important results in some areas, from arms-control talks with the Soviets to Nixon's dramatic visit to China in February 1972, the Soviets and Chinese proved extremely reluctant to help the United States achieve their objectives in Vietnam. Despite suffering heavy losses from American airpower, the North Vietnamese achieved enough military gains in the early 1970s that they could agree to American conditions for withdrawal without compromising their long-term objective of uniting Vietnam under a communist government in Hanoi, which they achieved in 1975 after the Americans withdrew.

At its core, *Fire and Rain* is a damning indictment of U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam under Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, who, Eisenberg argues, "prolonged the war as long as they did because it served their own needs and met other institutional requirements."¹⁴² Eisenberg is an effective storyteller, and her narrative flows extremely well, but despite her claims to offer a new interpretation, *Fire and Rain* tells a familiar story. Drawing mostly on American published archival sources and the vast and growing secondary literature in English, she can only offer limited insights into the thinking and behavior of Vietnamese, Chinese, and Soviet actors. Nevertheless, scholars of Pacific and Southeast Asian history will certainly benefit from reading Eisenberg's detailed narrative of the Vietnam War during the Nixon years.

¹⁴² Eisenberg, *Fire and Rain*, 516.

The Kyoto School and International Relations

The Kyoto School and International Relations: Non-Western Attempts for a New World-Order, by Kosuke Shimizu. Routledge, 2023.

Reviewed by BRETT A. FULKERSON-SMITH, University of Guam

Kosuke Shimizu's book was originally published in March 2022. Sadly, the political landscape has not improved much since then. While it is true that hegemony is waning, the liberal economy is increasingly overwhelming for many. As a result, the alienation of individuals continues apace and the chasm between the haves and the have-nots yawns wider. All of this brings "a nagging sense of uncertainty and unpredictability" (3). With the publication of the paperback edition, we have another chance to consider the promise of non-linear/non-cyclical, concrete temporality, and relationality for improved international relations.

But, as Shimizu points out, these conceptions of temporality and relationality are antithetical to the presuppositions of the Westphalian narrative that dominates international relations (IR). Attempts to change such fundamental terms of debate are fraught with difficulty. In fact, Shimizu offers a sustained case study of just this point. Although members of the Kyoto School of Philosophy attempted to "bring the bodily experience back into [political] philosophy with the temporality of the present" (7), they were ultimately unsuccessful. His cautionary tale of why this failure occurred and what it means for contemporary IR unfolds over the course of ten chapters.

After literature reviews of current East Asian IR in Chapter 2 and modernization and time in Chapter 3, Chapters 4 through 7 introduce many of the most prominent members of the Kyoto School of Philosophy. Chapter 4 focuses on the leading figures of the Kyoto School, Nishida Kitaro and Tanabe Hajime, and their existentialist philosophies. Chapter 5 discusses four of Nishida's disciples. Here, Shimizu describes

“the transition of Nishida’s present into the linear progressive temporality in the discourses of the Big 4” (13). In Chapter 6, Shimizu discusses Miki Kiyoshi’s philosophy of imagination and the latter’s attempt to connect concrete bodily experience with abstract philosophy. Chapter 7 “compares the discourses of morality developed by Tosaka Jun with Nishida’s philosophy to depict the way in which Nishida and his followers lost their commitment to bodily experience and moved towards an abstract nation-state, thus using more of the vocabulary of Westphalian modernity in their political writings” (13).

Beginning with Chapter 8, Shimizu begins to draw the hopeful lessons of this failure. He introduces the reception of the Kyoto School philosophy in post-war era Japan showing how Japanese thinkers of this era were influenced by the philosophies of its members. In Chapter 9, Shimizu highlights the work of some Japanese scholars who engage with IR from the perspective of people’s bodily experience. These attempts to transcend the traditional boundary of IR have, for Shimizu, “the potential for contributing to contemporary post-Western IR literature” (13). The post-Western IR of Buddhism is the focus of Chapter 10. Pointing out the similarities between the Kyoto School of Philosophy and Buddhist IR, Shimizu argues that “by attending to the failure of the Kyoto School’s attempt, Buddhist IR has an immense potential to provide a critical perspective towards contemporary world affairs, particularly the ethics of IR” (13).

In Chapter 2, “East Asian IR Revisited,” Shimizu seeks to “bridge contemporary non-Western IR with the challenge of the Kyoto School by pointing out the similarities and differences between them” (14). Much of the chapter is devoted to retracing non-Western IR.

As Shimizu observes, criticisms of the Western understanding of the world in IR date to at least the 1980s (15). Neo-Gramscian and post-Structuralist critiques are perhaps the oldest kind of critique. Building on the post-structuralist critique of Western rationalism as non-universal and, in fact, parochial, post-colonial theory “seeks to

combine participation in a progressive agential politics of identity with a metacritique of modernism for its parochial ideas and exclusionary practices disguised as universalism” (17-18). The development of non-Western IR takes the next step: theorizing the ontology of “transformative and hybrid subjectivities rather than rational and autonomous self-interest maximisers” (18).

There are four typologies of this discourse, according to Shimizu. In the first approach, “scholars simply point out that there are different interpretations of world affairs from those offered by Western mainstream IRT [International Relations Theorists/Theory]” (20). “The second approach argues that including voices long disregarded by mainstream Western IRT literature will ‘enrich’ the discipline by promoting plurality and diversity” (20). Some ‘Asian value’ theorists exemplify the third approach, which seeks to “overturn power relations to create ‘our’ version of the world” (21). A fourth approach seeks to redefine IRT itself by “problematizing ‘the basic formulation and idiom of our query’” (21).

Shimizu concludes this chapter by pointing out that the Kyoto School philosophers conflate these four approaches in their respective discourses on philosophy and politics. The point seems to be not only that the different philosophers associated with the Kyoto School of Philosophy took different approaches, but also, and perhaps more so, that the same philosopher adopted different approaches at different times and under different circumstances. Nevertheless, for Shimizu, “it is worth trying to use these four types of non-Western categories” to clarify the thinking of the Kyoto School philosophers, “because these categories help us understand the key concepts of non-Western discourses as relationality and temporality that constitute one of the foci of contemporary IR” (21). After all, subjectivity as temporal and relational is a core tenet of the Kyoto School of Philosophy.

In Chapter 3, Shimizu explains why this is the case. Even before the Meiji Restoration, Japan was engaged in a process of modernization. But the threat of violence from the West that coincided with it not only hastened this process, but also

transformed it into one of Westernization. “Japanese officials strived to introduce Western concepts of international laws and political institutions” (41). They also reformed the very foundation of lived experience in Japan—space and time—as Shimizu demonstrates with reference to the substitution of the Gregorian calendar and the equinoctial hour for the traditional lunar calendar and the temporal hour (38). These processes were increasingly met with protests from Japanese intellectuals. “It is under these circumstances that the Kyoto School’s philosophy became popular” (41). The Kyoto School relied primarily on Buddhism to “overcome the modernist abstraction of time and space and to retain the perception of the bodily experience” (40). How and to what extent the major Kyoto School philosophers accomplished these goals is the focus of the next four chapters.

Chapter 4 treats the first-generation Kyoto School philosophers, Nishida Kitaro, and Tanabe Hajime. Shimizu’s account begins with Nishida’s transition from pure experience to *basho* (place). The purification of one’s experience blends both Buddhist philosophy as well as the transcendentalism of Immanuel Kant and German idealists, like Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The influence of the latter is well-known in the literature and is mentioned by Shimizu, but unfortunately not discussed in detail here (46). Transcendentalism can be understood as the search for the conditions necessary for any possible experience. Purifying one’s experience by emptying it of both form and content grants access to those conditions. A reiterative process, this purification ultimately reveals the fundamental conditions of possible experience. For Nishida, this is the place (*basho*) in which an impermanent self and world is constituted in time through a spontaneous and contingent process of interdependent arising.

As Shimizu points out, Tanabe famously criticized Nishida’s dichotomy between part (self and world) and whole (*basho*) for being too abstract. “To give concreteness to this structure, some kind of mediating existence between the entirety (*rui*: the genus) and the individual (*ko*) was desperately needed: the *shu* (species)” (70). Tanabe lays out his vision in what is perhaps his best-known work, *The Logic of Species*.

For Tanabe, species are closed societies. They serve to ethically cultivate individuals through customs and laws in light of humanity (the genus). The goal seems to be that, through coercive force, otherwise free individuals would become autonomous in the Kantian sense, internalizing the customs and laws of their respective societies. And, to the extent that closed societies come to recognize the value of individual freedom in the process, they transform into *open* societies, what Tanabe calls “nation-states” (54).

For Shimizu, Tanabe’s logic of species is spatiotemporal. The past and the future are mediated by the present. And the present is spatialized in closed or open societies. “Tanabe sees that this is the representation of nothingness” that lies at the foundation of Buddhist philosophy (54).

The philosophies of Nishida and Tanabe, therefore, represent one way to respond to Western modernity, particularly in the age of globalization. As Shimizu explains, this approach is broadly Buddhist and abandons “any possibility of essentialising the otherness or selfness, and to instead imagine the world as full of contingencies” (74). Another way to respond is to construct a counter-narrative around a non-Western essence. As Shimizu discusses in Chapter 5, this is the approach adopted by the so-called Big 4 of the Kyoto School: Nishitani Keiji, Kosaka Masaaki, Koyama Iwao, and Suzuki Shigetaka.

Shimizu accounts for the differences in approach in two ways. On the one hand, Nishida’s philosophy was both personal, emerging from his own attempts to overcome his own suffering and pain, and theoretical. Tanabe’s was also theoretical. By contrast, the second generation of the Kyoto School of Philosophy had a clear “socio-political orientation” (64).

The US declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941, and during the summer of 1941, the Big 4 met with the imperial navy who seemed resigned to “lose the war in a manner that would not have a substantial impact on Japanese polity” (63). Discussions focused on ways to dissuade the army from further promoting the war. The declaration

of war seems to have rekindled a national pride in the Big 4 that Koyasu Nobukuni, a contemporary critic of the Kyoto School, describes as manic (66).

This nationalism was expressed in terms of the “historical mission” of Japan. According to Shimizu, this mission was informed by two beliefs. “First, European modernity was in an unprecedented crisis and, second, Japan was gradually increasing its presence in the world as a great power” (66). Japan’s ascendancy was attributed to its “moral energy” or virtue (67).

As Shimizu underscores, “behind the second generation’s logic of World History was Tanabe’s logic of the species” (69). For the Big 4, Japan was to serve as the intermediary between universal humanity and individuals. Shimizu writes: The mythical discourses of the Kyoto School philosophy, particularly Nishida’s place of nothingness and the eternal present, have become the source of moral superiority of Japan and have provided a sense of virtue that supposedly surpasses the West. Therefore, they [the Big 4] maintain that Japan should universalise this Japanese morality and virtue to make the world orderly and peaceful (68).

In the next two chapters, Shimizu turns to the left-wing of the Kyoto School, which appears to have taken the former approach mentioned above. Here, Shimizu contrasts the abstract philosophy of the conservative Big 4 with the leftists’ attempts “to socialise Nishida’s philosophy by bringing it back into concrete contexts” (80). Chapter 6 is devoted to Miki Kiyoshi, while Chapter 7 focuses on Tosaka Jun. In both, Shimizu highlights each thinker’s attempts to introduce “concrete others and relationalities with them in the picture of the nothingness” (81).

One way Miki attempts to do this is through his philosophy of history. History is the subjective narration of objective events. History, then, is the imposition of *logos*. While *logos* helps to stabilize experience, inform perceptions of the world, and to give meaning to life, Miki points out that the “basic experience” that makes history possible is itself dynamic (83). As a result, history is continuously being written, formed and reformed, by subjective *logos*.

But the writing of history occurs now, in the present. And this writing requires that a subjective *logos* is imposed on a collection of facts, which are curated by and as a function of the narrator's being and relation to the events of the world. Here, at this more primitive and fundamental level—not unlike Nishida's place (*basho*) of nothingness—lies what Miki calls history as a collection of facts. Shimizu points out that Miki's important concept of imagination, *kosoryoku*, develops from history as facts (85).

Following at least Kant and the German Idealists, Miki distinguishes between the reproductive and the productive imagination. The point seems to be that, in the present moment of writing history, the narrator can employ their imagination to highlight certain objective events to reproduce an existing ideology or to produce a new narrative by highlighting other objective events. Only through the latter is social change possible. And Miki believed that Japan must change for the better in accordance with this logic of imagination (86), if it were to successfully “promote individual morality” (83).

As Shimizu emphasizes in Chapter 7, for Tosaka, this account of relationality, temporality, and nothingness remains too abstract. As opposed to theorizing the conditions under which temporality is constructed in the present through a subject's relationality, as is the case with Miki and Nishida before him, Tosaka “was more concerned with...the way in which temporality affects people's everyday lives” (107). Important in this regard is Tosaka's distinction between scientific knowledge and common sense.

Scientific knowledge (as in the broad German sense of *Wissenschaft*) is like history in Miki's sense. Both are ideological and hegemonic. But, for Tosaka, scientific knowledge is in a dialectical relationship with what he terms common sense (99). Common sense has two meanings for Tosaka. In addition to “a sense of the world widely shared by ordinary citizens,” common sense also refers to a critical standpoint in the Kantian sense (99). This critical standpoint reflects the ordinary lives and concrete everydayness of citizens. For Tosaka, these critical engagements are expressed in

literature—as opposed to *dogma*—and so express *shinjitsu*, truth in a concrete context, but not *shinri*, abstract or logical truth (103).

In literature, we find meaning expressed through individuals in their everydayness. This order of meaning, or culture, Tosaka contends, can help to establish a moral world order. This is because Tosaka, although a materialist, rejects the Marxist idea that structure (economics) determines superstructure (culture). According to Japan's Gramsci, culture interacts with sciences like economics and politics in the public sphere to shape history (105).

Shimizu begins the third part of the book in Chapter 8 with a review of the reception of the Kyoto School of Philosophy in post-war Japan. Three post-war IR theorists are considered, in turn: Takeuchi Yoshimi, Hiromatsu Wataru, and Maruyama Masao. Their critical engagement with the Kyoto School philosophers offers valuable insights for contemporary IRT.

Takeuchi underscores the contradiction inherent in the Big 4's articulation of world history. While Japan was heralded as the leader of the East Asian region, it strived to establish a hegemonic alternative. These postures are contradictory. As Shimizu points out, "the rationale for leadership in East Asia was exclusively based on the European principle of modernization and civilization, but the Asian liberation from colonialism opposed this principle" (114). Takeuchi also noted the complete lack of attention paid to China by the Big 4 during their roundtables.

Hiramatsu was also critical of these roundtables. What is more, he criticized Miki's theory of imagination, claiming it was too abstract. "As a result, Hiromatsu's evaluation of the Kyoto School philosophy ends with disappointment, although he does write that [the Kyoto School's] concern with overcoming modernity is still legitimate in the present era" (117).

"Maruyama called the Kyoto School's philosophy an application of the 'secularised Buddhist philosophy' that allowed Japanese society to embrace all the contradictions within it without making sense of them logically or consistently" (119).

To revive Tosaka's public sphere, Maruyama called for the advent of a *sasara* style of public discourse. A *sasara* is a bundle of split bamboo with one end tied up, and is used in many applications, including washing dishes. The point is that, in this style of discourse, there is a rational or common foundation. In contrast, Maruyama describes the public and academic discourse of his time in the style of *takotsubo*, which literally means octopus trap, "where different perspectives coexist among intellectuals but never communicate or interact with each other" (118-119).

In Chapter 9, Shimizu surveys previous efforts of some Japanese scholars to "bring bodily and everyday experiences of ordinary people back into [IR] theorisation without being bounded by the curse of Westphalia" (125). The chapter focuses on Iriye Akira's work on diplomatic history, Hirano Henichiro's work on international cultural relations, and Takeshi Hamashita's work on regional history. From these analyses, Shimizu draws three lessons for post-Western IR discourse.

"First, Hirano's and Hamashita's analyses reveal how much our perception is biased by the Westphalian presumptions of state sovereignty and strict state borders" (139). As Hirano points out, so-called peripheral issues are just as important—if not more so—than core units of IR analyses. Hamashita shows that the stable political order in existence before the arrival of European modernity was made possible, in part, by blurred borders.

Second, there are "robust obstacles" to the kinds of arguments put forward by the likes of Hirano and Hamashita. As Shimizu observes, even today, any interpretation or understanding of state sovereignty and its boundaries that differs from "the mainstream Westphalian perception towards world affairs has difficulty being sufficiently recognized" (140). Conversely, Shimizu's third point is that "we need to keep in mind that perceptions based on such language as the Westphalian nation-state, geographical division and the dichotomy of West and East are more persistent than we can imagine" (140).

Shimizu concludes the book in Chapter 10 with a “theoretical journey for dialogue and reconciliation in contemporary world affairs with Buddhism” (141). Mahāyāna Buddhism profoundly influenced the Kyoto School philosophy. It is for this reason that Shimizu focuses on it, and its conception of *ku* (the ever-changing nature of things) and *engi* (relationality) in the context of language and being.

According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, things do not have fixed natures or purposes. This fact means that there are many more ways in which two things can relate. For example, on the (Confucian) view that a desk has a fixed nature or purpose, a person can only relate to it in so many ways: as a place to write this or that, or a place to reckon an accounting ledger, or to conduct other writing-based business. But, without this presupposition, the desk can easily be used as a base from which to change a bulb in the light fixture overhead, or a table for tea service, in addition to as a place to write upon. What is more, the use of language to specify a nature or purpose fixes it in what Imamura Hitoshi calls an act of “original violence” (145).

The same thing happens to the self. It, too, lacks a fixed nature or purpose. Its open horizon of relationality is ultimately bounded by the language of narration. This is one important way in which the self can distinguish itself from others. Buddhism reminds us that, in many ways, undoing this violence is the ultimate ethical act. To escape suffering, we need to become no-thing.

Shimizu believes that these tenets of Mahāyāna Buddhism are important in the context of contemporary IR. First, the Buddhist goal of the alleviation of all suffering invites contemporary IR theorists to reflect on “whether the discourses of IR have caused suffering for the sake of state sovereignty and world order” (148). Second, “the idea that all things have never been fixed means that all things established will necessarily be destroyed sooner or later” (148). It is neither necessary to assume that we must think in terms of the Westphalian, sovereign, nation-state, nor to be expected that such things will persist unchanged long into the future.

Other tenets are important as well. Mahāyāna Buddhism champions equality in the concept of *busscho*, the idea that everyone is on the way to Buddhahood. Because of this, contemporary IR must be committed to equality among all people.

In the remainder of the chapter, Shimizu applies these principles to three case studies. The first case study considers the US Okinawa base issue. The case underscores the importance of equality as well as *engi* in contemporary IR. The second case study comes from Hannah Arendt's book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and is a story handed down as the miracle of the Danes or the "light in the darkness" during World War II (150). This case study illustrates the power of unexpected *engi*, the importance of equality, and "the change in the subjectivity of Nazis as a result of the relationship between the Nazis and the Danish" (152). Similar upshots are highlighted in the final case study, which contemplates the diplomatic issue between Japan and South Korea over wartime sexual violence against women during World War II.

Perhaps because his analyses of these cases are predominantly counterfactual, I am not sure that Shimizu's "cautionary tale" about the failures of the Kyoto School philosophers to "materialize their dream" of non-Western IRT is entirely successful (xiii-xvi). The issue turns on what the term means. If by "cautionary tale," one means an enumeration of precautions one should take at the outset of a journey, then Shimizu's book is a cautionary tale. There, Shimizu focuses primarily on what a *future* non-Western or Buddhist IRT should contain and with what it should contend.

But contemporary non-Western and Buddhist IRT are works already in progress. In fact, Shimizu highlights several concepts from Mahāyāna Buddhism that are applied in contemporary IRT. And so, it is not enough to identify the kinds of mistakes made by the Kyoto School philosophers and to exclaim that these same kinds of mistakes should not be repeated moving forward, as Shimizu does. For journeys already underway, a cautionary tale should account for the current state of the journey, offering course-corrections as needed. In the context of Shimizu's book, what is needed is a determination of whether contemporary non-Western or even Buddhist IRT has

sufficiently supplanted or overcome the presuppositions of Westphalia. Unfortunately, Shimizu does not address this issue.

Another important omission concerns Shimizu's several discussions of body. He correctly points out that the body and bodily experience were paramount concerns of Nishida and other Kyoto School philosophers, like Tanabe and Miki (78). Given this importance, it is surprising that Shimizu makes no reference to the philosophy of Kimura Motomori. Kimura published an essay in 1938, titled "Body and Spirit," that seems relevant to at least some of the issues taken up by Shimizu, especially given Tanabe's and Miki's influence on Kimura and the former thinkers' prominent place in Shimizu's book.

In his essay, Kimura defines the body as a principle of expression. And expression is "the manifestation of the inside on the outside—or, to employ contrasting concepts to which people are accustomed, it is the realization of spirit [mind] in nature" (Fujita *et al.*, 110).¹⁴³ No doubt drawing on the dialectic of German Idealism—a philosophical tradition which he studied closely—Kimura's point seems to be that the past calls out to the present with details about the future. The past, therefore, guides the present creation of the future, with such creation accomplished through bodily expression. So, we must properly understand the past. In addition, we should also defer to the proletariat or others who truly understand the intricacies of bodily expression (through labor).

Nevertheless, Shimizu's book is an important contribution to the history of IRT. The line Shimizu draws from the Buddhism of the Kyoto School philosophers to thinkers engaged in contemporary (Mahāyāna) IR is bright, interesting, and insightful. This narrative—blemished by some spelling and grammatical mistakes throughout the book, including the misspelling of "Tanabe" in the title and header of Chapter 4—is supported by helpful endnotes, a thirteen-page bibliography, and a comprehensive index. And,

¹⁴³ "Body and Spirit [Mind]" (R. Chapeskie, Trans.). In Fujita, M., Chapeskie, R., & Krummel, J. W. M. (2018). *The philosophy of the kyoto school*. Springer.

along the way, Shimizu introduces readers to several important Japanese scholars from this and the previous century. Those just beginning their study of IRT will benefit from the framing this history provides, just as surely as will scholars particularly interested in the history and development of non-Western or global IRT.