POHNPEIANS IN HAWAIʻI: REFASHIONING IDENTITY IN DIASPORA

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Voyagers among the "Sea of Islands"

Voyaging has long been a central feature in the lives of Oceanic peoples. Once they entered the Pacific Ocean, they became comfortably at home in a large and unbounded "sea of islands" (Hauʻofa 1993). This vision of home—as a large sea full of places to explore, harvest, or settle and full of people to visit, exchange with, or dominate—allowed its inhabitants to live a fluid and mobile lifestyle (Hauʻofa 1993; Heine 2008). Fueled by an enduring sense of wanderlust and a quest for adventure, resources, and prestige, their voyages were aided by their very fine sailing vessels and navigational knowledge. These crafts and skills were found throughout the Oceanic region, but they were honed to an exceptionally high degree in the region known as Micronesia, where they still exist.

Voyaging, in greatly modified form, continues to be an important part of Micronesian life today. The recent flood of Pohnpeian and other Micronesian migrants to Hawaiʻi is driven by various cultural and historical factors—ancient, colonial, and contemporary. Once in Hawaiʻi, Pohnpeian identity is both maintained and transformed through a variety of cultural practices. Their refashioned identity is not entirely self-made, however, but is also subject to the webs of power linked to the nation state (Ong 1996). The prevailing social climate in Hawaiʻi, which has been less than welcoming to Micronesian migrants, has challenged Pohnpeian abilities to adapt to

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their new home. This article focuses on the struggles Pohnpeians face in maintaining a positive identity in this transforming and transformative context.[1]

Pohnpeian Voyaging

Ancient principles of navigation known as *etak,* found in the western Carolinean atolls of Micronesia, have been used by Mortlockese historian Joakim Peter as a framework to understand the more recent Chuukese migration (2000). In particular, Peter highlighted the continual connection made in etak between home and travel abroad. First, a master navigator looks to the horizon, the edge of the heavens—a foreign space—casting about and expanding boundaries in a quest for necessary and desirable things for people back home. Second, etak navigation is itself a home-centered navigational system, in which emphasis is given to the island of origin. One's position along the journey is calculated by dead reckoning; it is based solely on the distance and direction traveled since leaving the point of origin, using the home island as a guiding point (Peter 2000; Gladwin 1970; Lewis 1994). Finally, as Peter noted, Chuukese voyaging is purposeful, planned, and with a distinct course of action. Voyagers are advised not to wander aimlessly and to maintain strong clan and trade connections for basic life support. They should also have a connection or relationship to people in the destination. Indeed, Chuukese custom advises "walking in the footprints" of others, retracing others' movements. Without such connections, Peter explained, Chuukese travelers are said to be lost or adrift while away from home (2000).

Voyaging was also a central feature of life for Pohnpeians of the Eastern Carolines of Micronesia; it was based on motivations and strategies similar to those of Chuukese, and on a home-centered navigation system similar to Chuukese etak. Oral traditions speak of six early, heroic voyages from various parts of Oceania to settle this high, fertile, sacred island, beginning some 2,000 years ago (Rainbird 2004: 86–97). These tales often provide the names, titles, and clan memberships of the navigators and crews who sailed; the adventures they encountered; and the important things they brought with them or developed on the island (Bernart 1977: 1–25; Riesenberg 1968: 1–2). Then, once the main island of Pohnpei was filled, a later voyage from the west brought two holy men, Ohlosipa and Ohlosopa, who constructed a settlement in the island's large and calm lagoon, a megalithic complex called Nan Madol, and established the Saudeleur Empire (Bernhart 1977: 26–76). A final voyage led to the overthrow of the Saudeleur and the eventual establishment of a less centralized Nahnmwarki chiefly system

(Bernart 1977: 77–104; Riesenberg 1968), one that still exists, in modified form, today.

But over time Pohnpeians became noted as Micronesian landlubbers. As the second largest island in the region as well as one of the most fertile, Pohnpei afforded its settlers such natural bounty that, once settled there, the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants decided to stay put. Although wanderlust remained a significant cultural feature, and exquisite outrigger canoes continued to be crafted, Pohnpeians increasingly exhibited a marked preference for limiting their canoe travel to within the safety of their large lagoon system. For those who did voyage beyond the reef, however, such endeavors remained culturally marked as a source of danger, resources, and prestige. They were in marked contrast to the everyday, very high value placed on clan, lineage, and certain affinal relationships for whom Pohnpeians are ready to offer hospitality and even to sacrifice their own possessions and their very lives. One Pohnpeian proverb states, "Out on the open sea, each man considers his own life" (Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2001, 400). A small, special feast marked a person's departure from the island, providing them with additional strength to aid in their risky endeavor and also expressing a fear that they may never be seen again (Riesenberg 1968, 88). Those Pohnpeians who ventured beyond the island and successfully returned with knowledge and goods from the outside world were accorded especially high standing within the community—perhaps even a title within the chiefly system. Visitors from afar were also, and continue to be, treated with great respect and given the very best seats, foods, and goods at feasts.

In recent centuries, Pohnpeian travel beyond their own shores has undergone tremendous change. It has taken radically new forms, but ones in common with those of other migrants throughout the world. Their travel is today driven by needs and wants developed during the colonial period that are no longer readily served at home; they migrate to the seats of their former colonial powers or to nearby former colonial territories, and their connections are sustained by new forms of technology.

However, there are also many decidedly Pohnpeian cultural elements in this new migration. These include the Pohnpeian worldview that underlies it as well as the distinct pattern that is generated. Travel perpetuates some aspects of traditional Pohnpeian voyaging, including maintaining a sense of place and family, settlement patterns, means of survival and adaptation to new environments, and ways of perpetuating cultural identity (e.g., the discussion of "invisible luggage," Kuehling 2012 [this issue]).

In addition, Pohnpeian migration trends have also been strongly influenced by the presence of foreigners and colonial governments over more

than 150 years of contact and by the opportunities for as well as barriers to travel they have presented (Graham 2008). In their recent migration to Hawai'i, Pohnpeians have left home thinking of themselves as a part of the United States and expecting a welcoming reception. However, once arrived, they have found themselves unnoticed, virtually invisible, and largely unprepared for life in their new home.

Yet, those Pohnpeians who have settled in Hawai'i have creatively blended their old traditions with those of others they encounter. A Pohnpeian sense of identity is refashioned in Hawai'i; it is done so differently by two distinct waves of migrants, reflecting the different generations who have settled there, and centers around the enactment of different cultural practices and mediums of communication. However, Pohnpeian identity is also being reshaped by others with whom they interact Hawai'i, those who have a stake in defining who they are and what they should become.

New Horizons

Over the centuries since the original peopling of the island, Pohnpeians had become comfortably settled in their homeland. Contact with others was limited to neighboring islands within the region, largely for trade or warfare. This relative isolation ended in the early nineteenth century, when Pohnpei began to experience an intense period of contact with the outside world. This brought about enhanced opportunities for travel, including new means, destinations, and frequencies (for similar discussions for Chuuk, see Peter 2000 and Marshall 2004; for the Marshall Islands, see Graham 2008).

Pohnpei gained a reputation as a major port of call in Micronesia by 1833, just five years after its discovery by the Russian navigator Feodor Petrovich Lutke in 1828. Because it was the second-largest island in the region and had several good harbors, ample resources, and "friendly natives," a very lively trade quickly developed (Hezel 1983: 109–13). British and then American whaleships and merchant vessels quickly followed. The 1850s saw a peak of more than fifty American whaleships visiting and more than 150 beachcombers living on the island (Hezel 1983: 122–43; 1995: 55–57). A few adventurous Pohnpeians undoubtedly joined the crews of explorers, whalers, and traders as they sailed around other parts of Micronesia, the wider Pacific, and beyond.

Pohnpei's global significance and its inhabitants' horizons would further expand over the next one hundred years of colonization. When Pope Leo XIII recognized Spanish rights to the Carolines in 1885, Pohnpei housed a

base for their administration of the Central and Eastern Carolines, named La Colonia de Ascension. Following their defeat by the United States in the Spanish-American War, Spain relinquished its Pacific possessions in 1899, after a rather weak thirteen-year rule (Hezel 1983).

Secret negotiations with Germany resulted in their purchase of Spanish possessions in the Marianas and Carolines; the Germans then established headquarters in Pohnpei. The Germans promoted economic development, most often in the form of copra plantations. Their demands for labor from Pohnpeians, however, resulted in the infamous 1910 Sokehs Rebellion, which included the assassination of the German governor. Members of the Sokehs chiefdom who were involved were exiled to Palau, and inhabitants of Mortlock and the Pohnpeian outer islands of Mokil and Pingelap were resettled in Sokehs following a major typhoon that had destroyed their home islands (Hezel 1995: 101–2, 134–42).

At the outbreak of World War I, the Japanese sailed into Micronesia and took over Germany's possessions. The Japanese also wished to promote economic development and also established a branch of their colonial headquarters in Pohnpei (Peattie 1985, 70). Ruling with a firmer hand than the colonial powers before them, the Japanese largely controlled travel by severely curtailing traditional types of travel within the region and by keeping all others out. However, a few Pohnpeian youths were selected by the Japanese to travel for work elsewhere in the colony or (rarely) to attend advanced schools located in Palau or even in Japan (Peattie 1985: 94–95; Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2001, 28; Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci 2008: 14, 50).

Japanese-directed travel for Pohnpeians increased even further during World War II—in numbers of people, geographical extent, and the amount of force that lay behind it. Indeed, World War II resulted in the largest population movement of Pohnpeians in their history up to that time. For most Pohnpeians, their return home would have to await the conclusion of the war when they were eventually repatriated by American forces (Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2001: 266–67; Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci 2008: 204–7).

Following "liberation" (a term used mostly by the Americans) at the end of the war, the U.S. government assumed control throughout the former Japanese colonies in Micronesia. Once again patterns of migration were affected by the desires of a new colonial power. Pohnpeians were among the Micronesians recruited to work on various postwar projects within the region, particularly in Saipan and the Marshalls. The region itself, however, was largely closed to the outside world under the governance of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. However, an increase in

Pohnpeian and other Micronesian travel began with the general “education explosion” in the region in the 1960s, followed by the availability of airplane travel and scholarships for a new elite in training at U.S. colleges in the 1970s (Marshall 2004: 6–7).

The United States negotiated a Compact of Free Association (COFA) with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in 1986, which guaranteed free and easy entry to the United States. As a result, the migration of Pohnpeians dramatically increased. Technically, Micronesians from COFA nations—the FSM, including the states of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap; the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and the Republic of Palau—now hold the status of non-immigrants when they enter the United States. Until recently, they were simply required to fill out a form (I-94) at the destination airport. Today, with heightened U.S. security following 9/11, they must present a passport on entry. Once this simple process is completed, they become eligible for residence, employment, education, and health care in the United States, for an unlimited period of time.

Today’s Roots, Routes, and Flows of Pohnpeian Identity

Pohnpeians, like other Oceanic peoples in diaspora, are indeed “doing what their ancestors had done before them: enlarging their world as they go, but on a scale not possible before”; they are setting down new roots in “new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods, and their stories” (Hau‘ofa 1993, 10).

Post-compact Pohnpeian migrants have chosen to travel primarily to the U.S. continent and to Guam, the Northern Marianas, and especially Hawai‘i, with the numbers of people involved rising dramatically in recent years. They travel to America because of the promises made under the compact for access to employment, the availability of better health care, and education (Levin 2003)—all of which have become areas of increasing hardship back home (Graham 2008)—and, of course, for a bit of adventure.

As James Clifford suggested, “diaspora . . . bends roots and routes to construct forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identity outside the national time and space in order to live inside, with a difference” (1997, 251). Like most diasporic communities today, Pohnpeians have neither cut off ties to home nor been fully absorbed into the local community (Levitt 1999). In fact, the strategies Pohnpeians in Hawai‘i employ in maintaining their connections and their sense of identity in their diaspora are complex. They maintain some direct ties with the homeland (for his discussion on the centroperipheral mode of diaspora, see Dufoix

2003, 62), but they have also developed a new sense of community with others who have settled in Hawai'i. They also serve as an important transnational link for Pohnpeians who have either settled in or are traveling to other locations within the region or on the U.S. continent (for his discussion on the atopic mode of diaspora, see Dufoix 2003, 63).

Perhaps the most formal and most direct tie to the homeland can be seen among the first-generation Pohnpeians, who maintain their citizenship rights in the Federated States of Micronesia. They continue to be eligible to vote in elections back home, and polling booths are set up in Hawai'i for their convenience (see Dufoix 2003, 62). The proximity of Hawai'i to the Pohnpeian homeland is also significant, making it relatively easier and more affordable for migrants to travel back home, especially for funerals of close family members. This, along with romantic images of Hawai'i and expectations of great opportunities that lie there, has made Hawai'i the number one choice of most Pohnpeian migrants.

A sense of Pohnpeian community has been forming in Hawai'i that shares features of Stephane Dufoix's "enclave mode" (2003: 62–63). This is not based on clustered residence, because Pohnpeians typically prefer to remain dispersed, both back home or in Hawai'i. They explain that they like their privacy, and they prefer to remain somewhat distant from other Pohnpeians so that any of their bad behaviors (such as drinking alcohol or having unsanctioned romantic liaisons) are not easily observed and known to others. Rather, they develop a nonmaterial enclave as a "network of associations that gather like with like. The enclave operates locally and helps its participants get to know and stay in touch with one another. [It is] based not on a formal link of nationality but on a shared identity" (Dufoix 2003, 62).

A Pohnpeian sense of identity in Hawai'i is maintained by the perpetuation of a number of valued customs (*tiahk*), especially in cultural performances that are often a blend of old and new. Members of the older generation in particular take care to perpetuate valued customs such as using Pohnpeian language and women wearing Pohnpeian skirts (*uhrohs*), especially in Micronesian contexts. Pohnpeians also participate in civic ceremonies at which they perform old and new dances and songs. Families regularly gather together for kava ceremonies and feasts, held for special visitors and various life-cycle events, that include foods imported from back home. Traditional important occasions such as funerals (even for those still located back home or now on the U.S. continent) and birth celebrations are especially important times to get together, but now Pohnpeians also celebrate Christmas, birthdays, graduations, etc. In addition, informal exchanges, large and small, continue on a daily basis.

Several churches in Hawai'i have a fairly large Pohnpeian (as well as other Micronesian) membership, and some hold weekly services in indigenous Pohnpeian language. Church plays a strong role in fostering a sense of community for Pohnpeians in Hawai'i, but its role is weaker for them than it is for the more clustered settlements of Marshallese and Chuukese. As a result, the local Marshallese and Chuukese communities have become more centralized and organized in their efforts both to maintain their cultural identity and to help members of their culture adapt to their new home.

In addition, new Pohnpeian groupings and events have taken root in Hawai'i—occasional kava ceremonies held at Old Stadium Park, weekend campouts at Sand Island Beach Park, and a Pohnpeian women's mutual aid group that hosts an occasional fundraiser including a luau and a raffle. One local Hawai'i radio station has a nightly program in the Pohnpeian language.

Not only have Pohnpeians established a new home on the periphery in Hawai'i, they also serve as a crucial connecting link (or what Ilana Gershon has called a "node" in a network [2007, 47]) to those even more distantly located on the U.S. continent. Indeed, as Gershon has indicated for other diasporic Pacific Islanders, those translocal ties have become increasingly important. Pohnpeians in Hawai'i are also a critical part of a transnational community. They also belong to Dufoix's "atopic mode" of diaspora, "a way of being in the world between states that is based on a common origin, ethnicity, or religion that does not reduce one to be a subject of a host country" (2003, 63). This includes features of both multipolarity—a presence in several countries (in this case, Guam, the Northern Marianas, Hawai'i, and the continental United States)—and also interpolarity—the existence of links between the poles.

Building on Hau'ofa's many insights about Oceanic voyagers, Gershon noted that "it is families and their transnational connections that sustain diasporas, making them both durable and visible"; further, "Ethnographers of the Pacific have long known that the Pacific is not just a sea of islands, but also a sea of families" (2007, 474; see also Carucci 2012 [this issue]). Of course, these transnational ties are shaped by culturally specific family structures. For Pohnpeians, the importance of a person's place of origin and genealogical connections remain very important considerations in diaspora. "Family" within the diasporic Pohnpeian context primarily includes members of one's matrilineal extended family and other matrilineal clan members but also, significantly, one's in-laws.

This family exchange network is what maintains the relationships as a form of "social remittance" (Levitt 1999). Family networks offer hospitality

for travelers—for those in Hawai'i or on the continent who are going back home, or those traveling in the opposite direction—for visits, to attend funerals, for school or other forms of training, and for even more permanent settlement. Although Continental's Air Micronesia remains the single carrier throughout most of Micronesia (excepting Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands), making air travel expensive, there is a daily airplane service to Honolulu and a variety of air carriers in Hawai'i are aware of significant Micronesian travel to the U.S. continent.

Pohnpeian transnational family networks are also maintained by the exchange of gifts that include items Pohnpeians deem important and by their customary methods of exchange. From Pohnpei, traditionally valued goods—especially of food (fish, various traditional raw and cooked foods, kava) and uhrohs—are transported from the islands in oversized ice chests and other large containers. These items are especially dear, being rather difficult to find elsewhere and also signaling the continued ties of affection with folks back home (see Alexeyeff 2004; Besnier 1995). This is especially the case for kava. Transport of Pohnpeian kava to the U.S. continent began and is perhaps still most commonly enacted as a personal gift to family and friends. On occasion, however, this practice has been transformed into a transnational business, with kava sold at very high prices and with "kava parties" on the U.S. continent that charge $35 or more per participant.

Going in the opposite direction are modern American goods (especially items of technology) and money sent for important occasions. These are sent back with people returning to Pohnpei. Modern technology and the new ideas that they convey enter family homes in Pohnpei, producing some of the more worldly members of society. Such items are also used as new forms of presentations at feasts; they are thereby circulated to the wider Pohnpeian community.

Family networks maintain important social exchanges as well—by their continued expression of traditional ideas, beliefs, and values; by the transmission of newsworthy events, "the news of Pohnpei," that is happening back home and throughout the diaspora via letters, telephone, websites, and e-mail; and by their maintenance of a sense of respect and trust among its members (see Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009: 12–16). Connecting links to family are very important in maintaining Pohnpeian identity.

Hawai'i's Newest Malihini?

As we have seen, Pohnpeians refashion their cultural identity in Hawai'i through the continuation of old and modified cultural practices, and the creation of entirely new ones developed by them locally as members of a

robust transnational community. This is the case for all Pohnpeians who are busy adapting to life in Hawaiʻi. It is especially so for the youth, who often wish to emulate others and blend into their new homeland. Commenting on Pohnpeian youth, one mother explained, "The way of dress, they pick up on the way of American dress. Kids now pick up [that way of] dressing fast. Dress like one, feel like one." A Pohnpeian young person explained, "Here we can avoid participating in things [*tiahk*] and do our own thing. We can follow American customs. Be independent. We can choose what to participate in. Everything is optional [except the funeral of a relative]. This is good in some ways, for example, financially there is not so much pressure." But Pohnpeian identity is no longer solely in their own hands. There have been a number of significant changes to Pohnpeian identity that have been in the hands of others they encounter in diaspora. Pohnpeians are profoundly affected by how they are coming to be understood as members of the State of Hawaiʻi.

"Who Are They?"

Who are Pohnpeians, exactly, according to others within the State of Hawaiʻi? Much of the public's understanding is based on their earlier experiences with immigrants. Hawaiʻi has been a destination for many immigrant peoples—most notably Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Portuguese, Spanish, and American *haole* (white people), as well as other Pacific Islanders, especially Samoans and Tongans. But until recently, there was little awareness within Hawaiʻi of the existence of Micronesia; of Hawaiʻi's many ancient, historic, and even contemporary ties with that part of the Pacific; or of people from the region who had settled in their midst. However, after the signing of the Compacts of Free Association the numbers of migrants from the region rapidly increased, with Pohnpeians lumped into a general, very misunderstood, generic ethnic grouping, called "Micronesians."[2]

These Micronesians are locally understood to be just the latest in a series of *malihini* (the Hawaiian term for newcomers). In 2002, a (largely inaccurate) cover story of the *Honolulu Weekly* titled "Invisible Malihini" highlighted the growing presence of Micronesians in Hawaiʻi (Bickel 2002). Following the publication of the article, Micronesians living in Hawaiʻi became somewhat of a hot news item. Today, much local understanding about Micronesians comes from media coverage. Subsequent stories about local Micronesians have unfortunately been overwhelmingly negative. They have focused on volleyball game disputes, head lice among school children, migrants with Hansen's disease, a murder, and rape cases involving

Chuukese men. In 2010, a bill proposed to the Honolulu City Council suggesting a $500 fine or six months in jail for "smelly" riders on the public transit system left the ethnic designation of recent migrants and the homeless blank; nevertheless, many suspected that Micronesians were among those being targeted. In the past several years, a number of newspaper articles have specifically discussed Micronesian migrants' drain on the state's social welfare system and the problems they pose for its educational systems. These newest malihini have come to occupy the bottom of Hawai'i's socioeconomic ladder. They are often resented and referred to by some as the "Micronesian problem" (Heine 2008).

This negative reception was not expected by Pohnpeians and other Micronesians who migrated to Hawai'i. After all, the traditional welcome extended to visitors to Pohnpei is one of hospitality. And, after a long contact history with the outside world; after having Hawaiian converts accompany the first Protestant missionaries in the area in the mid-1800s; after serving as a major Pacific arena during World War II and then as a U.S. territory for more than forty years (originally administered from Hawai'i); after a variety of promises had been made in the postwar period (such as Reagan's 1985 speech to the Marshallese, "you'll always be family to us," discussed in Carucci 2012 [this issue]); and now after agreeing to Compacts of Free Association that contain favorable provisions for their emigration—it came as a shock to many that their existence is largely unknown and that they are unwelcome in the fiftieth state.

And, of course, many Pohnpeians were well aware of Hawai'i's reputation as the land of aloha (see also Carucci 2012 [this issue]). One young Pohnpeian woman, a recent graduate from Chaminade University in Honolulu who worked at McKinley School for Adults and was a member of the Micronesian Community Network, expressed her initial disenchantment with life in Hawai'i. She began by saying:

> My initial reason for coming [to Hawai'i] was to see the "paradise" that I heard talked about. But school was the reason I was permitted to come [by my family]. The "paradise" I heard about—everyone who came here and went back talked about its beauty, the beaches, the picnics, etc. I wanted to see it. But I found out it was not true within the first couple of days, due to an experience I had in Kane'ohe [in Windward O'ahu].
>
> One day I decided to take a bus, but I was on it too long and fell asleep and missed the stop; I wound up at Ala Moana [the shopping mall located on the opposite side of the island], lost! My cousin said to cross the street, but the bus driver said, "Stand

> here." I crossed the street, but there was no bus stop. People were there, and I waited thirty minutes. But no one helped; no one talked [to me]. At that moment, I questioned if this was "paradise."
>
> I asked, "So how do I get to town?" Other people turned away, did not talk to me. I thought, "This is no paradise!"

Still, many questions about Micronesians remain for the local population of Hawai'i. Even those who have learned a bit about the different new nations in the region continue to wonder, "Who exactly are the 'Micronesians'? Are all those from the islands in the Federated States of Micronesia 'Micronesians'? Are the Marshallese also 'Micronesians'? What about people from Palau, or even from Guam and Saipan?" "Why have they come to Hawai'i?" "Are they all from subsistence-based economies? Do most of them live on welfare in Hawai'i?" "Are there schools back in their home islands? How many are there?"

To date, very little local press coverage has focused on the reasons behind the special rights afforded to Micronesians in the compacts, or the contributions they have made to overall U.S. military preparedness, such as postwar nuclear testing and the continued presence of a U.S. military base in the Marshall Islands (see Carucci 2012 [this issue]); the granting to the United States rights of strategic denial throughout the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau; and the continued overrepresentation of young Micronesian men and women in the U.S. military (Heine 2008). Little has been mentioned about Micronesians' varied contributions to Hawai'i's economy. Direct economic contributions are estimated to be $50 million annually—in generated income, state income tax, expenditures, and compact impact assistance (Levin 2003, cited in Heine 2008). In addition, Micronesians have served as laborers on Hawai'i plantations, a job most other locals do not want; their presence stimulates additional trade between COFA nations and Hawai'i; and remittances are sent back home to help develop those island economies as well (Hezel and Samuel 2006). Even less is mentioned about Micronesian contributions to Hawai'i society—giving its people's exposure to other Pacific Islander cultural values (strong ones of personal interdependence, strong family support systems, reciprocity and respect, friendliness) and languages (at least eight Micronesian languages) (Heine 2008).

Even professionals who work with these peoples find it difficult to ascertain much information about Micronesians in Hawai'i. Recent requests from the State Attorney General's Micronesian Task Force for a new and more detailed census were unfruitful. Instead, we are left with the

following incomplete but educated guesses. The best source of information comes from the 2003 U.S. Census of Micronesians living in Hawai'i, conducted by Michael Levin, which counted 8,357; however, that census focused only on the island of O'ahu. Furthermore, figures were given only by country of origin—Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau. The highest rate of migration was from the Federated States of Micronesia, fully three of every four migrants; however, figures provided were not detailed by country of origin or ethnic background. In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau, this time using only sample data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted from 2005–7, roughly estimated the number of COFA peoples in Hawai'i at 12,215 (second to those from Guam, at an estimated 18,305). Recent Hawai'i State Department of Education figures show most COFA students are from the Marshall Islands and Chuuk, with far fewer numbers from Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, Palau, Guam, and the Northern Marianas. The largest concentrations of Micronesians are found in downtown Honolulu and Waipahu on the island of O'ahu. Word of mouth has it that the Marshallese are known to cluster together in large numbers, particularly in Waipahu, O'ahu; in Kihei, Maui; and also in Ka'ū on the southern tip of the Big Island (see Carucci 2012 [this issue]).

The 2003 census clearly shows that Micronesians living in Hawai'i come from the entire region and from a variety of cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds. However, with an increasing number from the rural and less-educated sectors of their societies and with their ease of entry into the United States under the Compacts of Free Association, most arrive largely unprepared for life in Hawai'i. Thus, Micronesians in Hawai'i face real difficulties finding good jobs and affordable housing, accessing good health care, and negotiating a rather different educational system—the very reasons that attracted them to Hawai'i in the first place. Compounding the problem is the fact that, since they are technically non-immigrants, they do not qualify for many federal programs (such as welfare, social security, or some medical assistance programs).

Indeed, poverty among "Micronesians" living in Hawai'i (as for all Pacific Islanders in the United States) remains greater in both incidence and severity than for all other Americans (Ahlberg 2000). Typically they occupy low-skill, minimum-wage jobs, especially in retail food and beverage sales and general office work. Unemployment is also unusually high, with nearly half living well below the poverty line (Levin 2003; Hammond and Filibert 2007, cited in Heine 2008, 20). Hawai'i's very high cost of living, especially for housing, is out of reach for most Micronesian migrants (Heine 2008; Carucci 2012 [this issue]). Micronesians in Hawai'i have a high percentage

of homelessness and residence in shelters and public housing. Most Micronesian children are placed in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classrooms, from which few exit; many teens drop out of high school, and fewer than 400 are enrolled in the public university system.

"Who Are We?"

Hawai'i's lack of good information combined with negative stereotypes about Micronesians have had significant, yet varied, impacts on Pohnpeian identity. In some contexts that involve dealing with others in the wider Hawai'i community, Pohnpeians sometimes identify themselves as Micronesian. In the doctor's visits I frequently attend with an older member of my Pohnpeian family, this is the answer he and his family routinely provide. Often, this response is simply given to ignite a spark of recognition from others with whom they interact; on rare occasions, someone will follow up by asking them about their particular ethnicity or language spoken, or from which island they or their family originated.

On other occasions, this wider Micronesian identity is more self-consciously used by Pohnpeians to forge ties with various other ethnic groups from the region—for church gatherings, festivals, conferences, or social or political action groups (such as the Micronesian Community Network, Nations of Micronesia, and Micronesians United); significantly, beneath these umbrella gatherings, ethnic differences are usually highlighted by the participants.

At the same time, other forces at work in Hawai'i have significantly altered Pohnpeian identity. Recent local prejudices against Micronesians have led some Pohnpeians to hide their identities, particularly in public settings. Frequently mentioned are instances of young girls' change in their dress—the uhrohs, such an important symbol of cultural identity. A young Pohnpeian woman explained, "The Pohnpeian skirt [uhrohs] is stereotyped as 'Micronesian,' which is [thought of as a] bad thing. So some don't want to wear it so people don't know they are Micronesian. But, the problem is not the clothing; it's what's in it. The younger ones at [school] . . . I helped them not to be ashamed." Another young woman stated, "Pohnpeian women don't want to wear uhrohs here, because they don't want to be identified as Chuukese.[3] Fewer and fewer wear them here. Also, fewer [Pohnpeian girls] wear long hair with combs."

In the past few years, there have been a number of attempts by others in Hawai'i to help Micronesians to better adapt to their new home. The summer 2007 Pacific Islanders in Education conference held in Honolulu highlighted local Micronesians in Hawai'i schools and, for almost the first

time, a number of positive articles appeared in local newspapers, television spots, and other media. This served to increase the efforts of the Hawai'i education system to serve this population. Recently, Hawai'i Attorney General's Micronesian Task Force reported its findings and recommendations and will continue to propose resolutions to the state legislature. Findings were presented to Hawai'i's delegation in Washington, DC, who have been seeking to have Micronesians included in federal programs overlooked in the compacts and to have more federal monies to reimburse the state, especially for Micronesian health care.

The goal of these efforts has been to help Micronesians adapt, to help them succeed by making them more "like us"—like other local folks in Hawai'i and those on the U.S. continent. However, as times have gotten tough during the recent recession, the emphasis has once again shifted to their "otherness," especially their different political status, which, although they are not immigrants, has provided them with access to some social and economic benefits. In July 2009, the State of Hawai'i proposed a new plan, Basic Health Hawai'i, designed to severely restrict medical coverage for "Pacific Islanders" (clearly only the COFA migrants). This plan, and public demonstrations against it, including concerned Micronesians demonstrating at the state capitol, were widely reported in the media. Reports were often contextualized by an unusual, very brief preface about the negative impact of earlier U.S. nuclear weapons testing in the region on COFA migrants' health, but these reports were again inaccurate, because testing was limited to only the Marshall Islands. After a temporary court injunction in fall 2009, the state reinstituted the plan in summer 2010, only to have another case filed against it by the Lawyers for Equal Justice on behalf of COFA migrants. The court denied the state's attempt to have the case dismissed and filed another injunction in November 2010, but the state is appealing. In addition to the serious threats of the new health care plan, the entire situation has served to further marginalize and stigmatize Micronesians living in Hawai'i.

These efforts are very new and their impacts on the identities of local Pohnpeians and others from the Micronesian region remain to be seen. Hence, new questions can now be asked. For example, in this new context, one in which Pohnpeians have now settled in the land of the colonizers, will they increasingly become "Micronesian" to be more visible and recognized, better understood, and a more powerful minority voice? As one young Pohnpeian woman told me, "When I first came, I didn't like to be called 'Micronesian.' I am Pohnpeian. Now I realize here, 'Micronesian' [is good]. . . . I can be all these things!" Still, she pointed out that she has "great pride in being Pohnpeian and in my Pohnpeian [language]. . . . I make sure those I am around know I am Pohnpeian."

A New Pohnpeian Identity?

In recent decades, Pohnpeian voyagers once again set forth toward the horizon, guided by their ancient navigational principles, motivations, and strategies. Once in Hawai'i, Pohnpeians have survived by perpetuating and adapting their valued customs and cultural identity. How will Pohnpeian identity be refashioned in the future as a result of meeting a host of unexpected challenges here in the land of aloha?

Will Pohnpeians become more "like other Americans"? Is this something Pohnpeians and other Micronesians want? Which Micronesians, how many, in what ways, how often, for how long, to what degree, are questions that remain unasked and unclear. Furthermore, among those striving for assimilation, what does becoming "like other Americans" mean? The path that it might take remains somewhat unclear and a rather diffuse target.

Only the future will tell whether the descendants of these newest Pohnpeian voyagers will maintain the connections with those back home and their way of life and be satisfied with "symbolic homelands" recreated in imagination and rituals performed as overseas residents (Heine 2008). Will Hawai'i become a new core area? Will the high cost of living and threats of lesser availability of health care allow Hawai'i to continue as a favored destination and connecting link? Or will it be bypassed as Pohnpeians and others from the Micronesian region seek out more welcoming destinations on the U.S. continent?

NOTES

1. I write this article as an anthropologist specializing in Micronesia, especially the culture of Pohnpei, and have several years of experience living and working on a variety of topics on the island itself, beginning in 1979. I am also a professor at University of Hawai'i–West O'ahu. My recent interest in Pohnpeian migration is the result of several unexpected strokes of luck. First, a few of my adopted Pohnpeian family, section, and chiefdom members and other friends moved to Honolulu in the late 1990s; they were quickly followed by others, including short-term visitors who stopped over on their way to and from the continent, and those who settled more permanently. Although Pohnpeians are spread throughout the Hawaiian archipelago, most are located on O'ahu; my campus is located in Pearl City, adjacent to the town of Waipahu, which now houses the second-largest concentration of Micronesian migrants in Hawai'i. My area of expertise combined with the location of my campus led, in turn, to my involvement in several projects: Project Waipuna, which involved the training of ESL teachers about Micronesian cultures as well as service-learning options for college students to work as ESL mentors in the public schools; my membership on the State Attorney General's Micronesian Task Force; and my own recent researches on Micronesians in Hawai'i.

2. Historian David Hanlon has chronicled the original misnaming of region by Dumont d'Urville that has resulted in the reification of Micronesia as a coherent cultural entity by anthropologists and colonists; see especially Hanlon 2009. In contrast, Hanlon has forcefully argued in favor of more localized representations of particular cultures within the region.

3. On occasion, negative media stories have identified the Micronesians involved specifically as "Chuukese." Also, Chuukese women in Hawai'i now manufacture and wear Pohnpeian-styled uhrohs.

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