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**McDermott & Andrade, eds./People and Cultures of Hawai'i**

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## **Introduction**

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### **Background**

America is rapidly changing its color. Population projections tell us that by 2050, the white majority will be replaced by a plurality of minority groups: Hispanic, black, Asian, and white. Strategic models are needed to plan for this new pattern in the makeup of our country. Hawai'i serves as a cross-cultural laboratory offering one such model, the evolution of a multiracial society into a multicultural one, a model we call the "Hawaiian Stewpot."

How did it happen? This book tells the story.

To begin, the history of Hawai'i is very different from the rest of the United States.

In colonial America, the first European settlers dealt with the native population they encountered with confrontation and domination, as if the indigenous peoples, not they, were the intruders. Moreover, young America imported a black slave class for its labor, denying citizenship and social mobility to both native and imported groups.

These divisions became even more fixed as science began to define human nature by race—not just by physical characteristics like skin color and eyes, but intellectual and moral qualities as well. Social and scientific theory supported the religious belief that the races had been created separately by God, once and for all.

That belief was challenged by the publication of Charles Darwin's revolutionary *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Variation had occurred by "chance," Darwin wrote. (The word "evolution" did not appear until

much later.) But how could chance have produced the natural order, people wondered? So Darwin was dismissed, and the need to further classify the human race into subcategories continued. Studies of race as the most important factor marking the boundaries between people dominated scientific investigation. The fact that there was a hierarchy of civilizations was a given—racial types representing different stages of human development, with the white race at the top. This was the rationale used to justify slavery in America and colonialism throughout the world.

Meanwhile, other white Europeans had been allowed to immigrate to nineteenth-century America to settle its rapidly expanding borders. Soon it was feared that the uncontrolled influx of people from “inferior” cultures would lower the standard of American civilization. So strict immigration quotas were passed by Congress to control the numbers—quotas supported by conservatives and progressives alike.

To further protect its standard of civilization, a single model for becoming American evolved. It was called *assimilation*—an application of the “melting pot” theory. Assimilation involved renunciation of one’s nationality and culture of origin, so that each successive immigrant group would become absorbed into the larger dominant group. This idea of substituting one culture for another is illustrated by a ceremony the automotive giant Henry Ford held for his immigrant employees. When they had finished their basic English language course, there was a graduation ceremony. Dressed in native costume, they were paraded off a mock gangplank onto a stage into a tunnel called the “Melting Pot.” Soon they emerged at the other end as newly minted Americans, dressed in identical suits and waving little American flags.

Absurd as it seems today, the ceremony was symbolic of the desired process of simply exchanging one culture for another. It naively assumed that a change in language and dress would lead to a change in internal values and beliefs.

The assimilation philosophy of acculturation has persisted until today as the preferred model by which new minorities are incorporated into the majority culture. But it is rapidly changing to meet the realities of twenty-first-century America.

In Hawai‘i, America’s fiftieth state, however, this emerging plurality of minority groups is nothing new. Each arrived with its own ethnocultural identity, evolving and combining over time to form one multicultural society. Accommodation had replaced assimilation.

How did it happen?

The history of Hawai‘i, especially its racial history, is very different from the rest of America. In early-nineteenth-century Hawai‘i, the arriving white minority was received by the indigenous native population with their own cultural concepts of inclusiveness called *aloha* (love, affection, kindness, compassion), *lōkahi* (harmony, agreement, unity), and *‘ohana* (extended family or clan). The newcomers were called *haole* (white person, American, Englishman, Caucasian; formerly it meant any foreigner, but since the first foreigners were white, it came to mean white).

The Hawaiian Islands occupy a crossroads in the Pacific, so soon after they were charted on the map, several nations, including America, Great Britain, France, and Russia, began to compete for favor. As time went on, American traders, merchants, missionaries, and whalers began to settle in Honolulu. There was room for all. The Hawaiian Kingdom was a tolerant society in which the laws held for native and *haole* alike. By mid-nineteenth century it had evolved into a constitutional monarchy—with a constitution that prohibited slavery: “Slavery shall under no circumstances whatever be tolerated in the Hawaiian Islands; whenever a slave shall enter Hawaiian territory, he shall be free.”

Tragically, the indigenous Hawaiian population became devastated by foreign introduced diseases—from syphilis to smallpox. Deadly diseases and a series of sociopolitical events described in the chapters that follow swung the pendulum from Hawaiian to Euro-American as the dominant political group. Sometime later, Euro-Americans would overthrow the Hawaiian monarchy, and eventually Hawai‘i would be annexed by the United States.

Nevertheless, there were several factors that kept Hawai‘i from following in the racial path taken by the United States. The most obvious one was its history as an independent nation.

Another factor was its geography. Hawai‘i is an island chain, farther from a major landmass than any other inhabited place in the world. Its strategic location in the mid-Pacific, halfway between North America and Asia, had been a factor in the downfall of the monarchy and annexation to the United States. But that same geography had advantages as well as disadvantages. An island environment limits the physical distance between groups and forces them to interact and adapt to one another. Biologists know that plants and animals living on isolated islands just behave differently. Biological survival encourages hybridization and mutation. Social survival encourages a similar process.

Kinship (who your ancestors were and what were the familial relationships—by blood or abiding friendship—that identified your origins), not race, was the organizing core around which Hawaiian society evolved. The Hawaiian Kingdom had set the tone as a tolerant and open society, consciously multiracial. There had been no quotas, no mandated separation of the races. Instead of racial polarization and antimiscegenation laws, there was intermingling from the beginning of contact. Without the hindrance of racial barriers, intermarriage, usually the last barrier to go, occurred early. The term “hapa haole” or “hapa” was coined to describe the offspring of this racial mixing. There was no stigma to the hapa racial heritage (which came to mean any mixture). It never had the negative connotation that half-breed or half-caste had in America. Nor were slang terms such as “banana” or “coconut” used to ridicule the marginal status of mixed race, as in the continental United States.

In such a favorable environment, the hapa population would steadily increase.

As early as 1853 there were almost a thousand individuals, or 1.3 percent of the total population, listed in the census as “Part Hawaiian,” or hapa. By the end of the century, that number had grown to nearly ten thousand, or 6.4 percent (Lind 1955). It has steadily increased ever since, so that according to the Hawai‘i State Department of Health, 60 percent of births are now recorded as “mixed race.”

Hawaiian intermarriage had formed not just a new mixed racial class without stigma but a whole new social class as well. When the *ali‘i*, or chief class, intermarried with the white traders and merchants, they created a new social class at the top, one reaching into the monarchy. Hawai‘i’s great Queen Emma, who personally started its private hospital system, was of mixed heritage. Robert Wilcox, the monarchist and Hawai‘i’s first elected delegate to the U.S. Congress, was hapa. Bernice Pauahi, heiress to the Kamehameha lands, married a white man—as did Hawai‘i’s last monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani herself, who would be overthrown by an oligarchy of white men. The colonial era would begin.

The overthrow of the monarchy represented a dramatic shift in the balance of political power. The Hawaiians had lost. The ordinary Hawaiian would be marginalized socioeconomically for generations. But racism was never institutionalized into apartheid. Kinship and its associated social class had trumped race. Some of Honolulu’s most exclusive private clubs and cultural institutions had mixed membership from the beginning.

And the plantation era moved Hawai‘i along the next step toward a multiracial society. While nineteenth-century America was experimenting with the quota system as a form of social racism, exactly the opposite was happening in Hawai‘i. A series of new immigrant groups—mostly from Asia, some from Europe—were added to this already mixing society. A program of contract labor, originally initiated by the monarchy, was carried out by the planter society. First Chinese, then Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, and Filipino came in successive waves to work as field hands in the burgeoning sugarcane industry. They were given housing and a small paycheck. Life under contract was hard, often cruel. Nevertheless, when the contract was up, they could elect to stay. And most did stay, one immigrant group after another settling in town or on their own land to raise families. Japanese and Korean men had their picture brides from home; but the Chinese, and later the other groups, too, began to intermarry into the existing population.

The unintended but serendipitous consequence of this era of contract labor was further racial mixing and a rapidly changing society. The other consequence of intermarriage was the extension of kinship and ancestral ties, melding the ethnic groups. The number of interracial marriages, more than 10 percent in the 1912 census, rose steadily over the years (Lind 1955). In the most recent census, a fifth of Hawai‘i’s population claimed two or more races and a third of them three or more, a rate nine times that of the rest of the United States.

Assimilation of immigrants into Henry Ford’s “Melting Pot” may have been the American dream, but there were just too many groups coexisting side by side to make it work in Hawai‘i. Over time, there was no majority group. Everyone was part of a minority. And extensive networks of familial relationships—through intermarriage, hapa offspring, and abiding multiethnic friendships—became the social norm for Island society. The Hawai‘i model was not a melting pot. It was more like a “Stew Pot,” with various ingredients mixing together to create a common stock.

The Stew Pot model was an interactive one: accommodation over assimilation. Accommodation is a process described by anthropologists that occurs “when groups of different backgrounds engage each other, *leading to cultural and psychological changes in both parties, and the establishment of new relationships*” (Berry 2008; italics ours). These cultural and psychological changes and the establishment of new relationships comprise the story told in this book.

Meanwhile, across the Pacific in continental America, the long-

standing rigid thinking about race was about to soften. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a German scientist named Franz Boas (1968), working with Alaskan Inuit and Northwest Pacific Indians, proposed that the concept of *civilization* was not an absolute but a relative one. Instead of a hierarchy of civilizations, he argued for a spectrum, with similarities and differences among them. They were just different from each other, historically and culturally. In this way, Boas introduced the concept of diversity and cultural pluralism. This revolutionary thinking about racial groups intersected with Darwin's emerging concept of evolution, the adaptive plasticity of the individual. The notion of cultural evolution and diversity could now begin to catch on.

Eventually America would turn the page. Laws would be changed and institutionalized racism would become a thing of the past. Furthermore, science would recant on race. Increasingly, research on DNA has confirmed that the longstanding use of race as a biological and genetic marker was based on a false assumption. Its principal use today is in medical research and tracking the country's voting patterns.

But in Hawai'i, the use of race to define groups was already being replaced by the concept of *ethnicity*—a broader dimension of human nature that goes beyond ancestry, blood quantum, and physical differences. Ethnicity includes both the concept of kinship, or external relationships, and a concept of the inner self called *identity*—uniting the past with the present and the future. This shift was made possible because, in contrast to the melting pot dream of homogeneity, the Hawaiian Stew Pot accepted differences between the ethnic groups. It celebrated and strived to maintain the origins and enduring cultural traits of one's ancestors. Thus, in the stew, each ingredient contributes to the common stock, at the same time retaining its own essence—its own taste and flavor.

And with generational change, the Hawaiian spectrum would shift even further—from race to ethnicity to culture—as the principal identifying marker to distinguish and to connect one group with another in this emerging multicultural society.

Why did this occur?

In an ethnically pure culture such as traditional Japan, cultural transmission was a vertical process, moving down one generation to the next, with the goal of preserving a single ethnocultural tradition. But in a mixed society such as Hawai'i, this vertical transmission within the group was balanced with an ongoing horizontal interaction between groups, an overlapping of these ethnocultural identities through ongo-

ing contact and ever-extending kinships. When you interact daily with people from another ethnic group, you inevitably learn their likes and dislikes, what makes them happy or sad—or angry. President Barack Obama put it another way when talking about his alma mater, Punahou School: “And if you’re in a school that has Chinese kids, Filipino kids and Japanese kids and White kids, Samoan kids, by necessity, I think you’re forced to learn to empathize with people who aren’t like you” (Calmes 2009).

In addition to social interaction connecting the different groups with one another, another process—one of integration—occurs with intermarriage. And with increasing rates of intermarriage diluting the original biological blood ties in favor of kinship ties, skin color becomes less and less the most distinctive characteristic among its people. Indeed, as the emotional attachment to biologically determined skin color lessens, a new blended or hapa identity emerges, a correspondingly new culture becomes the most significant dimension among people.

Culture has more porous boundaries than race or ethnicity, boundaries that are easier to cross. Language is an example of this process. Pidgin developed as a common English dialect that crossed the language boundaries among the different races working the plantations. It allowed for essential communication. Today, when it is no longer essential, it has persisted as a shared cultural phenomenon among different ethnic groups. Food and local customs, originally ethnic, are now part of a common culture. Sashimi, *malasadas*, kimchi, *kalua* pig—the list of island dishes with different ethnic origins is today’s multicultural menu. Hawai‘i state holidays, Kamehameha Day and Kuhio Day, celebrate Hawaiian royalty but are observed by everyone. The original annual Japanese Boys’ Day reflects a racial/ethnic tradition that could be shared, and it became Boys’ and Girls’ Day. First a racial/ethnic group observance, it is now celebrated as a wider community ritual—Children’s Day.

This evolution from race to culture was made possible by the early tradition of multiracial tolerance and shared culture in the Hawaiian Kingdom: two cultures, Hawaiian and haole, living side by side, with kinship forming a bridge between them. They are not simply coexisting but interacting and producing what are called “psychological and cultural changes in each other” from the beginning of contact. Subsequently, the relatively rapid addition of a series of Asian as well as some European immigrants accelerated the shift from race to culture even further.

Finally, we must consider the role of socioeconomic class as a factor in this complex, changing cultural picture. Older stereotypes of the social structure of Hawaiian society die hard, such as Hawai'i as a haole-run corporate empire, Chinese dominating the professions and finance, and Japanese dominating the public educational system. Some have even proposed replacing this older stereotype with a newer one—a two-class socioeconomic scale. It would place three groups on top—Chinese, haoles, and Japanese—and the rest—Filipino, Hawaiian, Samoan, and other Pacific Islanders—at the bottom (Okamura 2008). But that, too, is an oversimplification, suggesting an unchanging society, and it is challenged by the detailed descriptions of the individual groups in the chapters of this book.

How is it challenged? Immigrant groups usually come from lower socioeconomic levels in their home country—that is, peasant farmers and working-class people. As soon as they realize that social mobility is possible in America, though, they search for the “success ladder.” If, as most agree, that social class is determined by some combination of occupation, education, and income, they soon realize that the entry point to better occupation and income is education. Immigrant parents usually say they are working for a better life for their children and grandchildren. And that is true. Higher education becomes the goal for the second and third generations. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean immigrant groups are typical examples, rising by successive generations after coming to Hawai'i. And rapidly changing gender roles in these traditional cultures have only accelerated the process.

The Stew Pot model of Hawai'i's culture has been most visible in its politics. Ever since statehood, it has chosen from the stew's different ethnic groups to lead it. Consider the parade of the most recent governors of Hawai'i: first a local haole who grew up in Hawai'i, then a Japanese-American, next a Hawaiian, followed by a Filipino-American—and most recently, a middle-class Jewish haole who grew up on the mainland United States, moved to Maui, and became mayor of that county before her election as governor. Honolulu's most recent mayor is of Samoan/German ancestry.

### **The Chapters Themselves**

In the earlier edition of *Peoples and Cultures of Hawai'i*, each chapter told the history of the immigration of a major ethnic group and developed a *psychocultural profile*, or a snapshot, of the “personality”

of that group. But the picture has changed significantly. The original immigrant groups have matured and new ones have been added to the mix. This new edition of *People and Cultures of Hawai'i: The Evolution of Culture and Ethnicity* tracks the course of those changes. We attempt to construct a historical understanding of each group over time, as it evolved from race to ethnicity to culture as a product of this evolution.

The chapters in this book follow a common outline. They begin with an overview of the group—a summary from its arrival to the present. Gradually, the group develops its own unique ethnocultural identity, and this becomes the central organizing theme, the centerpiece of the chapter. Distinctive character traits such as temperament and emotional expression are explored—as well as ethnic stereotypes that may have been derived from them. Whether we like it or not, stereotypes are a reality and often reflect enduring traits that make this group stand out from the mainstream. Next, how the group's unique ethnocultural identity has become modified with time and generational change is discussed—which traits may have changed over the generations and which are more hardwired or enduring.

An important feature of each chapter is its focus on the group's family social structure, its generational and gender roles, its power distribution, and its central values and life goals. The ways it has been influenced over time by role changes, including intermarriage patterns, will be considered. You may even find the typical life cycle from childhood through old age described.

You will also find a description of the group's own internal social class structure, its social and political strategies, its occupational and educational patterns, and how education, especially higher education, may have influenced it—with the development of a professional and middle class.

Finally, each chapter will consider how that particular ethnic group has blended into Hawai'i's culturally sensitive society; that is, how it has overlapped with other groups, how values have been modified, and how new behavioral patterns have emerged over time. In some chapters you will find a unique dimension, a consideration of how the Native Hawaiian host culture has influenced the identity of the group to become more Hawaiian. It may show how the indigenous culture has served as a universal joint around which others have become integrated. Finally, at the end of each chapter you will find a list of suggested further reading, should you wish to explore an ethnic group further in more detail.

## Some Suggestions for Reading This Book

How might you the reader best approach what the editors consider the central concept in the chapters of this book—the concept of ethnocultural identity making up the Hawaiian Stew Pot?

In reading each chapter, you will come to appreciate how the important values, beliefs, and behaviors that make up the group's core identity operate at different levels of awareness or consciousness. That means they may also operate at different levels of power and influence. So let's shift from the Stew Pot metaphor temporarily to more closely examine its individual ethnic groups. For a moment, try to imagine each group's ethnocultural identity as a metaphorical iceberg. Just like a real iceberg, less than 10 percent is visible above the waterline, the larger 90 percent mass lying beneath the surface, harder and harder to see as the depth increases.

What do we mean by different levels of ethnocultural visibility? Let's take an individual example. Religion is a very personal matter for most people, but its public expression can usually be seen easily above the surface as church affiliation (and even to some extent, its theological orientation). But the personal practices of one's religion, such as churchgoing and prayer habits, are not so visible. They are at or just below the surface. One's individual faith and spirituality are to be found at a much deeper level. They are not easily accessible to those outside the group and are less likely to change.

So you will easily see on the surface of a group's ethnocultural identity such things as folk practices, dance, festivals, and celebrations. But the ancient myths and legends from which they arise are at increasing depths below, harder and harder to see. Indeed, as the earlier example of Henry Ford's graduation ceremony for his immigrant workers illustrates, language and dress may be relatively easy to change, but deeper traditions affecting them as workers—attitudes toward authority, toward cooperation and competition—are much less easily changed.

Consider another human phenomenon: interpersonal relationships. Common patterns of social interaction, such as manners—courtesy in meeting and greeting others—may be apparent on the surface of the group's behavior, while much deeper and much more fixed are facial expression and eye contact or attitudes toward touching or being touched.

So here is the challenge. If you try to place core beliefs and values at different locations on an imaginary iceberg as you read about them,

you will develop your own applied model for analyzing ethnocultural identity. Those values and behaviors above the waterline are more easily shared or changed, while those deeper down are more culturally fixed and enduring—what some refer to as hardwired.

Another task to keep in mind is just how those values, beliefs, and behaviors have influenced this group's move along the spectrum from race to ethnicity to culture to form the multiple ethnocultural identities in this Stew Pot society called Hawai'i. The process is not uniform. Some groups, like the Okinawans, have been more protective of early cultural traditions in order to differentiate themselves from others (in their case, the Japanese). They and the Samoans even have a special word in their language to describe their highly valued traditional culture. On the other hand, Hawai'i's own indigenous people, the *kānaka maoli* (whom we refer to as Hawaiians in this book), have temporarily *reversed* the process of moving from race to culture. The federal laws, as with other indigenous peoples in the United States, define Hawaiians' native land rights based on designated blood quantum or racial designation, which artificially places an intragroup wedge between who is a true Hawaiian. At the same time, contemporary Hawaiians, the majority of whom are hapa, are reclaiming their Hawaiian identity through their kinship ties and other cultural ways. They are reaching back into the deep past to retrieve ancient values in order to reinvigorate their contemporary ethnocultural identity. Emphasis on the *Hokule'a*—the Polynesian voyaging canoe used to recreate the original ocean exploration from ancient Polynesia to Hawai'i—is symbolic of that process. It represents personal and group characteristics from complex navigational skills to the sense of adventure and risk taking.

We hope you, the reader, will critically examine each chapter to trace the process by which that ethnic group may have moved along this continuum. We propose the spectrum from race to culture as a dynamic, moving process. How a specific group has moved from race—or biological ancestry—to ethnicity and a new sense of identity and then to a more permeable, socially determined boundary represented by culture is important to understand in this multicultural Stew Pot called Hawai'i. We believe what keeps the stew from overcooking and becoming a melting pot of homogenous soup is the Hawaiian concept of kinship that honors and sustains the enduring cultural traits of one's ancestral origins. With its overlapping and permeable ethnocultural boundaries, the Hawai'i model of today offers a direction for the rest of the United States.

Finally, however, we recognize the limitations of the approach we have taken in this book. There are other theoretical and strategic models beyond the one we have presented. The Stew Pot model may be unique, but it is not exhaustive. We believe that identity is a concept that is influenced by where one lives as well as one's ancestry. Others may disagree with this choice on our part.

We as the editors and authors in this book are a group of behavioral scientists approaching race, ethnicity, and culture from our own professional (and personal) perspective. There are other perspectives from other fields, such as education, sociology, archeology, humanities, and ethnic studies, to mention only a few.

There are also limitations to our attempt to recruit chapter authors from the ethnic groups they represent. The key is a balance of opinion with fact, of one's own internal or subjective perspective with an external or objective one, to combine breadth with depth. And while our chapter authors have strived to follow a common template or outline, you will find differences in methodology. Some authors have used individual informants in their research, others have gathered focus groups together, and others have chosen mainly to emphasize existing literature. In addition, there were limitations to the consistency of statistical data sets available across ethnic groups. Certain important data, such as on intermarriage, are not uniform across the groups over the same periods of time.

Nevertheless, we hope you, the reader, will find this book not simply the story of Hawai'i, but one that offers a way to read our own future as a country, that the emerging plurality of minority groups in the United States must do more than simply coexist to form a nation.

There is a corollary to diversity—called *connectedness*. That is our message.

### **Further Reading**

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