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**SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL  
WITHDRAWAL FROM A RURAL COMMUNITY**

By

Robert N. Anderson and Rebecca Y. Pestano

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL  
WITHDRAWAL FROM A RURAL COMMUNITY

Preliminary investigation of a Filipino population in Hawaii undergoing severe economic stress shows that conditioned responses which have historically proven rational in an essentially alien environment may now be disfunctional in a new environment devoid of a pervading paternalistic institution. The gradual, attenuating nature of the phaseout of the plantation is perceived to weaken family solidarity and strength. Family resources are shown to be a major factor in achieving success in the past.

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL  
WITHDRAWAL FROM A RURAL COMMUNITY

Two pineapple plantations in Hawaii have announced intentions to terminate their operations in September, 1975 and September, 1977. The impact of this phaseout bears heavily upon two plantation communities completely dependent on these companies for employment as well as social and economic security. Not only will employment cease to be offered, but the towns themselves will cease to exist for they are owned by the plantations. Plantation workers live with the realization that the plantation and its associated social system which have effectively controlled their lives for decades will no longer exist. Almost all of the population of these two plantation communities is of Filipino background.

Historical Background

Filipinos are the last major ethnic group which has immigrated to Hawaii, following earlier waves of Chinese and Japanese plantation laborers. The Filipino plantation laborers basically have come to Molokai in two groups. The first group was recruited during times of extreme economic hardship in the Philippines during the 1920's and 30's. The second group came immediately following World War II. A few more recent arrivals came as the result of

petitioning by earlier arrivals. The few who have been born in Hawaii effectively associate with a much wider range of ethnic and economic classes of people, though major ties are retained with immigrants.

The earlier immigrants are now retired or on the brink of retirement age. Most of the unmarried adult male population in the community belongs to this earlier group of immigrants. They are relatively unschooled and lack facility in the English language. They essentially live in a marginal relationship with the rest of the community, while finding most of their social identity within the plantation community. They have spent most of their adult lives within the community and now live with low incomes and relatively few options to locate elsewhere. Much of their time is spent in the rearing and training of fighting chickens and associated gambling. Although they are not overly concerned with the phaseout of the plantation work, they are most fearful of disruption of the existence of the community, for they have few other residence options.

The older immigrants are not highly assimilated in the American culture. Mass media exposure is very limited, largely due to their unfamiliarity with English. As an indication of this lack of assimilation, most were observed to be ignorant of and not interested in the recent turmoil surrounding the resignation of President Nixon. They experienced considerable employment hardships prior to the achievement of considerable union strength following World War II. Personal accounts of their first years in Hawaii reflect the worst stereotyped horrors of plantation labor exploitation. Despite distaste for the methods employed by the plantation companies, these individuals have remained in the community, apparently because other options were even less attractive.

Individuals immigrating into Hawaii following World War II found paternalism emanating not so much from the companies, but from the labor union. In part because this paternalism was considerably more benevolent, these immigrants are frequently more outspoken and more socially and economically mobile. This group has not yet achieved retirement, nor are they young enough to readily move into new occupations. The plantation phaseout is thus a potential major catastrophe in their lives.

Perhaps due to more effective exposure to the mainstream of American society, the most recent male immigrants less frequently pursue traditional social activities in contrast with more deviant behavior, such as heavy drinking, excessive gambling, alleged growing of marijuana, and blatant poaching. The women in this most recent group are relatively capable in urban situations, and are frequently active in community affairs. Nevertheless, even their plans are often vague or nonexistent for the time following the closing of plantation operations.

#### Poverty Determinants

The literature of the social sciences is replete with detailed discussions of the determinants of poverty in the advanced, capitalist countries. The basic thinking associated with the Protestant Work Ethic has been both refuted and sustained by empirical research. Little evidence has been found to demonstrate that the poor are inherently lazier or less motivated to achieve than are other segments of society. On the other hand, social scientists have supported the widely cherished belief that the route out of poverty is self-improvement, particularly through formal education. Other commonly analyzed determinants of poverty include industrial structure, race, sex, and family composition.

Statistical analysis of selected variables derived from case histories of 36 male heads of households who have been employed on the two pineapple plantations provides an opportunity to determine the relative importance of some of the determinants of poverty. All subjects were of Filipino ethnicity, and at least nominally Catholic. The data are thus, in effect, controlled for industrial structure, ethnicity (race), sex, and religion. All subjects face the loss of their jobs and/or homes within the next three years due to the announced intentions to terminate plantation operations.

Income and wealth (assets) were selected as indicators of economic success. Age, education, kin resources, and marriage status were selected as the more important personal determinants of economic success. All six variables were dichotomized in at least a reasonable ordinal fashion. Wealth (assets) was divided at the \$3,000 figure, with 17 respondents being below the figure. Income was divided at the \$6,000 per year point, with exactly half the respondents receiving less than that amount per year. The education and age distributions were divided at 8th grade and 60 years, respectively. Family structure and social networks are presumed to be important factors in determining economic success and mobility. Information concerning marital status and the existence of accessible kin is used as proxies for these factors. Marriage status was treated as an ordinal phenomenon with "conventional" marriages in the upper portion of the dichotomy. Respondents presumed to have weaker family resources, and thus placed in the lower designation, included those who were unmarried, separated or divorced, and included cases in which the age difference between husband and wife exceeded 20 years. "Kin resources" was similarly ordered by placing in the lower portion of the dichotomy respondents who had no relatives in



Hawaii when they emigrated from the Philippines. Those who had relatives in Hawaii at the time of immigration and those who were born in Hawaii were placed in the upper ordering of the dichotomy.

The results of the bivariate analysis are shown in Table 1. Income and wealth (item 5) prove to have the anticipated significant association, and reasonably high measures of association as indicated both by Phi and Somer's D. This would indicate that the two variables are somewhat interchangeable and mutually supportive as indicators of economic success.

Age has been widely recognized as an obvious factor in determining economic success. However, it is difficult to analyze the effects of age beyond generalizing the obvious fact that income is lowest at both extremes of the distribution. The analysis shown in Table 1 demonstrates no significant relationship between age and wealth, but a significant inverse relationship was shown with the income variable. Since age was also inversely associated with the determinants examined (items 10, 13, and 15), it is likely there is a spurious relationship between age and income. The lack of association between age and wealth further suggests spuriousness in the relationship between age and income.

If, however, it is believed that age is a legitimate determinant, and that the association with income is not necessarily spurious, analysis remains conceptually difficult. Income, as a flow of wealth, is useful as an indicator of economic success only for a population who has not voluntarily withdrawn from the labor force. Income levels are thus misleading as an indication of economic success for a population containing both retirees and those who are still employed. If wealth (assets) is used as an alternative indicator of economic success, age is still somewhat meaningless as a determinant, for younger workers have simply not had sufficient time to accumulate

Table 1. Cross-Tabulations of Selected Poverty Variables

Variables	Significance of Corrected Chi Square	Phi	Somer's D
1. Age and Wealth	0.4087	0.13771	-0.18576
2. Marital Status and Wealth	0.0401	0.34215	0.39628
3. Kin Resources and Wealth	0.4467	0.12682	0.17957
4. Education and Wealth	0.8697	0.02734	0.03406
5. Income and Wealth	0.0076	0.44513	0.50155
6. Age and Income	0.0015	0.53033	-0.55556
7. Marital Status and Income	0.0025	0.50312	0.55556
8. Kin Resources and Income	0.0021	0.51282	0.55556
9. Education and Income	0.0921	0.28074	0.27778
10. Age and Education	0.0047	0.47148	-0.65025
11. Marital Status and Education	0.0429	0.33742	0.51232
12. Kin Resources and Education	0.0164	0.39992	0.58128
13. Age and Kin Resources	0.0000	0.70509	-0.74026
14. Marital Status and Kin Resources	0.0003	0.60521	0.67532
15. Age and Marital Status	0.0030	0.49411	-0.52500

assets. Insufficient observations in this study prevented further analysis of age that would overcome these conceptual difficulties.

The statistical significance and strength of the associations between education and the indicators of economic success (items 4 and 9) further discredits the conventional wisdom which holds education to be the key to eliminating poverty. The apparent lack of importance of education is particularly striking in light of its high degree of association with the other selected determinants of poverty (items 10, 11, and 12).

Although it has not been fashionable in academic circles to consider marital status as a conceptually important variable associated with economic success, the statistical significance of this relationship (items 2 and 7) suggests that family structure is important, although perhaps in a highly complex fashion. The likelihood of two-way causation in the relationship is recognized as lessening the apparent importance of the statistical association. Similar statements may be made about the role of kin resources. The lack of association of kin resources and wealth may be explained by the common practice by the older subjects of distributing their assets among younger relatives in the form of housing downpayments, immigration bonds and other forms. Recompensation is usually anticipated, but in various ways.

People in poverty are faced with a number of factors that seemingly determine their status. A group of determinants such as sex, ethnicity or race, and age cannot be affected by individuals in any way that would lessen their poverty status. They have some degree of control over the nature of the industrial structure in which they are employed or are seeking employment, although the range of choice may be highly constrained. Some control is possible over social networks by choosing propitious locations

of residence and also over family resources. The options open may vary considerably from person to person. However, a higher degree of control is possible over marital status and education, although some limits to choice remain.

The subjects studied as reported herein were homogeneous with regard to sex and ethnicity, and findings, concerning age were ambiguous at best. Industrial structure also did not vary. The results thus suggest that, given the industrial structure and its attendant employment practices, education was not a useful route to economic success, although it may well be useful strategy in achieving entry into an alternative industrial structure. Of the variables examined, family structure emerges as the most important concomitant of economic success which can be influenced by those in poverty, unless they somehow obtain employment in a more advantageous structure. The role of family structure in adapting to differing economic circumstances is discussed in the next section.

#### Family Structure Under Stress

Historically, a number of families in the community have achieved upward mobility. They evidence wider awareness of the social and political environment, and are now more assimilated into the mainstream of U.S. society than are their more tradition-oriented counterparts. Their personal testimony is important in determining the roots of such achievements:

When I first came to Hawaii in 1946, I already had a wife and family, so I was forced to save every penny I earned. I then sent for them, and thinking that my children would soon be going to college in Honolulu, I might as well invest in a house and lot there. Instead of paying dormitory or boarding house fees, I'd pay for the loan on the house instead. I really anticipated moving to Honolulu, so when the announcement of the phaseout came, it was a smooth transition for me.

I was thinking of my children's future. I don't have a high education at all, so I wanted my children to get what I did not have. Even if I got disabled in the job, we were renting out \_\_\_ houses in Honolulu, so that helped the school expenses of the children.

I always tell my children to make use of every opportunity that comes to them. Like my oldest boy, he was supposed to go to prestige college after his stint in the army, but he decided he did not like military life. My heart was heavy when he made that decision, but at least he decided to finish college instead. My daughter is on the mainland now and is doing a good job with the government program. I tell her to work hard so she can travel and see the world.

The few families who have left the plantation in response to the announced phaseout indicated in interviews conducted as part of this study that kinship networks were indeed vital to such moves. The apparent social and economic support received from kin considerably eased their move and the subsequent adjustment process. Although financial problems are still perceived in these situations, morale is apparently high.

If it is accepted that a key factor in the economic and social welfare of individuals is their family structure as it interacts with the institutional requirements of their environment, it is worthwhile examining further the adaptive strategies taken by families as they begin to deal with the expected phaseout of both their employment and their community, per se. In so doing, it is reasonable to assume that the operations of family systems are rational in their pursuit of specific goals, and that there are certain costs to any changes in the structure and operational procedures of the family which have to be weighed against the benefits derived from such changes. The adaptive strategies pursued may prove to be counterproductive in the long run, although they may be reasonable responses in the short run. On the other hand, economic and social stresses may simply cause the family to deteriorate in such a fashion that individual goals will be pursued rather than retaining attempts to achieve collective objectives.

The stress experienced in the two communities studied has appeared to disrupt the normal flow of activities in the sense that fewer community celebrations and gatherings have been observed and that there is more open distrust of strangers and outsiders. More important effects concern the operation of the family system, particularly within unconventional family structures. (In a number of cases older Filipino men have returned to the Philippines to marry women considerably younger than themselves, and then returned to Hawaii.) These marriages have been generally quite stable under the plantation social system. However, the anticipated wider exposure by the wives to other peoples and cultures, the lessening of social pressures to conform to marital expectations, and the pressures of possible urban living would seem to make these marriages highly vulnerable.

In marriages with considerable age disparity between spouses, the children readily recognize the dominant role of mother and seldom turn to the father for permission or recognition of their activities. In other words, the husband plays a role similar to that of a grandfather in other extended family situations in the United States. The husband may go so far as to assume basic domestic chores in the household, which he may have learned during his long years as a bachelor. Nevertheless, despite the seeming reversal of roles in many of these families, most husbands have been very explicit in their refusals to allow their wives to seek outside employment. In part, this is due to their increased need to protect the remaining vestiges of the denigrated status which would result from a seeming inability to support the wife and children. Such status would be viewed as untenable by the husband. Such refusals are often cloaked in the name of the children's welfare, or the health of the wife. Despite such increased resistance by the husband to role reversal, economic stress combined with the advantageous characteristics of the wife make such reversals

almost inevitable.

Even in cases where there are not extreme differences in age between spouses, the role of the wife is commonly found to be that of the dominant person in the household. This particularly has been the case in the disciplining of the children.

The actual or potential increased dominance of the woman is seen to threaten the stability of the family system and serious problems are already occurring with role conflicts. As the wives faced the forced unemployment of the husbands during a period of increasing slack in the available work due to the phaseout, the situation was extremely uncomfortable and confining. The husbands were accused of always being in the way and causing problems in disciplining the children, the husbands, in turn, frequently objected to the forceful dealing of their wives with the children. Consequently, the wives expressed reluctance to leave the children in the care of their lenient fathers. Nevertheless, the wives realize this will be necessary if they are forced to enter the labor market.

As the husbands are stripped of their breadwinner status, complete role reversal is anticipated, and considerable stress in response to the new type of family organization will likely occur. Despite the previous dominant role of the wife, her complete dominance will be uncomfortable for both husband and wife. In a few cases, the wives had worked in demanding positions previously, and thus some of the difficulties of transition and role conflict had been resolved. Such results might thus forecast the long term results occurring in families currently experiencing a severe degree of role reversal. A few quotations from some of the more aggressive wives may provide insight into these long term effects:

I think I am the man in this family. My husband has no ambition at all. I tell him to take up plumbing, but he doesn't pay any attention at all. If he had, he would not have as much a problem in looking for a job. I keep blaming him now because he lacked the foresight to invest money in a house and lot years before. If only I wore the pants in this family, we would have had a house by now.

My husband does not like parties at all. He just comes to eat and then goes home, smokes his cigarettes, and watches TV. When I come home, sometimes I find him asleep in front of the TV set. My sons are all grown-up now, but they are closer to me than they are to their father. I guess that's because my husband is very shy and reserved.

I don't like my children to have greater respect for me than they have for their father. That is not healthy. But I can't do anything because my husband is so timid and spineless. I have to push him every time and the children see me doing it.

The response of the husbands is surprisingly not very defensive, although the comments may not fully reflect the depth of their feelings:

My wife is okay as she gets things done. I don't think I can do or achieve what she has done. It's good for the children because she encourages them and answers questions I don't know.

It is terrible when she wants something done because she nags, nags, nags. But her nagging works most times, so I think that's good then.

In contrast, some of the feelings expressed by wives in households just beginning to experience a degree of role reversal are as follows:

My husband is still head of this house. Even if my children turn to me for permission, I still make it a point to have my husband say something, for after all, he is the breadwinner.

I never fail to impress upon my sons that their father worked really hard to feed them, clothe them, send them to school, and the only way to repay him for his hard work is that they do well in school and get out of trouble.

I tell my kids that their father has slaved for their good and welfare since 1931. That never fails to make them behave and accord their father the respect due him.



It seems apparent that role reversal and the accompanying stresses and deterioration of family resources will be most frequent in cases where marriages are not that strong in the first place, i.e., marriages with extreme age disparity, but it is important to note that some dissatisfaction with the role competency of the husbands in the family system has been expressed by wives in all types of marriage situations observed. The wives frequently complain that the husbands do not involve themselves in the lives of the children, and that, at the same time, the husbands are too permissive with the children.

The long-term psychological effects upon the children of dominant mothers or of a transition in role dominance within the family during critical periods of childhood is not clearly known. Nevertheless, the immediate effects within the family are generally considered by all members to be somewhat undesirable. Although some of the children may be unusually motivated and capable of high levels of achievement as a result of the interplay of forces within such families, it is also reasonable to believe that many will experience considerable social difficulties.

The changes in role dominance observed in these families did not result from conscious decisions of the members of the families, but were reflective of rational responses to changing economic situations. Since the change in role dominance seemed to be an undesirable phenomenon in all cases, it is reasonable to assume that it is a factor in weakening the family structure, resulting in a general decline in effective family resources. Although such results would be highly complex, and numerous exceptions to the rule would undoubtedly be observed, the erosion of the basic resources goes far beyond a decline in wealth levels or participation

in formal activities of human resource investment such as education and retraining.

The very essence of the family, its organization and structure, is expected to undergo drastic changes. These changes are rational responses to economic stress and are readily predictable. As a consequence, members of the family are even less well prepared to pursue whatever economic options may be available to them. The gradual phaseout of the pineapple operation is seen to be unfortunate for the families involved, even in contrast to the possible effects of a very abrupt termination of the plantation operations. In other words, the families may well have been more capable of dealing with a transition to other types of economic activities if they had not been weakened by the increasing degrees of unemployment characteristic of the gradual phaseout approach to the plantation's termination.

#### Fatalism

Responses to economic stress in the cases examined were heavily conditioned by the lifelong experiences of the subjects in what they perceive to be an essentially alien environment. The cultural baggage brought from the Philippines was conducive to the submission and docility required by the plantation companies, even as late as 1946. The required behavior, in other words, not only fit with the traditional, peasant orientation of the workers, but was a functional response to economic demands. However, continuation of such total reliance on authority figures (the labor union combined with the plantation company), may prove dysfunctional as the plantation phases out.

The reliance on authority, a version of fatalism, is an explicit reaction to the recognized inability to control one's destiny. Such

apparent apathy and indifference is reflected by the following interview comments:

No can do nothing. These guys in the company strong guys. Us, only small potato, small potato no can fight big potato.

It is going to be very difficult for my family, especially my children, but we can't do anything about it.

God will not leave us alone. Something will come up somehow. We should all pray and ask for God's mercy.

The nuns who came here last summer must have been sent as an answer to our prayers. They really brought us good luck. See, the company (Del Monte) was extended until 1978. It was really a blessing that the nuns came.

We will be able to get out of this economic difficulty. I've gone through the depression and the Second World War, and the big sugar strike, and I am still here.

You know, I no like go back to P.I. I tell myself, I goin' make (die) in Hawaii already. Long time I no visit P.I., but 'cuz get phaseout, come November I go home with my family. Maybe it is my "suerte" (luck) that I gonna make in Philippines and not Hawaii.

The labor union continues to exercise paternalism and risk-reducing functions inherited in large part from plantation management. Communications and decisions come from the top, with infrequent flow in the opposite direction. The union has achieved a dependency by the workers that is essentially a patron-client relationship. This proves operative for the plantation laborers in their time of economic stress:

I am sure the union will do something. It will not leave us alone. It will help us out in this situation.

I don't worry so much about what we are going to do. The union is there.

The union will insure our well-being. There is nothing to worry.

The perceived inability to personally influence or control the future prevents the people from participating in activities that might bring about upward mobility. This refusal is strengthened by previous realizations and consequent conditioning that activities such as formal education would make them unsuitable for plantation employment:

They told us in the Philippines that we did not have to have any kind of education whatsoever. The only thing they were interested in was whether we were hard workers or not. For example, in the HSPA headquarters in the Philippines we were made to present our hands for inspection by the representatives of the companies. If we had calloused hands, we were accepted there and then. Those who had "student looking" hands were made to come back when they already knew how to do hard work. Another criteria for acceptance was whether we passed the working test, which was to clean the whole day the entire emigration office so that they will have good evidence of our capacity to do work.

Something of the operative atmosphere of the early plantation is derived from the following planter-formulated rules that continued into the early 1900's:

Laborers are expected to be industrious and docile and obedient to their overseers.

Any cause of complaint against the overseers of injustice or ill treatment shall be heard by the manager through the interpreter, but in no case shall any laborer be permitted to raise his hand or any weapon in an aggressive manner or cabal with his associates or incite them to acts of insubordination.

Laborers are expected to be regular and cleanly in their personal habits, to retire to rest and rise at the appointed hours to keep their persons, beds, clothing, rooms, inclosure, and offices clean and are strictly forbidden to enter that part of the cook house set apart for plantation cooking or to use any of the firewood for their private cooking arrangements.

No fires will be allowed after 6:30 p.m., and no lights after 8:30 p.m. Every laborer is required to be in bed at 8:30 p.m. and to rise at 5:00 a.m., the hour before breakfast being devoted to habits of cleanliness and order about their persons and premises. During the hours appointed, for rest, no talking is permitted or any noise calculated to disturb those wishing to sleep.

Gambling, fast riding, and leaving the plantation without permission are strictly forbidden. (File 51, Interior Department, 1866, Archives of Hawaii as quoted in Andrew W. Lind, Ed., Modern Hawaii: Perspectives on the Hawaiian Community, Labor-Management Education Program, University of Hawaii, November, 1967, p. 5.)

The pronounced tendency to avoid major decisions has affected, in part, the subjects' responses to economic proposals which might provide unemployment following the termination of the plantation operations. A guava processing plant to be established on a cooperative basis was largely met with indifference, but a resort development financed and managed by outside interests was strongly endorsed as a source of new jobs.

### Conclusion

The treats of unemployment and accompanying disintegration of the communities have caused the subjects to assume defensive stances similar to the strategies which have proven successful in past alien environments. Such a stance may prove costly in the new circumstance. At the same time, basic resources derived from the family structure are being eroded. Feeling quite helpless in preventing the plantation phaseout, most families are simply waiting for whatever fate brings them. Few anticipate leaving the plantation and effectively achieving competence in dissimilar employment. The more prevalent statement is a marked reluctance to leave the island and its attendant levels of economic and social security. The ultimate authority figure, the government, is seen by them as preventing such security from dropping below untenable levels:

This is where Hawaii is very much ahead of the Philippines. Here, the government will not let you down, when you are poor, there is the welfare program to turn to.

When you no get job, you can get unemployment compensation. When you retire, get social security. Good life over here.

Why should we have compunctions about going on welfare? The hippies do it, the Hawaiians do it, so we do it too.