Sociology in Hawai`i: Past, Present, and Possible Futures

Sun-Ki Chai
Department of Sociology
University of Hawai`i at Ma`noa

Hawai`i Sociological Association
Annual Meeting
February 13, 2010
Hawaii Sociology circa 1937:

“Hawaii has many advantages for the scientific observer of sociological and anthropological phenomena. It is an island universe serving as a sort of laboratory of bio-social and cultural phenomena and processes.”

Review of Romanzo Adams,
Interracial Marriage in Hawaii: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation,
Frank H. Hankins, American Sociological Review,
August 1937, p. 563.
UHM Sociology Chronology
1920-1970

• 1920: Created as Department of Sociology and Economics with Romanzo Adams (PhD, Chicago, 1904) as first professor
• 1920-21 Robert E. Park of Chicago is Visiting Professor of Sociology
• Mid-1920s: Adams creates Hawaii Sociology Lab (later the Romanzo Adams Social Research Lab)
• 1927: Andrew Lind arrives at UHM from Chicago, joins faculty 1931
• 1934-61: Lind serves as Head of Romanzo Adams Social Research Lab
• 1935: Lind founds the journal *Social Process in Hawaii*
• 1937: Combined with Anthropology to form Department of Sociology and Anthropology
• 1938: Clarence Glick arrives at UHM from Chicago
• 1947: Separates from Department of Anthropology
• 1961: Lind named founding head of Social Science Research Institute
• 1963: RASRL merged into SSRI; ceases to exist
Hawaii Sociology and the First Chicago School

• Romanzo Adams, 1868-1942
  – PhD, University of Chicago, 1904
  – Professor and Chair, University of Nevada, 1904-1920
  – Arrives as founding Professor of Sociology, University of Hawai`i, 1920
  – Creates Hawaii Sociology Lab (later RASRL), 1920s
  – Retires, 1934

• Andrew W. Lind, 1901-1988
  – Arrives at University of Hawai`i for dissertation research, 1927
  – PhD, University of Chicago, enters UH faculty, 1931
  – Head of Romanzo Adams Social Research Lab, 1934-61
  – Founds *Social Process in Hawaii*, 1935
  – First head of Social Science Research Institute, 1961
  – Bernhard Hörmann Creates Andrew W. Lind Social Process in Hawaii Fund, 1986
“By the time of his death in 1942, he [Adams] was the pre-eminent spokesman on matters of immigration and race. Under Adams’ leadership, Hawai‘i briefly became an important outpost in the development of sociological theory in the United States.”


“For these distinguished sociologists [Lind and Hörmann], Hawai‘i was an unusual "laboratory" for ethnic studies. Not only was there a "striking ethnic diversity" in these Islands, but the social process of their construction and reconstruction was recent and vivid.”

“Andrew W. Lind (Ph.D. 1931) found that Hawaii furnished a convenient laboratory in which to study the ecology of race relations.”

“It appeared to [Robert] Park, Adams, and Lind that Hawaii provided an ideal showcase for the Chicago theories.”


“Chicago Sociologists came to Hawaii as if it was a pilgrimage site. . . sociology at Hawaii would be dominated by Chicago graduates.”

“Adams, Lind, and Glick also trained a number of Chinese and Japanese students . . . many of whom went on to the University of Chicago for advanced degrees.”

– Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 82, 156.
UHM Sociology Undergraduates -> University of Chicago, 1935-1955

- Bernhard Hörmann
- Kiyoshi Ikeda
- Yukiko Kimura
- Margaret Lam
- Moy Fook Gum
- Bung-Chong Lee
- Jitsuichi Masuoka
- George Yamamoto
- Douglas Yamamura

Hörmann, Ikeda, Kimura, Yamamoto, and Yamamura all later taught in UHM Sociology Department.
UHM Faculty, 1952

Row 1: (4) Clarence E. Glick, (5) Kiyoshi Ikeda.
Row 2: (4) Bernhard L. Hörmann, (5) Andrew W. Lind. (7) Margaret A. Zimmerman.

Clarence E. Glick, "The Position of Racial Groups in Occupational Structures", *Social Forces* 26:2, December 1947, 206-211


Bernhard L. Hörmann (ed.), *Community Forces in Hawaii*, University of Hawaii Press, 1956.


Social Process in Hawai`i
Issues: 1935-1963


Vol. 15, 1951, "Industrial Sociology in Hawaii," edited by Betty Au, Fusae Lim, and Dick Nagata. Incl. papers by Hormann, Kiyoshi Ikeda, Blumer, Glick and his students, Lind, and others.


Vol. 22, 1958, "Basic Crises," edited by Carole Nohara and Shirley Okino. Incl. papers by Hormann, Glick, Darrow Aiona, and others.


Sample Student Paper Titles from RASRL: 1924-1960s

Abe, Lillian, “Study of a Community in Honolulu” 1929
Abe, Shogo, “The Relation of Family Equipment to Culture Conflict” 1936
Agena, Tsuruko, “Race Relations in Haiti” n.d.
Aguiat, Earl, “Report on the St. Antonio Society” c1930
Alona, Lee, Yee, Leong, Nakamura, “Committee on Racketeering” 1939
Aitken, Robert B. “Age and Race in Wahiawa-Churches” 1952
Akau, John K. Jr., “Human Relations as Demonstrated at a Student Boarding House” n.d.
Albao, M; Lee, J.; Chung, H. “The Study of Alcoholism” 1939
Albao, Mary. “Filipino Immigration to Hawai'i” n.d.
What Happened to Hawai`i Sociology as a Core Location for Race and Ethnic Studies?

- Devaluation of concepts associated with First Chicago School, such as assimilation and ethnic succession
- Decline since 1950s in popularity of urban ethnography methods in mainstream sociology
- Idea of Hawai`i exceptionalism with regards to ethnocultural conflict no longer accepted
- Drying up of pipeline after retirement of “first generation” Chicago graduates
- Change in sociology as a discipline, bureaucratization prevents such development of pipeline-based prominence
- Race and ethnicity studies have spread far beyond sociology, as well as splitting into multiple literatures that typically ignore one another
What does Hawai`i Sociology Stand for in 2010? (A UHM-Centric View)

- Race and Ethnicity remain one of UHM Sociology’s four “areas of concentration”, along with Asia-Pacific studies.
- The UHM graduate student body since 1990s has been consistently largely international and largely of Asia-Pacific ethnic or national origin.
- Asia-Pacific focus is now the most distinctive part of departmental identity within Sociology, but Race and Ethnicity remains a key topic.
- Relatively few local graduate students, however, which means focus is now more on East Asian rather than Hawai`i cases.
One Tentative Vision for the Future

• Our strengths still remain in areas of cross-cultural, cross-identity analysis, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific areas

• Disciplinary boundaries are slowly dissolving, particularly with regards to funding opportunities, and as an atypically interdisciplinary-friendly department we are well positioned to take a leading role in such opportunities

• While the “ethnicity laboratory” idea is one whose time has come and gone it can be replaced by “concentrated multiculturalism”

• We need to position ourselves as department uniquely positioned to carry out interdisciplinary analysis of comparative cultural and ethnicity phenomena from an international perspective.

• This kind of analysis does not clash with, and can be applied across all of our substantive fields.