

SOCIAL PROCESS IN HAWAII: THE EARLY YEARS

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The suggestion of a journal devoted primarily to the "social situation in Hawaii" was dropped somewhat casually in conversation at a Sociology Club dinner in the spring of 1934 by Everett Stonequist, a visiting professor from Skidmore College. The very thought that a small group of about thirty students, primarily undergraduates, could aspire to a venture so ambitious seemed almost absurd at the time, regardless of the support they might obtain from a faculty of three. Once planted, however, the idea that a modest undertaking of that type was at least "worth a try," took hold sufficiently in the minds of some of those present to result in the appearance in May, 1935, of a forty-nine paged mimeographed publication with the title, *Social Process in Hawaii*. The one and only resident candidate for a master's degree in the sociology department, Kum Pui Lai, had been persuaded to take the editorship, and together with a staff of two other graduate students, four undergraduates, and one faculty member, they succeeded in bringing together fifteen short articles dealing with various aspects of Island life, for which they believed there might be an interested reading public.

There was not then or subsequently any expectation of producing a journal primarily for sociologists, but the experience of both students and faculty in sociology had led them to believe that an important segment of the community, particularly social workers, educators, physicians, and other professionals dealing with the multi-cultural people of Hawaii should find interest and benefit from the studies which had been or were being conducted by sociologists in the Islands. The diversities in the practices and standards of the ethnic groups especially were still so great that no one, even with long experience locally, could be expected to be acquainted with all of them.

Students of sociology at the University, particularly at the undergraduate level, had been encouraged to test classroom propositions by observations within their own family, neighborhood or other groupings within the community and to objectify them in written reports, from which the faculty and

others who might read them probably learned as much as the students who wrote them. Thus, seven of the fifteen articles in the first issue were written by undergraduates, three by students in the introductory course dealing with etiquette among Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and another four by students in advanced courses in the department. Other papers were in the nature of summaries of research conducted by graduate students or faculty, and included one by Stonequist, ideas of which were incorporated a few years later in his widely quoted volume, *The Marginal Man*.

A gratifying response from the local community, including editorial commendation in both Honolulu newspapers, led to a second and a third printing, and the decision to attempt publication on an annual basis, utilizing conventional printing form in subsequent issues. The Sociology Club, which included both graduate and undergraduate students, continued to be designated as the publishers of the first twenty issues of *Social Process*--sometimes in collaboration with the Department of Sociology--and after that, jointly with the Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory. The editors of all the issues except two were students, including among others the present [1978] Chancellor of the University, for two years when he was a student. Most of the final editing, including the reading of proof, it is true, fell to the lot of one or both of the two principal faculty advisers. It must also be conceded that the modest sale price of fifty cents per copy may have contributed to the early exhaustion of the entire stock of the first ten issues, but the increasing orders from libraries in universities and colleges on the Mainland suggest that the articles had value in wider academic and intellectual circles.

The articles submitted for the earlier issues of *Social Process* covered such a broad range of topics that it was difficult to specify an organizing principle for each issue, except an inclusive one like the Immigrant Heritage, Problems of Assimilation, Social Disorganization, or Wartime Hawaii. The broad-ranging, humanistic interests of the sociologists in Hawaii at that time led them to undertake research which might have been thought to belong properly to other social sciences, but in its absence, articles by sociology students on such topics as Voting, Statehood, Vital Statistics, Occupational Succession on Plantations, Unionization, and Island Speech were accepted and published in *Social Process*. As research

on Hawaii developed in neighboring disciplines, articles began to appear, first only from social work, but later by professional educators, linguists, geographers, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, economists, political scientists, and ministers of religion.

The presence on the faculty of eminent visiting professors and their contribution of thoughtful articles to the early issues of *Social Process* gave added incentive to the participation by both resident faculty and graduate students. Two of these visiting contributors, Ellsworth Faris and Herbert Blumer of the University of Chicago, either had been or subsequently were elected a president of the American Sociological Association. Everett Stonequist and Edgar Thompson, specialists and authorities on the Marginal Man and the Plantation respectively gave special encouragement to *Social Process* during the first few years of its history. Clarence Glick, who later returned as a senior member of the faculty in sociology, was in a sense a visiting professor at the time he wrote the often-quoted article for *Social Process* on Chinese residential dispersion.

Comments on the first issue by two of the earlier visitors to the campus, Edmund Day, Social Science Director of the Rockefeller Foundation, and Robert E. Park, University of Chicago sociologist, both called attention to the special value of such a journal as "a pedagogical device for stimulating interest in students" and to "energize and strengthen classroom work."

During the forty-three years that have passed since the first issue of *Social Process* appeared, striking changes have occurred in both the nature of Island life and the outlook and methods of the scholars interested in its study. Consequently, one would neither expect nor desire the publication in 1979 and later years to assume the same form or necessarily to serve the same functions as the journal of prewar days. These islands, however, will continue to be the special locale--the community laboratory--within which the contributors to *Social Process* will necessarily conduct much of their observation and research, from which their support will largely be derived, and to which an obligation of realistic and scholarly reporting will also be owing.