

**APMAM TIEMPO TI ULI'E HIT (LONG TIME NO SEE): CHAMORRO
DIASPORA AND THE TRANSPACIFIC HOME**

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We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Pacific Islands studies.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Chamorro migration and settlement within new diasporic spaces like San Diego, California. It shows how Chamorros living away from their home islands still find ways to stay connected to their cultural roots through their transpacific homes and identities. The movement of Chamorros to the United States changes how Chamorros choose to articulate their indigeneity. This thesis examines the challenges and nuances of living in the transpacific diaspora through the examination of Chamorro organizations, clothing brands, and festivals. Today there are more Chamorros living away from their home islands than on them. This project shows that Pacific Islanders abroad continue to keep strong links to their home islands despite their physical location.

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INTRODUCTION

Chamorros are the indigenous people of the Marianas Islands. The archipelago consists of fifteen islands, which only four, Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan, are currently lived on. The Mariana Islands are located in the western half of the Pacific in Micronesia. The islands are 3,808 miles from Hawaii, 1,561 miles from Japan, and 4,467 miles from Australia. Chamorros have a deep history in the archipelago. Scientist found that Chamorros have called the Marianas Islands home for over 4,000 years. Chamorros believe that they came from the islands through the sister and brother gods, Puntan and Fu'una, in Fuoha Bay.

Unlike my ancestors, I was born and raised in the United States. My upbringing tells a tale of a long history of Chamorro migration. Today Chamorros are finding that their concept of home is stretching beyond the physical borders of the islands to include major cities on the west coast of the United States. My family's story maintains strong roots in the Marianas Islands but calls San Diego, California a second home. Our movement started with my namesake. My name is Jesi, and I am named after my grandfather, Jesus (the Chamorro form of my name) Lujan. We are both also known as Chu', Sus, and Jes.

During World War Two, Jesus was the youngest of nine and just a little boy. His father, a fisherman, was shot during the war, leaving his family to struggle financially for many years to come. It was through this poverty that he later lied about his age and joined the military at age 17. Even though Jesus came from a poor family, my grandmother, Guadalupe Blas, was allowed to marry him in 1960. My great-grandparents thought that he had financial promise due to his enlistment. Soon after their marriage and

the birth of my uncle, Kelvin, Hurricane Karen swept through Guam, leveling the island and its entire infrastructure. As the rebuilding of the island began, my mother, Kathleen, was born. My grandparents saw this as a unique opportunity for the island to start over, and, coincidentally, this was the time when the U.S. Navy requested that my grandfather move from Guam. At only one month old, my mother, her brother, and my grandparents boarded a plane to Hawaii and started our family's migration story.

From 1963 to 1968, Jesus was stationed at Pearl Harbor, Oahu. It was here that Guadalupe was introduced to her first baked potato and shown how to bake a cake. It was also here that my grandparents continued to speak Chamorro to each other, but stopped conversing in their native tongue with their children.

In 1969, Jesus and Guadalupe made their final move to San Diego, California. Jesus was stationed at 32nd Street Naval Station. The Lujan Family moved to Paradise Hills where many other young Chamorro military families found affordable housing and social links to the Marianas. My grandparents raised my mother and her brothers within a tight nit Chamorro community.

It was during my mom's high school years that she met my father, Albert Bennett Jr. He is the youngest of seven and of Irish and Native American (Mohawk) decent. He grew up in a poor family from New Jersey. My grandfather, Albert, was in the U.S. Army and served in World War Two as a teenager and later in the Korean War. Even with this service history, my father's family struggled financially. Like Jesus Lujan, Albert Jr. turned to the army due to poverty. In 1982, my Chamorro grandparents approved of my father's proposal to my mother because of my father's recent enlistment in the military.

I was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1988. I was the typical army brat. As a child, I hooah-ed at every American flag I saw and learned that my school friendships would last three to four years. We moved from Fort Carson, Colorado to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and then to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. All the while, San Diego, California and Guam continued to be my family's main homes. In 2000, my parents divorced, and I moved back to San Diego, California. This did not stop my movement due to the military. My school vacations took me to Fort Knox, Kentucky, back to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and finally to Tampa, Florida.

TRANSPACIFIC HOME

Chamorro migrants have created a transpacific home, where there is a back and forth flow of communication, goods, and bodies between the Mariana Islands and their current location. Due to the poverty that influenced the start of my family's migration, there were few cultural artifacts that my grandparents brought to their new homes from the Mariana Islands. Besides the couple pictures they brought with them, remnants and memories of Guam came through language and food. I remember hearing my grandmother's thunderous voice calling Chamorro friends in San Diego and family in Guam, speaking Chamorro and laughing loudly about family dramas. When my mother did not want me to know what she was saying about my sister and me, Chamorro was used. I heard our language and learned our songs at our fiestas, nobenas, and other family parties. In these spaces where Chamorro language was used, food was a major means of sharing memories of home. There was always a small bowl of finadene in the kitchen. Kadu mannok and champulado were our comfort foods. My family would gather around the kitchen as my grandmother cooked and shared stories of our roots.

While food and language transmitted memories and images of the Mariana Islands, physical movement of my family members also define the transpacific home. With my grandmother being the oldest of twenty, her brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc were always a constant in my home. They brought pugua, books, posters, and pictures from Guam. My younger relatives taught me words like “Chad” and “leche.” They described Guam in a way that I could relate to and draw similarities to my current city. Not only were family members from the Mariana Islands coming to visit us, but we were also returning to our home islands. My family was able to stay physically connected due to my aunts working for Continental Micronesia. It was through this airlines connection that my grandmother’s younger sisters would pick me up and bring to Guam for the summers. I had always imagined Guam to be small and poor. That helped me rationalize our irrational movement from our homelands. I was surprised to find out how big Guam felt. There were so many villages that I did not know of, so many family members that I did not know existed. Guam felt like home and I could see why my grandmother never stopped identifying with and talking about “back home.” It was through these summer trips that I also learned that my lived experiences as a Chamorro growing up in the United States were different from my family in Guam. I never felt that I was disconnected with my home islands, I just realized early on that being a Chamorro from the U.S. was a unique experience that Chamorros in the Mariana Islands were not always familiar with.

PACIFIC MIGRATION

Migration in Oceania is not a new phenomenon; Pacific cultures have always been migrating for various reasons. The origins of Oceania are rooted in mobility.

Thousands of years ago people left Southeast Asia and moved eastward through the Pacific. Skilled navigators equipped with strong canoes made their way into what Western explorers would later call, Melanesian, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Pacific Islanders with their “sophisticated deep water sailing canoes and remarkably accurate star compass- not only migrated originally to their island homes via sea highways, but they also maintained a high degree of mobility through interisland voyages” (Marshall, 6). Pacific Islanders continued to move throughout Oceania, engaging in trade, waging war, and maintaining complex clan relationships. For Pacific Islanders, movement and voyaging has always been apart of their identity and lifestyle.

When Western explorers came to Oceania, they prompted a colonial mobility within the islands due to the exploitation of Pacific Islander bodies. During the late 1800s, European planters looked for land to acquire in order to start plantations. Commercial crops of sugar, copra, rubber, cacao, and other fruits started in Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Hawai‘i, Australia, and Fiji. Planters were looking for cheap labor to work their crops, but few Pacific Islanders were willing to work the fields. In Hawai‘i, outside labor was brought in from Japan, China, and the Philippines. Fiji had many Indians brought in as indentured laborers to work the plantations. For other parts of the Pacific, “recruiters, known in the early days as blackbirders, introduced a system of indenture whereby islanders obligated their labour for a few years in exchange for subsistence, a small wage, and a bonus of cash or goods on their return home” (Kiste, 24). In reality, this system often acquired labor by kidnapping Pacific Islanders mostly from Melanesia. Those kidnapped were usually taken to sugar fields in places like Australia. In some cases of blackbirding, the treatment of Pacific Islanders and the conditions that they

worked within were comparable to slavery. For many years to follow, colonial mobility for Pacific Islanders came through such mistreatment as labor in mines and plantations as well as through nuclear testing.

From the 1950s to the present, Pacific Islanders, mostly of Polynesian and Micronesian ancestry, have been moving from their home islands at a new rate. In the 2010 U.S. Census, “out of the total U.S. population, 540,000 people, or 0.2 percent, were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.... 685,000, or another 0.2 percent reported NHPI in combination with one or more other race. Together these two groups totaled 1.2 million people” (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-12.pdf>). From the 2000 to the 2010 census, the Pacific Islander population in the United States increased three times faster than the whole U.S. population. In New Zealand, “The Pacific population in New Zealand grew from just 2,200 people to 266,000 between 1945 and 2006 and now makes up 6.9 percent of the total New Zealand population” (http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-demography/summary.aspx). In many cases, there are now more Pacific Islanders living away from their home islands than within them.

These populations of Pacific Islanders are moving to new countries that have historical ties to their home islands, “links of trade, missionary activity, and strategic significance kept Americans coming to the Pacific Islands and opened pathways for Pacific Island people to come to the United States” (Spickard, 7). These pathways of colonialism and compacts have allowed such groups as American Samoans, Chamorros and Marshallese to settle in the United States. Other colonial powers such as France, Japan, Germany, Britain, Chile, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand, have also opened

up migration routes for Pacific Islanders. Today people are relocating in search of better healthcare, educational opportunities, jobs prospects, and military assignments. Even though Pacific Islanders are no longer being forced from their islands, many times economic and social conditions created by neocolonialism adds to the pressure for people to move.

With the exponential growth in Pacific Islander movement, new technologies have changed the way people stay connected. For many islanders, plane tickets have become more affordable, long distance calls easier, and social networking possible. “Movement is easier and quicker; connection and exchange with homeland communities is richer and more complex; and the ability to maintain difference in most host countries is greater than ever before” (Rynkiewich, 281). The rise in Pacific Islander movement and capability to keep close connections to home islands has led to a change in the way Islanders understand the Pacific region.

Pacific Islands Studies scholars have been writing about Pacific peoples movement and settlement in the diaspora. Many of the early writers about Pacific diasporas wrote about the movement in romantic and idealistic terms. In Epeli Hau’ofa’s celebrated essay, “Our Sea of Islands,” he refutes Western understandings of the Pacific as being inhabited by small islands. He pushes the idea that Oceania is rich and expansive, which includes the waters our ancestors have navigated. Oceania is a term to also discuss the movement of Pacific Islanders to new destinations. He argues that,

“There are thousands.... Flying back and forth across national boundaries, the international dateline, and the equator, far above and completely undaunted by the deadly serious discourses below on the nature of the Pacific Century, and the

Asia-Pacific coprosperity sphere, and the dispositions of the post-cold war Pacific Rim, cultivating their ever- growing universe in their own ways, which is as it should be, for therein lies their independence” (Hau’ofa, 39).

For Hau’ofa, it is not a new phenomenon that Pacific Islanders are on the move. Pacific Islanders are participating in their longer history of migration and voyaging. Similarly, Francis Hezel writes an unproblematic article on Micronesian migration and diaspora. In “Micronesians Abroad,” Hezel describes how Micronesian communities throughout the United States are flourishing and contributing to their new cities. For example, in a city in southern California, the mixture of Micronesian islanders there, “work for the college in modest jobs- as receptionist, maids, handymen, maintenance men, security guards- and live with their families in housing units rented from the university. All of them participate in the religious life of the university, and a few of them have even enrolled in programs there” (Hezel, 7). These positive images of Micronesians living abroad is important to have in order to refute current stereotypes, however Hezel fails to discuss the complexities of living in an Oceanic diaspora. The idea of Oceania is an inclusive, empowering, and uplifting view. It highlights how Pacific Islanders do not sever ties with their homeland when they leave and that their indigeneity is still important to them regardless of their location. At the same time, the idea of Oceania does not show the impacts of out migration on islanders and their home islands. Hau’ofa and Hezel’s ideology can come across as encouraging the growth of a Pacific diaspora. The ideas that they present do not fully examine the brain drains that occur when Pacific Islanders leave for education and career opportunities and do not come home. These scholars omit how Pacific Islanders are often not successful when they first move to new countries. There is

also no discussion about the diluting of Oceania of its native people. When waves of Pacific Islanders leave, how does this affect their home islands? The hardships on Pacific Islanders living abroad and the questions their islands are left with are often ignored when scholars discuss the Oceanic diaspora.

Pacific diasporic studies have become critical of Pacific Islanders movement, however much of the work being produced is centered on the experiences of Polynesians. In *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, numerous essays discuss the issues Pacific Islanders face living in a new space. Some topics in the anthology explore identity, cultural transformation, social problems and responses, and gender and sexuality. For example, “From Village to City: Samoan Migration to California,” Janes interviews several diasporic Samoans to discuss the complexities and hardships their families experienced during their settlement in U.S. Of the twenty-one essays included in this book, only one highlights the experiences of islanders from the Micronesian region. The rest of the pieces are centered on Polynesia or the Pacific as a whole. In *Voyages: From Tongan Villages to American Suburbs*, Small highlights the rise of Tongan migration to northern California. She effectively shows the identity politics Tongans encounter living in United States, such as keeping Tongan traditions alive, “overseas children are changing Tonga, not being changed by it” (Small, 202). These migration issues are not common just to Tongans and other Polynesians. Even though both texts focus primarily on the eastern half of Oceania, Micronesians are also working through the same growing pains of having diasporic communities.

Since the early 1990s, scholars have written on Micronesian migration, however it does not compare to the volume of scholarly and creative work that the Polynesian

diaspora has produced. In contrast to Epeli Hau'ofa's, "Our Sea of Islands," David Hanlon's, "Sea of Tiny Islands," in order to bring attention to Polynesia being the hallmark of Pacific Studies. He argued that his, "essay is not a simple plea for a greater inclusion of Micronesia within Pacific studies, but rather a call for the recognition of its absence" (Hanlon, 105). Much of the research done on this particular region of Oceania is centered on the statistics of islanders from the Federated States of Micronesia moving to places like Guam and Hawaii. Speaking to these statistics, are scholars like Robert Kiste. In *New Political Statuses in American Micronesia*, explains the unique compact made between the United States and particular island groups in Micronesia. He discusses that, "It can be argued that the result is a trade-off. American defense interests have been served, and the islanders have the levels of support to which they have become accustomed" (Kiste, 79). Similarly Mac Marshall's, *Namoluk Beyond the Reef: The Transformation of a Micronesian Community*, focuses on the migration from Namoluk and their experiences away from their atoll. He highlights the educational opportunities the islanders are finding in their new destinations. These types of research and statistical findings describe Micronesian migration at a moment in time when many in places like Hawaii, Guam, and California are trying to understand the migration clause that the compact between the U.S. and Micronesian islanders have.

With Micronesian diaspora studies mainly analyzing the Federated States of Micronesia, Chamorro movement has become absent from the discussion. Faye Untalan tries to fill this absence with her dissertation, "An Exploratory Study of Island Migration: Chamorros of Guam." This was one of the first pieces written about Chamorro population changes and outmigration. She writes in 1979 that, "there have been no studies of

Guamanians with regard to their migration, or their patterns of adaptation or adjustment” (Untalan, 45). Untalan describes how the military and later education and the airlines industry were the main paths for Chamorro migration. Today there are about 50,000 Chamorros within the Mariana Islands. Currently there are more Chamorros living away from their home islands than on them. According to the 2000 census, there were 92,611 Chamorros in the United States. Within ten years, this number has grown to 147,798. (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-12.pdf>) Chamorros are the most geographically dispersed Pacific Islander group in the United States with more than half of the population living outside of the states, California, Washington, and Texas, which have the largest Chamorro populations.

Robert Underwood’s, “Excursions into Inauthenticity: The Chamorros of Guam,” is another foundational piece in explaining not only the migration of Chamorros but the forces within Guam that were prompting the out flux of people. For example, the “military connection provided not only a convenient exit from Guam but also established the major U.S. points of entry, since Chamorros in California concentrated in communities adjoining such major naval facilities as San Diego or Long Beach” (Underwood, 167). Underwood work investigates the specific social and economic pressures that the Americanization of Guam brought to Chamorros following U.S. occupation.

With the overwhelming presence of the United States’ military in the Marianas, the process of enlisting Chamorros into military service has become a viable and many times encouraged option for Chamorros looking for work. After the Second World War, Chamorros struggled with participating in a cash economy and living up to the

expectation of earning wage employment. Along with this new economic system, more and more islanders were beginning to graduate for high school. This situation made it so that the military remained the most feasible option for Chamorros who were not continuing with their education or could not get hired on island. The first large influx of Chamorros into the armed forces began, “When the U.S. Congress passed the Organic Act in 1950 and the Chamorros became American citizens, inductions of young Chamorro men into the armed services increased dramatically, especially when the Korean War began....” (Underwood, 167). Through this easily accessible and normalized career choice, the United States military has played a vital role in the out migration of Chamorros from the Mariana Islands, especially from Guam, to militarized cities like San Diego, California. With Chamorros now serving in the military, “This military link to movement abroad was phenomenal, and three quarters of all Chamorros living outside of Guam have been estimated as being currently or previously associated with the armed services” (Underwood, 167). Even though movement of Chamorros to San Diego is partially resulted from the U.S. military, I want to show how Chamorros are not reducible to the militarized space in which they live in and the work that they do.

Even though there are more Chamorro living outside of the Mariana Islands than within, Chamorro diaspora studies is still a marginal area in Micronesian and Chamorro studies. Michael Perez is one of few Chamorros investigating not only Chamorro migration, but also the issues diasporic Chamorros are challenged with. In broad examples from Chamorros in California, Perez is able to examine how, “American ideology not only masks the reality of immigration and racial oppression on the US mainland, but is entirely irrelevant to the cultural problems on Guam and in the US from

this framework, Chamorros simply become equated with newly arrived minority groups or get overlooked” (Perez, 466). Together Untalan, Underwood, and Perez help build a platform for current diasporic Chamorros to write from. What continues to lack in this field is a deeper examination of settled Chamorro communities that have rooted themselves primarily in the states.

The importance of my paper is that it has the potential to be of value to a variety of audiences. For Pacific Islands Studies, my piece would offer further insight to approaching Oceania as an ever-expanding space. Examining Chamorro migration and its diaspora adds to the idea of Pacific Islanders as a mobile people that are flexible in times of pressure and change.

For the wider American population, it is important that they be made aware of the continued U.S. colonialism in Oceania and how it affects islanders today. This includes introducing this population to Chamorros fight for sovereignty and land rights. This project can also show a general American audience the resilience and pride that Chamorros have in their Pacific roots despite the struggles that they have faced.

Finally, this paper can be significant for Chamorros living both on and off of their islands. I want to change the current framework of Chamorro critical work to put into conversation the importance of ones ethnic roots, not just the experiences of those who are physically located on the island. I want Chamorros abroad to see my piece as inclusive of their lived experiences and celebrate their complex personhood. Chamorros living within the Mariana Islands can have a means to understanding the different struggles and triumphs Chamorros away from home deal with in a new cultural and

geographic context. This documented story will only add to and strengthen our Chamorro history.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

My paper will use the lens of militarism and indigenous articulations to investigate Chamorro migration and the identities that have been created within San Diego, California. I show how Chamorros living away from their home islands still find ways to stay connected to their cultural roots through their transpacific homes and identities. I examine the challenges and nuances of living in the transpacific diaspora as a Chamorro through image analysis. Chamorro logos, flags, apparel, and posters are rearticulations of popular diasporic notions of indigenous identity and community. The migration and settlement of Chamorros in the United States changes how this group understands and represents their indigeneity.

Chapter one maps out the militarized spaces of the Marianas Islands and San Diego. It also discusses the social and economic pressures on Guam that led to a large Chamorro outmigration to naval cities like San Diego. With Chamorros now moving to San Diego, social and nonprofit organizations have been a way for Chamorros to tackle issues related to being a new migrant group. The chapter examines how two Chamorro organizations, The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club and Che'lu (Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity) Inc., construct a transpacific home through their logos, fiestas, festivals, liberation celebration, and monthly meetings.

Chapter two examines the history of clothing in the Marianas Islands and how colonialism influenced its usage. The chapter also investigates how three Chamorro

clothing brands of today, Island TAT, Fokai, and Magas, articulate a Chamorro identity. Each brand has a unique way of rooting themselves as a native brand based on their physical location, whether that is within or outside of the Mariana Islands.

Chapter three looks at the history of fairs and festivals in the Pacific. It then investigates how Pacific Islander led gatherings have changed over time with the growth in interest in Oceania by outsiders. Today, festivals and fairs in the Pacific diaspora act as a way to celebrate cultural roots. Through the Pacific Islander Festival (PIFA) and the Chamorro Cultural Festival, Pacific Islanders show how they are away yet rooted in their transpacific homes.

The purpose for pursuing transpacific focused research is to add to the larger discourse surrounding the United States' presence in the Mariana Islands. Like Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands, Guam's ambiguous territorial status allows for the US military to mistreat native lands and people. With much of the political, academic, and mundane discussions being centered on a large military buildup approaching Guam's shores from Okinawa, the U.S. presence and the usage of the island are being reexamined. What is missing from this vital point in Chamorro history is the Chamorro diasporic voice. There cannot be a full understanding of the effects of militarism of Chamorros and the militarization of the Marianas without incorporating the lived experiences of the diasporic Chamorro communities that have migrated out due to the military. Highlighting this specific group in San Diego allows ideas surrounding the military's role in Chamorro lives to expand beyond the borders of the Marianas into communities far beyond the islands. This paper will add another crucial element within the already complicated conversation of U.S. presence in Oceania.

I hope that my paper will not only add to the current political discourse in regards to U.S. imperialism in the Mariana Islands, but that it will strengthen Chamorro voices in the diaspora. I want my work to show that the ideas, concerns, and hopes of Chamorros living away from their islands are justified and needed. In Guam, there are sovereignty and anti-military organizations, like We Are Guahan and Famoksaian, which were formed by and spearhead by Chamorros who left Guam for their college education. It was within these diasporic experiences that they began to understand their Chamorro identity as important and something worth fighting for. I think there is something very valuable in looking at the diasporic experiences that Chamorros abroad are having. Today there are more Chamorros living away from their home islands than on them. I hope my project shows that the islanders abroad add to the rich story of Chamorro history. I hope my work can help Chamorros in the Mariana Islands and in the diaspora come to understand one another and see each other as a larger community. This can make it easier for Chamorros as a whole to work together to address many issues that we face moving into the future.

The importance of my paper is that it has the potential to be of value to a variety of audiences. For Pacific Islands Studies, my piece would offer further insight to approaching Oceania as an ever-expanding space. Examining Chamorro migration and its diaspora adds to the idea of Pacific Islanders as a mobile people that are flexible in times of pressure and change.

For the wider American population, it is important that they be made aware of the continued U.S. colonialism in Oceania and how it affects islanders today. This includes introducing this population to Chamorros fight for sovereignty and land rights. This

project can also show a general American audience the resilience and pride that Chamorros have in their Pacific roots despite the struggles that they have faced.

Finally, this paper can be significant for Chamorros living both on and off of their islands. I want to change the current framework of Chamorro critical work to put into conversation the importance of ones ethnic roots, not just the experiences of those who are physically located on the island. It is about having an interpretation of diasporic Chamorro identity that offers something more than critiques of inauthenticity, blood quantum, and miseducation about the homeland. I want Chamorros abroad to see my piece as inclusive of their lived experiences and representative of their rich Chamorro communities. Chamorros living within the Mariana Islands can have a means to understanding the different struggles and triumphs Chamorros away from home deal with in a new cultural and geographic context. This documented story will only add to and strengthen our Chamorro history.

My thesis uses the transpacific Chamorro community in San Diego to show the reality of living outside of the Mariana Islands. It highlights the reasons for early migration and how we diasporic Chamorros have created a home away from home. With Chamorros are finding their way to the United States and still creating strong ties to one another; it shows that just because we have left does mean we want to sever ties. Through this examination of Chamorros in the diaspora, Chamorros living within the Mariana Islands can have a means to understanding the experiences of those abroad. Through this understanding, new ways to fight for Chamorro language revitalization, self-determination, militarization, cultural maintenance, and environmental preservation as a unified people can be made.

CHAPTER 1. TRANSPACIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

For some Chamorros, the idea that their diasporic community can have meaningful ties to their home islands may seem questionable. As a Chamorro woman who was born and raised within the United States, I can understand the perception that some islanders in the Mariana Islands may have about my positionality as a transpacific Chamorro. I was fortunate to be raised in San Diego, California where Chamorros have been migrating to since the early 1930s. It is here that I was able to participate in social and cultural organizations that have helped bring Chamorros together for over 60 years.

One such organization that is the backbone of the Chamorro community in San Diego is, The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club. My earliest memories of understanding that my ethnic roots were different from others in San Diego came through the context of the Guam Club. This Chamorro owned and ran organization, quickly became the central meeting place for Chamorros throughout San Diego County since the early 1950s. As much as I remember the events, gossip, and memories associated with the Guam Club, my earliest thoughts of it goes back to the drive leading up to the property. The road to the club house would be crowded with cars, most of which would be adorned with decals that said things like, “Chamorro Pride,” stated family names, or had the Guam flag on it. These identity markers are not uncommon to see around American cities with larger Pacific Islander populations, however I was always impressed to see so many of these decals from Guam in one space. Seeing these cars would indicate that it was time for me to catch a glimpse of the main wall of the club grounds. Across the top of the wall was an arch that read, “The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club” and had wire latte stones on either side of it. I did not understand the role of a latte nor did I have any real conceptual



Figure 1. Sons and Daughters of Guam Club Entrance
(Photo by Jesi L. Bennett)

framework to understand the importance of having a space for my Chamorro community. Even with these limitations, I knew that the Guam Club had been a constant space within my family. It was here that I was able to interact with the larger Chamorro community in San Diego. The Guam Club allowed me to be an active participant in events that were culturally significant to us and helped me to start to formulate my own ideas about my Chamorro identity.

Like the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club, Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity, also known as Che'lu, was an important place for me to further understand my Chamorro identity. During my undergraduate work as an Ethnic Studies and Critical Gender Studies double major, I began looking for ways to be more active within my own Chamorro people. I wanted to become reacquainted with my Chamorro community that I often felt cut off from in my education. Once I was introduced to Che'lu, I learned quickly that this nonprofit was more than a social space. Che'lu became a vehicle for me to grow as a scholar and activist. It was during my time as a board of director for the organization that I began to see the complexities of being apart of the Chamorro diaspora.

For example, Chamorro men who had retired from the Navy would help with language classes and canoe building. For many years, I associated their faded green military tattoos and hats that depicted what navy ships they served on as markers of being a sellout. I learned quickly that even though the military moved many Chamorros from the Mariana Islands, these Chamorros are more than the jobs and routes of migration that they took years ago. Che'lu helped me learn more about what Chamorros in San Diego are facing and how we, as a diasporic group, can articulate a Chamorro identity while away from our home islands.

As a Chamorro woman that grew up in San Diego, I am often reminded by my fellow Chamorros that my experiences are different from those who were able to grow up in the Marianas Islands. Even though the Chamorro cultural presence in the Marianas is quite different from San Diego, transpacific Chamorros are not severed from their roots. As Guam faces a massive military buildup of the island and works to understand its links to the United States military industrial complex, I too feel burned by these injustices. These issues do not feel foreign to me because I was exposed to these same problems in as an army brat. I moved from base to base, all the while normalizing and finding security in these places. Even though I am a Chamorro from a diasporic community, the parallels between San Diego's and the Marianas' history is distinctive. We are both struggling with a military might that many have normalized and see as a defining characteristic of our spaces. In the same ways that Guam is imagined as "truly a tropical paradise.... gleaming white sand and crystal clear, warm waters for swimming, snorkeling, or just relaxing and enjoying the fantastic sunsets...." (<http://www.guam-online.com>), San Diego, is also imagined as a tourist destination, absent of conflict and complex history.

According to *The Insiders Guide to San Diego*, “years of development and growth have transformed San Diego into an palm-studded play ground for millions, but the city’s natural beauty remains impressive and largely unchanged.” (Kelleher, xi) In reality, San Diego has a long history of native peoples, colonialism, war, and militarization. It is not until you look beyond the palm trees and umbrella clad beaches that the similarities between Guam and San Diego can be seen.

SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA

For a Western audience, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese explorer sailing for Spain, discovered San Diego in September 28, 1542 (Kelleher, 2). Sebastian Vizcaino, another Spanish explorers, later named this coastal land, San Diego de Alcala, after the feast day of St. Didacus. Even though San Diego is thought to start with the arrival of Spanish explorers, this Mexican land had been home to the San Dieguito and La Jolla Indians from 10,000 B.C. to 5,000 B.C. In 1769 the nomadic Kumeyaay Indians settled in San Diego. These native peoples clashed with the on going Spanish colonization. Even with the installation of missions and the rise of Spanish education, “The natives resisted the missionaries’ every attempt to incorporate them into the mission” (Kelleher, 9). Like the Chamorros of the Marianas in conflict with Spain in their archipelago, Kumeyaay of San Diego also struggled with the colonial structures and oppressive systems that the Spanish brought to their lands. It was not until 1821 that Mexico won its independence from Spain, and San Diego became apart of the Mexican State of Alta California. After this gain of independence, México was at war with the young, expanding nation of the United States. México lost the Mexican American War of 1846-1848, and the territory of Alta California was ceded to the United States.

In 1907 San Diego started to become a naval city when the U.S. Navy opened a coaling station in Point Loma (Kelleher, 20). Most of the economic impact from this small operation was kept to the “Singaree,” or red light district of the future downtown San Diego. Due to this small naval influence on the city, historian Kevin Starr did not include San Diego in his book, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*. He argued that, “From a historian’s point of view, nothing much happened in San Diego before the Second World War” (Davis, 6). It was not until 1934 that the influence of the military in San Diego County grew exponentially. The Consolidated Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo, New York moved to San Diego, making it the “Air Capital of the United States.” As World War II approached, San Diego experienced a large growth because of its importance to the United States’ preparation for war. It was during this time that, “dozens of other war plants followed Consolidated’s lead, swelling the population and rocketing the defense industry into great importance locally” (Kelleher, 21). From World War II to today, San Diego has been in a complex courtship with the naval industrial complex.

San Diego, California, like many other large coastal cities in the US, embodies what one would believe to be a militarized space. “War, tourism spectacle, endangered dissent: these are the perennial axes of modern San Diego history” (Davis, 2). The local history and economy find themselves heavily woven into a large military presence within the region. It is within this militarized space that colonized people and racialized groups affected by U.S. wars, such as Filipinos, Samoans, Somalis, and Vietnamese constitute a large community within San Diego County. Many of these communities of color came to San Diego through military service as well as refugee status, rather than through the

popular immigrant narrative of seeking opportunity. San Diego is known to be a “navy town” and the “birthplace of naval aviation.” It is within this city that there are numerous Naval ports, Marine Corps bases, and Coast Guard stations. Such characteristics exemplify the conditions that facilitated the Chamorro diaspora, through the military conduit, not only in San Diego but also in other coastal cities. The navy alone owns thirteen piers, which encompass 977 acres of land and 326 acres of water. Along with the ownership of San Diego’s geography, over 110,000 active-duty military personnel and 6,000 civilians work within the bases and call San Diego home (www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/san_diego.htm). Due to this large military population, San Diego also has the largest population of military retirees in the nation. This large military influence on the city has led to a fourth of all employment having direct ties to the military. Today, “The military remains a central economic engine, followed by federally subsidized aerospace industries, tourism, and higher education and academic research” (Davis, 168). This economic and social militarism creates a cultural superpatriotism that work against any large-scale opposition to the military or any of its related injustices in San Diego County. In the present day, “San Diego is a double “jumping-off place”: the “placid bay” in which the defeated “folks” drown themselves is a point of departure for manifest destiny’s next chapter in the Pacific and beyond- in Hawaii, China, and Japan, in the Pacific War and Vietnam” (Davis, 13). San Diego continues to be a place that the navy heavily influences and uses for its own militaristic agenda.

HISTORY OF CHAMORROS IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Like other Pacific Islander groups, Chamorros have a long history of migration throughout Oceania. For ancient Chamorros, their strong navigation abilities and skillfully made boats enabled their mobility. Chamorro boats were, “swift, light, and graceful, the proa of the Chamorros was one of the highest state-of-the-art expressions of that most essential instrument of all traditional pacific islanders, the ocean-going sailing canoe” (Rogers, 31). This workmanship could be seen in small paddling canoes used within the reefs, while larger canoes, or sakmans, were used for interisland journeys. Chamorros were able to move throughout their archipelago freely as well as to meet and trade with other islanders. Navigational skills gave Chamorros the ability to move easily as a people.

Mobility for Chamorros changed when the colonial agenda of the Spanish made its way to the Mariana Islands. Spain first journeyed to the Marianas in 1521 and claimed the archipelago as Spanish crown soil in 1565. Spain wanted control over the islands in order to have a stop on their trade route between their other colonies, the Philippines and Mexico. Spain also rationalized its presence in the islands by working for the Catholic Church. With these two plans in mind, the Spanish made all Chamorros live on Guam and Rota while, “interisland trips, or even sailing beyond the reef, were prohibited without the permission of the Spanish authorities. These restrictions were intended to prevent the islanders from fleeing to the northern Marians or to the Carolines” (Rogers, 33). With the Spanish restricting much of Chamorro mobility, the ability to trade with other islanders, like Carolinians, ended. Chamorros movement was stifled for sometime under Spanish rule while they tried to figure out how to control Chamorros.

Toward the end of the Spanish occupation of the Mariana Islands, Chamorro mobility grew again through labor. In the Marianas, Chamorros had to perform communal labor for the Spanish. It was during this time that many Chamorros fell into debt with the Spanish government, church, and prominent families. This financial issue came from loans, lancho (ranch) leases, and other living expenses that Chamorros could not afford. In the 1880s, Chamorros began looking for economic opportunities in the whaling industry to pay for their debts. It was during this time period that as many as 800 Chamorros left their islands to become whalers in Hawai'i. The Spanish Governor Olive y Garcia of the Mariana Islands, described Chamorros within their islands as, "lazy, indolent, ignorant," but once working abroad they were regarded as, "good workers.... There is a common saying that the Chamorro away from his island is a lamp brightening a stranger's door" (Rogers, 105). Chamorros were gaining a reputation as good workers abroad. It was during this time period that many began realizing that there were opportunities off of their islands.

During the early years of American colonization of the Mariana Islands, Chamorros migrated throughout the United States in small numbers for education. After Spain lost the Spanish-American War in 1898, the U.S. gained former Spanish colonies as war prizes. The Mariana Islands were included in this acquisition. The U.S. deemed Guam a naval station while the northern islands were sold to Germany and then later taken by Japan. Due to its strategic location, Guam was run like a military base and the rights of Chamorros were ignored. It was from 1898 to 1950 that Guam was in a naval period that was characterized as having a naval governor that, "exercised complete executive, legislative, and judicial power, with neither a judicial system nor a legislative

body to act as a check on his actions” (Hattori, 18). It was during this time that the naval government worked to assimilate Chamorros. To help further the assimilation process, a few Chamorros had their college funded by the U.S. For example, in 1940, “Dr Ramon Manalisay Sablan returned to Guam, having completed both his education at the University of Louisville Medical School and his internship at Central State Hospital in Lakeland, Kentucky” (Hattori, 3). Dr Sablan was the first Chamorro licensed physician and often used by U.S. to be a role model for his community. Dr. Sablan would talk with Chamorros to take part in American health practices and behavior. Chamorros like Dr. Sablan that were educated in the U.S. almost always came back to Guam. It was not until 1950 that the Organic Act for Guam was established, allowing Guam to have a civilian government and opening a new wave of Chamorro migration under American citizenship.

THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GUAM CLUB

The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club became an important part of the Chamorro transpacific home in 1953 when Joe Flores and Gil Taitano founded the club. Their first event was a Liberation dinner and dance held on July 18, 1953. As the club grew in membership and was established as an official organization in the early 1970s, Gil Taitano donated his property to become the clubhouse. Today the Guam Club sits on two and a half acres, which includes the main clubhouse, pavilion, outdoor kitchen, and bar facilities. It is here that Chamorros gather for village specific fiestas, nobenas, Liberation Day, fundraisers, language classes, senior meals, bingo, cultural speakers, Chamorro veteran groups, and more. It was through the establishment of the Guam Club that village specific organizations were created throughout San Diego. Similarly, the



Figure 2. Sons and Daughters of Guam Club Pavilion
Figure 3. Sons and Daughters of Guam Club Clubhouse
(Photos by Jesi L. Bennett)

Guam Club also inspired the creation of Chamorro based groups throughout California, Washington, Florida, and Washington, D.C. (goisland.net)

For the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club, the establishment is tied in with the militaristic mobility brought to Chamorros after gaining American citizenship. This type of mobility can be understood through the club's logo. The main images on the logo are of the geographical spaces of Guam and California, both of which are seen from a bird's eye view on a blue background. It is as if they are two islands on an Oceanic map. Seeing the two landmasses placed next to each other highlights Chamorros new navigation of their transpacific home through airplanes rather than canoes. For Chamorros, the airplane is called, "batkon aire," which literally translates to, "air boat" (Topping, 220). The usage of airplanes has allowed Chamorros to move beyond the Mariana Islands and expand their Oceania into the United States. Even though Chamorros have migrated for many different reasons, the U.S. military continues to be a major force behind the relocation of Chamorros. With the passing of the Organic Act in 1950, Chamorros became U.S. citizens and the number of young Chamorros joining the military grew exponentially.



Figure 4. Sons and Daughters of Guam Club Logo
(Photos by Jesi L. Bennett)

With the rebuilding of Guam after World War II, more and more Chamorros were graduating from high school and thrown into a new wage based economy. The way in which Guam was being rebuilt for the U.S. military left few opportunities for Chamorros to make a living off of tradition occupations. Instead, the military, “remained the most viable option for those not continuing on to university or having no island connections to secure a good job” (Underwood, 167). The first large wave of Chamorros joining the military not only came with citizenship but with enlistment during the Korean War. This mobility for Chamorros established, “a convenient exit form Guam but also established the major U.S. points of entry, since Chamorros in California concentrated in communities adjoin such major naval facilities as San Diego or Long Beach” (Underwood, 167). Chamorros were being shipped out and flown to places like San Diego for their military service. The Guam Club’s decision to have Guam and California

floating next to each other in their logo speaks to the ever-expanding, borderless space of the Mariana Islands.

The Guam Club's logo also alludes to strong kinship ties amongst Chamorros in San Diego as well as with those in Guam. Within the logo, Guam and California have been depicted as islands of the same scale. This can be interpreted as the club members seeing the relationship that they have to their island as relevant and important to their new home space. It is through the Guam Club that Chamorros abroad are able to speak back to their homeland and have a place to fulfill their cultural needs and obligations. For Chamorros in San Diego, "their comparatively small number in relation to the total population, their familiarity with American life-styles and culture, and the pattern of suburban life in California, Chamorro neighborhoods are neither necessary no possible" (Underwood, 174). Since newly settled Chamorros did not live in clusters within San Diego County, they used the Guam Club as a space to socialize and reaffirm their cultural roots. This is important for Chamorros because they can have a space that,

"provides roots in the new environment. His need for hospitality and friendship creates a cooperative and interdependent desire to help his fellow islander cope with the problems of social survival in an alien environment. For him, the social group.... functions as a means in itself to sustain group life. Often, social obligations are more important to an islander than school or job obligations" (Untalan, 64).

The Guam Club gives Chamorros a place to make connections to people they might have not been able to in Guam while also keeping kinship bonds strong in a new geographical and cultural context. Since many of the Guam Club members are man'amko (elder), there

has yet to be formal Guam Club website established on the internet. Without access to the mission statement of the Guam Club, online forums give some indication of the social draw of the club. On Yelp.com, one user writes about Chamorros, “Where do they go for culture besides their grandparents? The Guam Club!” Another user lists different memories that she has of the club. She writes of, “Dinner dances and Sunday brunches....kelaguen and red rice and BBQ.... Liberation Queens....Fundraisers....Pugua and pupululu leaves....muffled laughter as old women sing those Chamoru songs way too loud and off key....” It is through these comments that one can see how the lines between Guam and California become blurred at the Guam Club. For Chamorros in the diaspora, “frequent visiting and socializing are practiced and maintained just as strongly on the mainland as on the island” (Untalan, 47). It becomes easy to understand the reasoning behind having Guam and California draw to the same scale for this transpacific group.

The Guam Seal within the club’s logo speaks to the militarism in Guam and the militarized path many Chamorros have taken. Between the two landmasses on the club’s logo is the Guam seal, which is the same size as the islands around it. The Guam seal is typically seen in the middle of the Guam flag. The scene within it depicts a beach from Guam, a lone coconut tree, a Chamorro sakman, and the Two Lovers’ Point cliff. Even though the flag for Guam is meant for those who call Guam home, the design of the seal is tied to militarism. Helen Paul, a navy wife stationed on Guam, designed and sketched the blueprints for the Guam flag. Paul constructed the Guam seal in a way that she found visually appealing through her hobby of photography. It was through Paul’s hobby of photography that, “brought her in line with the civilizing mission as many of her visuals

and captions conveyed what was “dandy” about U.S. colonialism” (Delisle, 168). Like the military wife who decided how Guam would be symbolically understood with its flag, the military continues to control how the island is understood, used, and what its future will look like. The military owns one-third of the islands, all of which used to belong to various Chamorro families. The U.S. military also controls how the island is understood by coining for nicknames for Guam like, “where America’s day begins,” “tip of America’s spear,” and, “unsinkable aircraft carrier.” It also pushes the idea that Guam is a military recruiters paradise, where Guam has more people joining the military per capita than any other place in the U.S. Finally, the military tries to control the island’s future by proposing a daunting military buildup that would bring in 8,000 troops, their dependents, and outside labor from Okinawa to Guam. The U.S. military keeps its grasp tight on the island in order to make sure Chamorros are kept from creating representations of themselves and their islands that are not tied to America. What is also interesting is that there is no seal or flag for California. This could be the case because the club is trying to emphasize its relationship to Guam rather than its relationship to its new home in San Diego.

The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club logo speaks to the specific identity politics that Chamorros in the diaspora face. The club’s name is written around the logo to frame the entire image of Guam and California. Unlike many of the other Chamorro groups in San Diego that incorporate a Chamorro phrase or word into their logos, the Guam Club’s is in English. The language and word choices speak to the time when the Guam Club’s members were first settling in San Diego. The agenda of Chamorros just moving from Guam to San Diego in the 1950s and 1960s was different from the cultural

and linguistic projects that Chamorro groups are addressing today. The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club became a space for newly migrated Chamorros to figure out how they could express their cultural identity in a place that knew little to nothing about their home islands. This meant finding out how to fit in between longing for home while also starting to lay down roots in San Diego. The Guam Club became the symbol of an organization, “behaving as if they are a permanent thread in the fabric of Californian life....” (Underwood, 176). Cultural maintenance did not become a concern and priority until these early generations of migrant Chamorros began having children and raising their families primarily in San Diego. Using the phrase, “Sons and Daughters of Guam,” speaks to the connections that the club members were trying to keep open and alive with their motherland.

The identity politics that newly migrated Chamorros faced in San Diego changed with time away from home. Many during the 1950s were looking to get adjusted to life in the United States in a time where, “their personal contacts there are viewed as people of exotic interest” (Underwood, 175). Chamorros today are still seen as exotic, however they are also mislabeled in many other ways. Chamorros are often seen as Latin@ due to the Spanish influence in many of their names. Other Chamorros are understood as being Asian due to the popular Asian Pacific Islander category in the U.S. In the diaspora, Chamorros are hypervisible because of their brown bodies. At the same times, Chamorro indigeneity is invisible due to mislabeling from those in their new surroundings. This mislabeling also comes from Chamorros themselves. For many in the diaspora, Guamanian is used as an identity marker rather than Chamorro. Historically, the term Guamanian was adopted on Guam after WWII by the U.S. Navy and locals. It was meant to

name the, “permanent inhabitants of the island. This ethnically neutral designation was the result of informal polls and school contest in which the public chose Guamanian over the traditional term Chamorro and such other names as *Guamese*, *Guamians*, or *Guamericans*” (Fogers, 209). It was also during this time period that the labels mainlanders and statesiders were used to talk about those in the U.S. The origins of Guamanian are rooted in colonial practices to erase Chamorros from the island. By using an ethnically neutral word and having everyone on Guam buy into it, there is an erasure of any indigeneity. Guamanian also works to keep Chamorros severed as a people. This term makes it so that Chamorros from the Northern Mariana Islands are separate entities, not included in the Guam-centric identity. Even though Guamanian is often used in the diaspora to help non-Pacific Islanders locate the persons roots, it simultaneously denies the person their claims to an indigenous identity. Perhaps older Chamorros in places like San Diego continue to mark their roots with the term Guamanian because they, “are struck in a time-lag vis-à-vis their relationship to Guam and Chamorro identity.... since they left when the term Guamanian was rather clear-cut in its boundaries, they have organized Guamanian Associations throughout the golden state” (Underwood, 9). Many older Chamorros could use the term Guamanian to self-identity due to the political climate on Guam when they left, however Chamorros that were born and raised in the states use the label too. Many are aware that they are Chamorro and will say so to family, friends, and other that are understand their cultural roots. Guamanian often comes up in the diaspora because it has the word Guam in it. Guamanian makes it easier for the average American to figure out where the person might be coming from. For diasporic

Chamorros, finding ways to identify themselves in their transpacific context can be difficult.

CHAMORRO HANDS IN EDUCATION LINKS UNITY (CHE'LU)

With the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club seen as a social space, there was a push to have an educational and cultural component added to the organization. In the early 2000s, Che'lu (Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity) Inc. was created as the Guam Club's non-profit organization. Its mission is, "dedicated to the Chamorro community by strengthening our native language, culture and health through education." Due to conflict, the Guam Club and Che'lu severed ties and became separate organizations. Today Che'lu is partners with the Jacob Center for Neighborhood Innovation. The Jacob Center mission is, "resident ownership of neighborhood change," in southeastern San Diego. Since Che'lu and the Guam Club work within that particular area of San Diego, the Jacob Center has given Che'lu office space. It also has the Guma Chamorro and the Chamorro Cultural Festival on its grounds. Along with working with the Jacob Center, Che'lu has cultural and educational initiatives for Chamorros. They have built a recreation of the Chamorro Sakman, or flying proa, started language classes, ran Pacific Islander health initiatives, and conducted cultural workshops. Che'lu becomes a Chamorro cultural resource for Chamorros who were raised in the U.S.

Che'lu's original logo works to express a transpacific Chamorro identity that rooted in the Mariana Islands. Inside of the logo are white hands reaching out to the Mariana Islands that look to be incased within our ancient home pillars, also known as latte stones. Rather than focusing on Guam or any particular island as the center of the organization, Che'lu works to acknowledge Chamorro roots. From the perspective of the



Figure 5. Jacob Center for Neighborhood Innovation

Figure 6. Guma Chamorro

(Photos by Jesi L. Bennett)

viewer, it looks as though the hands are reaching out to its homeland that can be either interpreted as the islands or the foundation to our ancestral homes, the latte stone. The latte stone (with the Mariana Islands inside of it) looks to be on a globe. The background is a blue grid, similar to nontraditional means of navigation. Like the Guam Club’s design, Che’lu’s logo is constructing imagery that calls to home from a distant place. Che’lu’s logo does not have California placed or mentioned anywhere on it, however the outstretched hands indicate a longing of connection from the Chamorro diasporic community.

In 2011, Che’lu’s redesigned logo completely moves away from geographical features of the islands to bring in a Chamorro body. The new logo’s imagery coincided with the planning of the third annual Chamorro Cultural Festival. In some ways the new logo is similar to the original insignia. The organization kept the same round shape and used the name of the organization to border the emblem. The focal point of the logo



Figure 7. Original Che'lu Logo

Figure 8. Current Che'lu Logo

(<https://www.facebook.com/CHELUSD>)

continues to be a latte stone, however what is depicted around it has changed. Rather than being placed on what seemed to be a globe, the latte stone now has lines coming out from behind. One could interpret the beams as rays of sunshine or perhaps that the latte stone itself is shining. Reminiscent of a sunset, this setting could be seen as the viewer looking home. The middle of the logo could call to the idea that at the end of the day, Chamorros still look to their ancestral land and regard it as home. What makes this logo very different from Che'lu's original design and the Guam Club's insignia is that where there used to be islands depicted now is a figure of a man. The man has his hair cut in the style of ancient Chamorros and the muscular figure is reaching his hands out toward the latte stone. What is interesting about this change is the decision to move away from using islands and incorporating a hypermasculine body in the logo. Within ancient Chamorro society, "Descent within the clan was reckoned through the female line. This matrilineal principle conferred power and prestige on Chamorro women" (Souder, 44). The maga'haga (oldest women) in clan held the highest rank within society along with

maga'lahi (oldest man). It is interesting that a muscular male figure to be a major component of the logo. Currently there are nine women serving as board of directors in Che'lu. This is stark contrast to the two men who are serving as board of directors. The current president of Che'lu is also a woman who has been in the organization for a few years. Even though the patriarchal culture of Spain and the United States has had influence on the Marianas Islands, “ Chamorro women play a pivotal role, indeed an essential one, in sustaining the family and perpetuating traditions which form the core of Chamorro identity.... Chamorro women do hold significant and powerful positions in Chamorro society structure today” (Souder, 46). With Chamorro woman historically being the central figure in the household and continuing to run organizations like Che'lu, having this male body in the logo can erase the role and importance of the woman who make up the organization and larger Chamorro population in San Diego.

The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club and Che'lu are two of many Chamorro organizations within San Diego that work to foster Chamorro identities in a transpacific context. It is with these two active and established organizations that the complexities of maintaining ties to the Mariana Islands as well as identifying as Chamorro can be seen. The two groups also work within a larger Pan Pacific community in San Diego, as the following chapters will show, working within this framework can be both beneficial and complicated at times. Chapter two will move away from the physical spaces that Chamorros use to assert their indigeneity to look more closely at the role native owned clothing brands play in self-representation.

CHAPTER 2. FASHIONABLE SOVEREIGNTY: TRANSPACIFIC CLOTHING WITHIN THE CHAMORRO DIASPORA

Throughout Oceania, culturally based clothing lines are becoming a popular means of self-representation. It is not uncommon to see Pacific Islander men and women wearing clothes that depict their cultural identities through words, pictures, and symbols. For Pacific Islanders abroad, many have family and friends send or bring them clothing from local brands. While most of these brands are not producing traditional fashions, the tee shirts and hats that they design articulate a transpacific identity that helps them connect to their home islands. Pacific Islander designs become a way for those in the diaspora to wear a piece of home on their body and represent their roots while away.

Chamorro owned clothing brands are no exception to creating identity-based designs. By taking a closer look at the history of clothing for Chamorros, one can see how the shirt designs of today have been influenced by fashion colonialism. Even with these pressures, Chamorro brands can be decolonial and help to push for new understandings of what it means to be a native person. With Pacific Islander owned brands in the United States and within Oceania, these clothing companies help to construct a particular kind of Pacific Islander identity. Within the Chamorro context, this formula has occurred through three popular brands Island TAT (Traditions All Together), Fokai, and Magas. It is important to investigate how these brands current attempts to be clothing companies play a role in Oceanic cultural expression and identity. Are Pacific Islander clothing companies continuing the trend of commercializing a community's culture, or is this a decolonizing act that helps to create new forms of knowledge production and identity? Through the mission of the brand and images that they produce, what type of Pacific Islander identity is being constructed specifically in the Mariana

Islands and in the Chamorro diaspora? To understand what a shirt from Island TAT, Fokai, or Magas can do for a Pacific identity, it is important to realize the, “messy and highly subjective nature of cultural identities.... that emphasizes agency, intersubjectivity, and context” (Morton, 5). All of these components work together to make a unique situation and approach to branding for a company. Fokai (to break) is an international clothing brand that was created in Guam. Rooted in fighting culture, Fokai’s designs speak to specific type of Chamorro hypermasculinity. Magas (boss) is a Saipan based company that also uses native words and legends to reclaim colonial erasure of Chamorro masculinities. With Island TAT being from the Chamorro diaspora and stressing the idea of “traditions all together,” it strives to create a Pan Pacific identity. While this inclusive identity is being created, the realities of being outside of Oceania and relying on profits for sustainability complicate the “traditions all together.” All three clothing companies use designs as a tool to reclaim and promote a particular Chamorro identity.

For ancient Chamorros, the concept of clothing was perceived differently from how many understand it today. The climate of the Mariana Islands made it so that clothing was minimal. Ancient Chamorros had no clothing except for the women who wore a, “small triangular apron called a *tifi*, or a skirt of grass or leaves suspended from a belt.... Or a plate of turtle shell to cover themselves” (Cunningham, 44). Chamorros wore woven hats made of pandanus, called *batya*, to shield them from the sun and rain. Woven sandals, or *dogga*, protected their feet from the reef and other harsh land. Ancient Chamorros also wore “shell and stone ornaments, including several types of shell beads

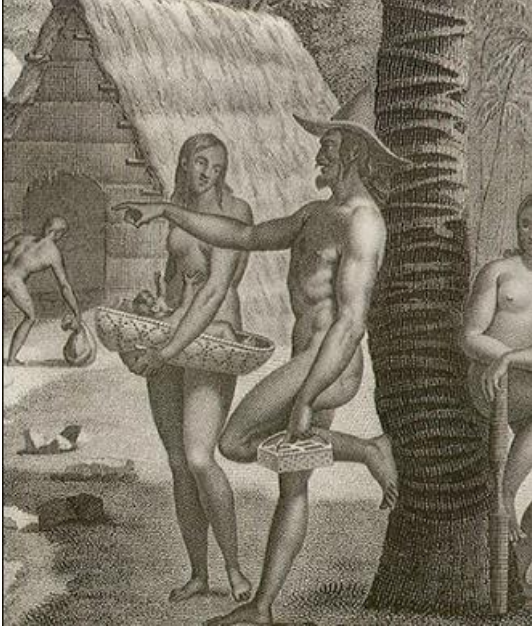


Figure 9. Ancient Chamorro Clothing

(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/guampedia/3985565160/lightbox/>)

and stone and shell pendants” (Russell, 134). Many times these pieces were worn as decoration or to showcase particular rank or status within the community. Besides these few ornamentations, full body clothing was a foreign concept that did not become apart of daily Chamorro life until Spanish colonization.

When Spanish explorers and missionaries settled in the Mariana Islands during the 1500s, they brought with them Christian ideologies of shame and indecency. For Chamorros, “Because no one wore clothes from birth to death, there was no shame” (Farrel, 99). By demonizing Chamorro culture, Spanish missionaries worked to changed social norms within the islands. Chamorro bodies were clothed with imported garments brought from Mexico and the Philippines. With time, especially in Guam, “the Chamorros who survived the Spanish conquest gradually became Hispanicized.... They wore Spanish clothing, at least when in town” (Farrel, 191). They preferred to wear items that were understood to be the most European, such as silver rings and earrings, pants,



Figure 10. Spanish Influenced Clothing

(<http://www.pacificworlds.com/cnmi/visitors/people.cfm>)

sleeved vests, and mestisas. This familiarity and usage of Western clothing continued into American occupation of the Mariana Islands.

After the Spanish-American War when the US received Guam as a war prize and, the concept of clothing changed yet again for Chamorros. The US used clothing as one way to justify continued colonization of the islands. By having the military administration portray Chamorros as, “sometimes wretched, sometimes decent, these elastic representations of the indigenous people could be manipulated to justify a wide range of colonial practices” (Hattori, 20). These depictions helped create sanitation laws that worked to assimilate or Americanize Chamorros through health and hygiene policies. This included having sanitary inspectors check homes, schools, and other areas of Chamorro daily life. This was done to ensure that Chamorros had clean shoes on, washed and dried their clothes a way, and did not wear mestisa skirts that were thought to attract dirt. These policies of, “governing girls skirts and the hanging of laundry may have arisen out of concerns for hygiene, but they simultaneously reinforced the government’s power to control the minute details of each person’s daily life” (Hattori, 21). Clothing under



Figure 11. Chamorro Women in Mestisas

(<http://www.nationalgeographicstock.com/ngsimages/explore/explorecomp.jsf?xsys=SE&id=604845>)



Figure 12. Chamorro Women in American Style Skirts

(<http://www.pacificworlds.com/cnmi/memories/memory2.cfm>)

American rule was a means for the US to manage Chamorro bodies in order to assimilate and ensure naval personnel that Guam was a livable place.

After 100 years of American occupation in the Mariana Islands, the US military continues to have a strong grip over Chamorro daily life. This grasp can be seen in the unprecedented amount of Chamorros serving in the military. Uniforms become a colonial means to manage Chamorro bodies. The fatigues that Chamorro soldiers wear signify the need for economic stability and social visibility within the larger American context. Military uniforms also act as a way to further discipline and control Chamorro bodies. This concept of military clothing makes it so that Chamorros’ “fatigues never fit so snugly in the first place- a discomfort that has helped some of them to think about the contradictions and problems of militarism” (Camacho, 170). Clothing issued by the military signifies a continued and uncomfortable colonial relationship between the Mariana Islands and the US that has yet to be resolved.



Figure 13. Chamorro Men in Naval Uniform
(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/guampedia/4010479708/>)

At the end of the nineteenth century, sports like football were first introduced to Oceania through the military. For the U.S., sports and their uniforms were used as tools to assimilate and instill American ideals in their new colonial subjects. For example, “in American possessions like Guam, the anxiety also reflected an interest to uplift and discipline natives who were typically characterized as degenerate and potentially troublesome” (Diaz, 180). Even though with the agenda to Americanize Pacific peoples, sports have become a means to getting into college and professional athletic careers outside of the Pacific for young islanders. It is through this history of Spanish and American influence on Chamorro daily life, Chamorro men and women continue to follow the clothing trends and styles of Western culture.

TRANSPACIFIC CLOTHING: ISLAND TAT

Island TAT is a clothing company that is an extension of a career in tattooing that Joshawa Elsas started almost ten years ago. Joshawa Elsas is a Chamorro that grew up in Hawaii and became a tattoo artist that specializes in Polynesian based tattoo designs. His clothing company, that consists mostly of shirts and sweatshirts are decorated with

Polynesian tattoo inspired designs. Depicted on the shirts are usually mixes of Polynesian based tattoo drawings along side symbols from other parts of the Pacific and even from more local southern California. In terms of inventory, there is more men's clothing offered for purchase than for women. Even though there are other Pacific Islander clothing companies that are based in San Diego, like Tatau and Chamorro Style, their popularity and visibility within the diasporic Pacific Islander community does not compare to that of Island TAT.

In order to begin to comprehend the ways in which Island TAT creates a Pan Pacific identity through its clothing, one must first look at the city that it started in. San Diego like many other large coastal cities in the United States embodies what one would believe to be a highly militarized space. The local history and economy find themselves heavily woven into a large military presence within the region. It is with this militarized space that colonized people and racialized groups affected by U.S. wars and plights, such as Chamorros, Filipinos, Samoans, Somalis, and Vietnamese, constitute a large community within San Diego County.

Island TAT emerges from a very active and significantly sized transpacific community within San Diego County. With the reality that different Pacific Islander ethnic groups interact with each other and have cross-cultural exchanges at such things as Pacific Islander Festival Association (PIFA), a Pan Pacific identity is something that can be and is commercially successful for a brand like Island TAT. The idea of "traditions all together" is not only the mission of the brand but it also becomes a marker of the Pacific Islander representation that it is trying to create. Due to the physical number of Pacific Islanders in San Diego and the shared roots in Oceania, many find it beneficial to work

together as a larger joined community. Joshawa himself is the embodiment of this Pan Pacific sensibility in San Diego. He states on his website that, “I identify myself with the Hawaiian culture because this is what I was raised and grew up with. It is where you were raised or who you associate with, who make you...you” (<http://islandtat.com/about.php>). Having ethnic ties to Guam but growing up in Hawaii and feeling apart of Hawaiian culture, Joshawa is a product of this Pan Pacific thinking. Due to this lived experience for Joshawa, Island TAT produces clothing that allows other Pacific Islanders in the diaspora to wear their ethnic and regional identities on their sleeve. It is as if "she or he is at one level proclaiming, "I too have a 'culture.' I am culturally marked. I am not plain vanilla or nondescript, like the palagi" (whites)” (Linnekin, 335). At the same time, many of these designs also bring in other island groups’ symbols that create a more Pacific, regional design, rather than an island specific representation. For example, on the company’s website one can choose from an array of shirt designs that create an inclusive, Pan Pacific identity. A shirt with a Chamorro latte stone on it is next to a shirt with a Polynesia inspired stingray on it. The shirt called, “Guam Tribal,” has a Guam seal sketched out in a way that incorporates a Polynesia tattooing designs on it. There is also a set of shirts that all have word “love” written in block letters (with Polynesian tattoo designs inside of it) across the front of it. Each one is a little different depending on what island specific symbol is positioned in place of the letter “o.” Depending on the symbol used, some shirts are called, “Love HI,” “Love Tonga,” “Love Sovereignty,” etc. All of these tops are designed in a way that not only calls to one’s ethnic roots but it also denotes a self identity that is shaped by Oceania as a united and collaborative region.

Island TAT's clothing helps to construction a Pan Pacific identity that not only works to be a representation of a united Oceania but also a printed symbol of resistance. As much as the shirts from the clothing brand help signify the person wearing it as a member of a specific Pacific ethnic group, it also denotes the person's positionality as a native Pacific person. Joshawa stays away from the imaginary boundaries that colonizers have set up in the Pacific to disrupt the idea of the Pacific region as a fluid network of people, objects, ideas, etc. By presenting this newly recentered Oceania, rather than three separate Pacific regions, Island TAT creates physical markers of the unifying ideas that influential Pacific scholars, like Hau'ofa, have stressed. Whether it is Joshawa's intentions or not, his shirts can be interpreted as taking a political and resistant stance to outsiders understanding of the Pacific. This is not the first instance of Pacific Islanders finding resistance in the clothing they wear. During the 1970s, Native Hawaiian surfers from the North Shore of O'ahu, wore black board shorts to signify an identity that is rooted in indigeneity, land, and more specifically, water. It is as if when the, "members of the Hui used the shorts in the water, they constituted moving texts and living bo(a)rders, signifying a claim to ocean space" (Fermantez, 93). In the case of Island TAT, taking a Transpacific approach to designs constructs a united Oceania within a diasporic context. It makes claims to land space and identity that is shown through one's attire. With strength in numbers, not only is Island TAT able to make a profit, it is also enabling a new conceptualization of what it means to be from the Oceania. With not only aesthetically pleasing but also thought provoking designs, the consumer is buying into a representation of himself or herself that is empowering and shows self-pride. Even though Island TAT may seem to be just a clothing company, the designs help to situate



Figure 14. Guam Tribal Men’s Tee Shirt
 (<http://islandtats.com/shop/shop/guam-tribal-2/>)

Figure 15. Love Collection
 (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2320940636535&set=a.1042295951217.8412.1640156496&type=3&theater>)

the consumer as apart of a larger region. It enables visibility and validity in the consumers’ ethnic roots and cultural pride. This is a step forward for Pacific Islanders because for a long time it was the outsider who decided who and what an indigenous person from Oceania should be understand as.

As much as Island TAT is helping the Pacific diaspora in San Diego to rethink their identity as people from Oceania, it is also working to reconstruct other local identities. Even though the clothing brand started and still emphasizes Pacific inspired designs, it has more recently started to incorporate sport teams. This new venture can be seen as Island TAT being influenced by their local surroundings. With the case of the Tongan diaspora, Helen Morton discusses how this group of people has constructed their own culture outside of their island nation. She states that, “The subjective experience of

identity, both personal and cultural, is challenged by confrontation with a different culture. Often, the very fact of embodiment, particularly in relation to physical appearance, can become a source of confusion and anxiety about identity....” (Morton, 6). This idea of being influenced by a dissimilar surrounding can help to form one’s identity. For Island TAT, the reality is that they are located in southern California. It is there that Pacific Islanders are interacting with other ethnic groups, learning new cultural ideas and practices, and viewing southern California as a second home. Shirts like, “S.D.,” “Chargers,” “Raiders,” “San Fran,” and “L.A.” all call to this new sense of home and evolving identity as Pacific Islanders abroad. What is interesting is how the designs of these shirts are co-opted and indigenized. Symbols, such as the San Diego Charger’s lightning bolt, are drawn out in a Pacific Island tattooing tradition. The same goes for the shirts that represent the baseball teams in San Diego and Los Angeles. The letters for these city initials are turned into Polynesian inspired tattoos. These sport designs speak to ideals of Pacific Islander masculinity and more importantly, the mobility athletics like football and rugby have brought to the Oceania. Island TAT’s sport shirts have come to represent the new investment islanders are now having outside of Oceania. These designs are symbolic of the lived realities of the Pacific diaspora that are currently reconceptualizing their ideas of home and sense of place. This notion helps to further complicate and show how complex local Pacific Islander identities are in places like southern California.

Complicating Island TAT’s mission of “traditions all together,” is the newly incorporated Filipino designs that are emerging from their clothing line. On Island TAT’s website, shirts like, “Love Pinoy,” and “Pinoy Shimmer,” are next to tops like, “Ikaika



Figure 16. Chargers Tee Shirt

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2196248399307&set=a.1042295951217.8412.1640156496&type=3&theater>)



Figure 17. San Fran Hoodie

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2802880524731&set=a.1042295951217.8412.1640156496&type=3&theater>)

Chest Plate,” and “Latte Stone.” Some could question whether Joshawa is incorporating Filipinos into his target audience because he is pushing the notion of what it means to be a Pacific Islander. Filipina scholar, Joanna Rondilla argues that, “In California, Filipinos are the largest Asian ethnic minority group. It makes no sense for Filipinos to be marginalized within a racial group where we are becoming the largest ethnic component. Therefore, we need to shift away from the old ways in which we are defined” (Rondilla, 62). Within San Diego, many young Filipinos are disassociating themselves from Asian American labels that are often seen as undesirable. They are now making claims to Pacific Islander identities that many Americans see as exotic and romantic. For example, it is not uncommon to see Filipinos take part in various forms of Pacific Islander life such as dancing in halaus and attending island reggae shows. With more and more Filipinos

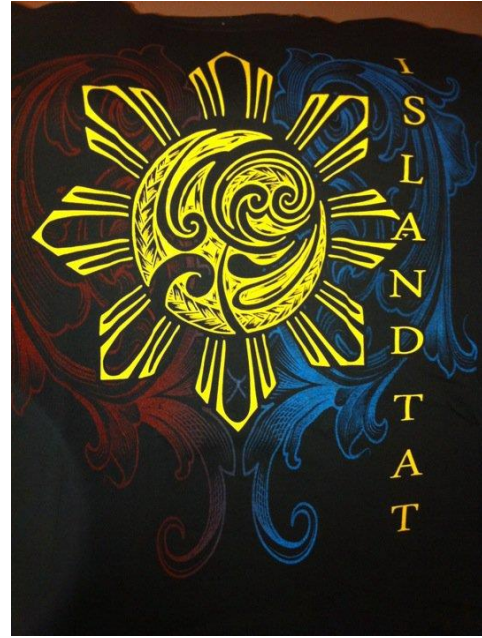


Figure 18. Pinoy Love

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10150448654217332&set=t.1640156496&type=3&theater>)

Figure 19. Pinoy Shimmer

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1691136883218&set=t.1640156496&type=3&theater>)



finding appreciation for Pacific Islander culture and an island “way of life,” Island TAT seems to have caught on to this trend. The brand is bending to local needs to not only serve a population but to turn a profit. The brand gives little attention to the implications of conforming to an Asian Pacific Islander (API) model. Island TAT overlooks Pacific Islanders moving towards “Oceania” based identities in order to replace colonial constructs of the “Pacific.” Working under an API model also erases the fight by Pacific Islanders to stand independently of the “A.” There has been a push from scholars like Rondilla to acknowledge that certain Asian communities, like Filipinos, do have shared histories with Oceanic peoples. For example, Chamorros and Filipinos were both Spanish colonies, and after World War II Filipinos made up a large group of outside labor used to rebuild the Mariana Islands for the United States. Even though these are important parallels in histories, the API category is still not justified. The thousands of years of rich

Chamorro history prior to Spanish occupation shares few parallels with the Philippines. At the same time, the Mariana Islands cannot constitute the whole Oceania historical experience and reasoning behind a strong connection between Asian and Pacific Islander groups. Today Pacific Islanders face unique issues directly linked to native sovereignty and self-determination, and “perhaps the biggest difference between Pacific Islander and Asian American histories, struggles, and studies is that binary between the condition and status of Indigeneity versus Immigrant/Settle identity under the sign of America....”(Diaz, 197). For Island TAT, moving to incorporate Filipinos into their brand highlights a lack of understanding about the PI struggle for visibility under the privileged “A.”

Even though Island TAT’s decision to incorporate Filipino designs calls into question their understanding of API politics, one must keep in mind that Island TAT is a business that relies on revenue to continue to thrive and be sustainable. "The search for new markets -capitalist expansion- therefore has the potential to influence not only the graphic content of designs on consumer goods but also the way in which people conceptualize themselves and others" (Linnekin, 325). With Filipino designs only recently incorporated into Island TAT’s clothing and an untapped market for Filipino based clothing companies in San Diego, commercialization and profit come into question. Roger Keesing discusses this issue of commercialization of a Pacific identity and presenting it in a way that is easy sold and digested by outsiders. He states that, “the “cultures” so commoditized and packaged can be sold to tourists. I have commented elsewhere on the way this commoditization shapes Pacific cultures to fit Western fantasies....” (Keesing, 32). Even though Island TAT is not constructing Pacific clothing

to fit Western needs, it is constructing it in a way that is accessible and packaged for Filipinos. The designs that are being produced for Filipinos show a wider conversation that Island TAT is having with the San Diego community. It not only shows the reality of having a business, but how the outside community can influence the inside. Joshawa's surroundings have the power to control what he designs and for who he designs for.

As much as clothing is used for functional reasons, it can also serve as a quick glance into different aspects of a person's identity. For Pacific Islanders, there is a current market that serves to produce Pacific based clothing that aims to produce ethnic and cultural designs. Within San Diego, the Pacific Islander brand, Island TAT, uses the tradition of Polynesian tattooing and symbols from throughout Oceania to create shirts that push for a Pan Pacific identity. The specificities of being a Pacific brand coming from the diaspora and serving a mix of Pacific Islanders makes for a unique Pan Pacific representation of islanders. Ideas of unity and resistance to outsiders' perspectives of Oceania come through, through the designs that Island TAT creator, Joshawa Elsas, creates. In actuality, one could argue that a, "common cultural identity is being claimed do not exist; rather, it is that they have been given existence and importance through the process of colonial domination" (Keesing, 26). Given the struggles that many Pacific Islanders faced in leaving their homelands and dealing with the assumptions many outsiders have about being from the Pacific, the empowered Pan Pacific identity that Island TAT works to make is validated. The combination of shirt designs that incorporate Pacific symbols alongside local, southern California styles helps to highlight the complexity of something like a Pan Pacific identity in the diaspora. For Island TAT, one of these complexities is being a business in need of funding to sustain itself. This has led

to such things as southern California symbols and Filipino designs making its way into their inventory. Fermantez states that, “Oceanic identities can be seen as fluid and contingent, existing betwixt and between tradition and genealogy on the one hand and decolonizing ideology and counter-hegemonic practices on the other” (Fermantez, 88). This is to say that Pacific identities are multifaceted and working through many different systems that are dependent on their context. Island TAT is not only influence by the Pacific Islanders who are consumers of the brand, but by the surroundings of San Diego. It indigenizes these outside influences in a way that works for them and makes for a unique Pan Pacific identity.

ON ISLAND CLOTHING: FOKAI & MAGAS

Fokai, another Chamorro owned clothing company, deals with the same complexities of designing identity fashions. The company was created about twenty years ago by a group of friends who had connections to mixed martial arts and other extreme sports. Fokai, a Chamorro term to “beat up, injure, or harm” has developed from a homegrown company to an international fighting brand. Today, Fokai has two clothing stores on Guam, an online store, and merchandise sold in Saipan, Japan, Bali, Hawaii, Ireland, and throughout the US. Even though the brand sells merchandise for men, women, and children, typically Fokai’s customer base are young Chamorro men. Due to Fokai’s popularity and success, both Chamorros and fighters wear their apparel.

Even though Fokai has become an internationally recognized brand, many of its shirt designs make claims to a local, Guam identity. Popular designs consist of Fokai in various scripts followed by the phrase, “since ever since,” and Guam’s coordinates, “13 N/ 144 E.” The phrase, “since ever since,” is a popular expression in Guam to explain

something that has always been a certain way or to indicate longevity. The brand makes claims to the island in an ancestral, precolonial way. The irony in “since ever since” is that it is using an English phrase to assert indigeneity. “Since ever since” speaks to the linguistic colonialism that Chamorro has endured for many years. At the end of the Spanish American War in 1898, the Mariana Islands were politically split. The archipelago was sold to Germany, while Guam was given to the United States as a war prize. In Guam, the U.S. looked to manage and acculturate their new colony. During the Naval Era, when Chamorros were under the direction of the U.S. military, “order, cleanliness, education and the knowledge of English all seemed to be part of the same process to many naval officials” (Underwood, 118). This agenda was reflected throughout Guam, however it was through schools that Chamorros were formally taught to embrace all things American and reject their Chamorro culture and language. American teachers taught their students in English, pushed American ideals, and punished students who spoke Chamorro. While education was a major tool in the subjugation of Chamorro, further oppression of the language came through the insistence of English in the mass media, government, and church. For the island, “nothing characterized the naval administration more than its continued, unrelenting emphasis on the use of English....the Chamorro language in their view itself became the enemy of education” (Underwood, 149). The survival of the language was left to the family unit, who was constantly bombarded with policies and ideas that demonized their native tongue and emphasized success with the English language. Today Chamorro is endangered, and there is a push for language revitalization throughout the Mariana Islands and Chamorro diaspora. Fokai’s usage of “since ever since” on their clothing



Figure 20. SES Coordinates

(<http://www.fokaistuff.com/collections/mens/products/ses-coordinates-red>)

Figure 21. Mapper Tee

(<http://www.fokaistuff.com/collections/mens/products/mapper-tee-blue>)

designs signify a change in how young Chamorros can express their native identity through the Chamorro language.

Along with the phrase, “since ever since,” Guam’s coordinates, “13 N/ 144 E,” are incorporated into Fokai shirt designs in order to position the brand as Chamorro. This way of situating the brand calls back to its origins in Guam. Together the two phrases give the brand a credibility of being from and about Guam from the time when it was created. Even though the coordinates position the brand as Chamorro, it also highlights a colonial history in Guam. The coordinates come from nontraditional sailing practices that had a major hand in the decline of Chamorro navigation. Similar to many other island groups in Micronesia, Europeans knew Chamorros for their skills on the ocean and the workmanship of their canoes. One early European explorer said that, “one attempts a description of the canoes, one cannot but ceaselessly praise their skillful velocity and

maneuverability.... When they demonstrate their mastery of the waves, verily they do resemble flying darts, and no steed could better heed the driver's reins than they, nor swifter move" (Farrell, 101). This praise for Chamorro ocean faring was lost with time due to colonial influences throughout the Mariana Islands. While using Guam's coordinates does speak to colonial histories for Chamorros, it simultaneously puts Guam on a global map. With fighters sporting Fokai shirts and fighting gear throughout the world, the coordinates make the brand and Guam comprehensible for a Western audience.

Magas, or boss, is another popular Chamorro clothing brand. This brand started in 2007 by Francisco Cabrera under his company, Stressfree CNMI Company. Today Magas is sold at Cabrera's 670 Rock Steady Shop amongst other Chamorro centered brands such as Adit (Fierce) Brand, Balas (Whip), Fotten Gaga' (Monster Strength), Sons of Taga', and Marianas Built. Even though the 670 Rock Steady Shop does have a website, clothing cannot be purchased from it. One must either be in Saipan or have contacts on island in order to buy the merchandise. Like Fokai, Magas' has clothing for both men and women, but their customer base are young Chamorro men.

Unlike Fokai who uses coordinates to situate itself in Guam, Magas uses Chamorro language to localize the brand in Saipan. This is very different from diasporic brands like Island TAT that use traditional tattoo designs and other island images to mark itself as a Pacific Islander company. In places like Saipan where the Chamorro language is heard and understood by many, focusing on these phrases within the designs situates Magas as a Chamorro brand. Most Magas shirts have Chamorro words along side ancient Chamorro images that most would not recognize unless they come from the Mariana



Figure 22. House of Magas

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=269069959791917&set=a.267302546635325.35848.129568463742068&type=1&theater>)

Figure 23. Tano i man ma'gas

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=159519464080301&set=pb.129568463742068.2207520000.1366627325.&type=3&theater>)

Islands. For example, many Magas shirts have an ancient Chamorro home on latte stones followed by the words, “Magas Nacion” (Boss Nation) or the outline of the Northern Mariana Islands with the phrase, “tano I man ma’gas, islas marianas” (the land of the bosses, mariana islands). There are no translations to help an outside audience understand the meaning of the shirt’s design. This decision can be taken as a political strategy rooted in the larger Oceanic decolonization movement. During the 1970s and 1980s, many Pacific Islands, like Fiji and Tonga, gained independence from colonial powers. It was also during this period that an Oceanic consciousness was growing with the protests for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific. With the rise of regional connections, there were also cultural renaissances taking place in many Pacific Island nations. For example, in Hawai’i the 1970s were marked by Kanaka Maoli political activism and the revitalization

of their language, traditional navigation, and other cultural practices. It was also during this time period that, “the rising Chamorro consciousness led to demands to Chamorrize the curriculum and establish language and culture programs” (Underwood, 376). This awakening for Chamorros enabled the creation of the politically focused group Nasion Chamoru. Nasion Chamoru worked toward a decolonized future for Chamorros. Angel Santos, the leader of the group and former senator, wrote,

“some Chamorus feel it's too late to attend to problems on Guam, but while the Chamorus still make up 42 percent of the population it is not too late. While some Chamorus chose not to sell their land, it is not too late. While some still speak the language, it is not too late. While our culture is still being practiced, it is not too late. Patience, faith and prayer are our only weapons in reversing the injustice and restoring hope for our people” (Santos).

Magas’ designs speak to a history of Chamorros fighting for recognition and rights to self-determination as indigenous people. It is through the political actions of Chamorros before that Magas can have shirts that celebrate their strong ancestry in *fino*’ Chamorro.

For Magas and Fokai, their focus on masculine clothing leaves their women’s lines lacking in merchandise and culturally appropriate designs. Fokai Femme, Fokai’s women’s clothing, has four shirts available on its online store compared to the thirty-two shirts offered to men. In both cases, Chamorro women’s clothing seems quickly thrown together as if they were afterthoughts. The women’s shirts are the same crew cut as the men’s, however they are usually pink and adorned with tropic flowers. This lack of attention to women’s clothing and the romanticism seen in their designs is very different from the actual roles Chamorro women fill in the home. Since ancient Chamorros times,



Figure 24. Buenas

(<http://www.fokaistuff.com/collections/femme>)

Figure 25. Mas Magas

(<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=138362342862680&set=pb.129568463742068.-2207520000.1366708069.&type=3&theater>)



“clans were organized along matrilineal lines of descent. Remember, it was Fu’una, the sister of Putan, who inherited Putan’s powers and created the universe. Women held a special position of authority in the Chamorro society” (Farrell, 95). Ignoring the strength Chamorro women have, leaves many of the Magas’ and Fokai’s shirts playing into Western stereotypes of Pacific Islander women. For example, Fokai Femme’s shirt usually say “buenas,” or hello, leaving Chamorro women to be the welcoming face of the island. For Magas, their women’s design is in pink and has the outline of a Chamorro women’s face with long hair. Beneath the woman it says, “elegance of an island girl,” which plays into the idea of island women being exotic, passive figures. There is no reclaiming of her history or celebrating her strong island heritage like the male designs aim to do. The role of women’s clothing in Chamorro brands is not unique to the Mariana Islands. In places like Hawaii, “identity fashions are worn primarily by Hawai’ian men

and boys.... There are a few Hawaiian Strength aimed at women.... However identity is not only gendered but is overwhelmingly masculinized in this merchandise" (Linnekin, 330). Fokai and Magas' women's clothing lines tell more about their male counterpart than they do of their own gender roles and stories within Chamorro society.

Within the Mariana Islands, new politically focused clothing brands are being created. As Guam faces an uncertain future with a daunting military buildup approaching its shores from Okinawa and the further militarization of Oceania, Chamorro clothing companies are responding to these changes through their designs. Guam Style was founded in 2007 and has a store in Chamorro Village on Guam. Merchandise can also be purchased from their online store, and they have a booth at the annual Chamorro Culture Festival in San Diego, California. Guam Style's mission is to, "Protect, Preserve, Unite.... Protect our Island, Preserve our Culture, Unite the people. We strive as a company to educate the uneducated about our culture. We Promise to KEEP IT ISLAND and always come True and Original" (<http://www.guamstyle.bigcartel.com>). The staple shirts have (<http://www.guamstyle.bigcartel.com/product/keep-it-island-blk-tee>) written across them, "our culture is worth dying for," and "keep it island, fight for Guam." Both designs stress the importance of being culturally and politically aware. Guam Style is reaching out not only to Chamorros in Guam, but they also aim to spread their message to the Chamorro diaspora. Perhaps Guam Style signifies a shift in Chamorro apparel, where being politically and culturally active is celebrated. Perhaps their clothing reflects this new mindset of young Chamorros both in the home islands and within the diaspora.



Figure 26. Our Culture

(<http://www.guamstyle.bigcartel.com/product/our-culture>)



Figure 27. Keep It Island

With native owned clothing brands becoming an important part of representing ideas of indigeneity, the next chapter will move into the festivals where diasporic Chamorros perform their nativism. The festivals discussed are events in which the Chamorro social and nonprofit organizations as well as the Chamorro owned clothing brands, come together to express a complex understanding of what it means to have ancestral roots in Oceania. The festivals illustrate how the social, commercial, and cultural, all work together to help maintain cultural links to home islands while establishing unique diasporic Pacific Islander identities.

CHAPTER 3. TRANSPACIFIC FESTIVALS: VALIDATING IDENTITY

Within the transpacific home, gatherings of Pacific Islanders are an important means of maintaining collective identities and links to home islands. Get-togethers are an important part of life for Chamorros today. Weddings, births, funerals, and graduations bring Chamorros from throughout the islands and diaspora together. In some ways, a gupot, or party, is more important now than ever for Chamorros because it serves as a tool to maintain familial relations in a time when Chamorros have become the most widely dispersed ethnic group in the United States. Having a gupot brings Chamorros together from far and wide in order to take care of social and cultural obligations. Smaller gatherings, usually in the form of a barbeque, are typically held at the beach, a person's house, or a park. A gupot serve the purpose of bringing people together and allow for cultural maintenance through the sharing of stories, hospitality, and food to take place.

Even though Pacific focused gatherings and festivals may feel like a modern occurrence, Pacific Islanders have been gathering together since ancient times. Within the Mariana Islands, Chamorros use the word gupot to describe a, "party, celebration, fiesta, festivity, holiday, feast" (Topping, 84). Chamorros would hold a gupot for important life events like weddings, births, deaths, and even "planting, first fruits, the first run of a certain kind of fish, harvesting.... the capture of a turtle or a large fish like a marline was a cause for celebration" (Cunningham, 130). This type of gupot would bring together a family or clan but many times these celebrations would include whole villages. These gatherings of people were not only a cause for celebration but it also took care of social, spiritual, and cultural obligations. Bringing people together helped to strengthen bonds between family, friends, and the larger community.

Culturally, a gupot created a space for Chamorros to practice their traditions. During the feast, “relate their histories, genealogies, and legends. They recited poetry, and told stories” (Farrell, 100). Ancestors were venerated and histories shared through storytelling and singing. Music was often accompanied by people dancing and chanting. Men were known to have competitions that tested their courage and strength. Activities included wrestling, spear and sling stone throwing, dancing, swimming, jumping, and running. Along with the physical activities, intellectual competitions were also common at a gupot. Chamorrta songs took much skill and were often gambled on. The singers would have to sing a song, “in four-line stanzas.... The opponent had to make up four lines to answer” (Cunningham, 131). The poetic activity usually teased the competitor and continued on until a singer no longer had a comeback. Debating contests, or mari, were also a means of competition at Chamorro gatherings. Debaters as young as five competed against people in other villages. Regardless of what activities were present, abundance of food and hospitality as an expression of inafa ‘maolak, or the Chamorro value of restoring harmony and order, were key components of a gupot. Even though culture is displayed in these gatherings, the intention is to build kinship bonds between Chamorros.

COLONIAL GATHERINGS

During the Spanish colonization of the Mariana Islands, gatherings for Chamorros centered on the Catholic Church. This colonial agenda began during the 1500s when Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese galleons made their way around the world. They were in search of new lands to claim and resources to exploit for their countries. Spain found their way to the Mariana Islands in 1521, and established the islands as Spanish soil in

1565. Spain established control of the islands in order to be a stop on its trade route between the Philippines and Mexico. The Spanish rationalized this new colonial project by claiming that they were spreading the word of God for the Catholic Church. This commercial and religious colonialism was greatly fought by Chamorros through wars and other acts of disobedience. Catholicism for Chamorros was, “at first a scourge, then a refuge against natural calamities and the collies of alien humans, the fierce embrace of suffering and fate that is Roman Catholicism became an abiding spiritual heritage of the people of the Marianas” (Rogers, 106). Used as a means to survive and keeping cultural practices alive, the Catholic faith became a common practice amongst Chamorros. Gatherings of Chamorros turned from being about celebrations of life events, to congregating for mass, nobenas, and saint feast days. Nobenas, or rosaries, were and continue to be, “acceptable among the Chamorros because of its potential for familial solidification and strengthening of family ties even between generations” (<http://guampedia.com/nobena-novena-catholic-devotional-prayers/>). The village or family having the nobena provides food at the church, house, or community space for those participating in the gathering. For the Mariana Islands, “of all the legacies of Spain.... The Christian religion would be the most enduring for the Chamorros” (Rogers, 106). The gathering for church related events continues to be an important part of life for Chamorros in the home islands and for those abroad.

By the late-eighteenth-century, other Britain and France colonialism enacted a new kind of gathering, sent voyagers through the Pacific with new ideas of what the region was about. Coming out of the Age of Enlightenment into the Romantic Era, this intellectual and artistic movement favored emotion over science and had a greater interest

in nature. The Pacific became a muse for Romanticism where, “notions of primitives as noble or savage permeate literature and historical accounts about the Pacific, serving either as an ideal model for a lost Edenic past or as a fearful vision of human nature run amok without the constraints of (European) civilization” (Desmond, 11). It was in the Pacific, that Europeans saw Pacific Islanders as the epitome of Romantic ideology. Specifically in the eastern Pacific, these lighter skinned islanders were seen as living close to nature, without any hardship, and free with their sexuality. These misconceptions of Pacific Islanders fueled a desire for Europeans and later Americans to further colonize and draw their own conclusions about the region.

European and American fascination with Oceania was not only found in the bodies of Pacific Islanders but with the desire to collect native cultural objects. Originally voyagers brought objects from their travels back to their countries. For the West, “collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity” (Clifford, 218). The process of collecting Pacific Islander objects, made it so that Westerners felt as though they were making Oceania their own. By cutting these collected objects from their cultural and historical context, they begin to represent or stand in for whole groups of Pacific Islanders. This Western practice of amassing culture is entangled in European notions of order and hierarchy. These collections were not only about preservation or education, rather they were about establishing power relationships between the civilized and the primitive other. By appropriating parts of Pacific Islander culture to share in Europe and the United States, further rationalization of conquest and romantic ideas in Oceania continued.

Western fascination of native peoples culminated in exploitative display of “otherness” in the form of the World’s Fairs. Starting in London in 1851, the World’s Fair began as a large public exhibition showcasing the progress industrialization was bringing to Western countries. Along with highlighting advancements, a major component of the fairs were “living exhibits”. Native peoples and their cultural objects were put on display for ticket holders to see. Rather than being a cultural exchange, native people were put in “living exhibits” that were recreations of their villages. At the St. Louis World’s Fair of 1904, “the largest of these exhibits was the Philippine village, a 47-acre site that for seven months in 1904 became home to more than 1,000 Filipinos from at least 10 different ethnic groups” (NPR). These “living exhibits” along side displays of technological advancements played a major role in promoting nationalism, imperialism, and modernist economic and political thought in the United States. The World’s Fairs, especially those held within the U.S., were used as a colonial tool to justify the U.S. as a new imperial nation.

Through the 20th century, Chamorros continued to gather for nobenas and saints’ feast days, however different forms of public celebrations developed with new colonial powers in the Mariana Islands. For many years, “American and Japanese colonial administrations in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands sometimes used commemorations as a means to encourage the loyalty of the Chamorro population” (Camacho, 83). Commemorations of colonial experiences would increase after World War II, the most famous and celebrated one in Guam being Liberation Day. The first Liberation Day in 1945 was deeply religious with Chamorros throughout the island going to mass at their village’s church. It was the Catholic faith that “shaped Chamorro

interpretations of the war and their involvement in it.... Catholic notions of liberation and salvation fused with political loyalties. Chamorros prayed to Uncle Sam as if he were a religious figure.... They sought his help, his protection, and his salvation” (Camacho, 89). Displays of loyalty changed over the years depending on the desires of the island population and government. As the gathering for Liberation Day continued through the years, parades, parties, and memorials have been added to the occasion. Each new aspect of the gathering for Liberation Day is intrinsically tied to the political climate on Guam and popular memory of what “liberation” means for Chamorros.

The tourist industry became another means of gathering natives, however the style in which they were brought together spoke to traditions of Westerns displaying people. Within this historical moment, native people were not put on display in Western countries rather race based tourism was becoming a major economic vehicle. Popular images of a romantic Pacific and essential “hula girl” on, “postcards, photographs, and stereotype cards contributed to the circuit of images, as did sketches in advertisements beckon to Americans to come visit” (Bunten, 6). With the United States owning islands throughout the Pacific, tourism took off and continues to be a major economic staple in the region. With an overwhelming interest in romantic notions of the Pacific, race based tourism became the means to satisfying outsider’s expectations of the region. Race based tourism was centered on being exposed to the people and culture of the vacation destination. It was no longer about seeing the natural features of the islands, but rather visitors were looking for the happy native to greet them at their hotel. With these expectations in mind, hotels in Hawai’i brought hula dancers and luau’s to their grounds. Having live performances of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders indicated

authenticity. Tourist that came from near and far to experience Hawai'i expected displays of native bodies. The Hawaiian people and their culture became commercialized in order to feed the growing tourist industry. For the tourists, "everything in Hawaii can be yours, that is, you the tourists', the non-Natives', the visitors'. The place, the people, the culture, even our identity as a "Native" people is for sale" (Trask, 144). This display of native bodies for profit and the exploitation of their culture continue to today. Insight how tourism relate to previous gatherings and displays

The imagined Pacific manifested itself into spaces, like the Polynesia Cultural Center, that works to serve tourists their romantic notion of the islands rather than the lived realities for Pacific Islanders. With the popularity of native performances in Hawai'i, the Brigham Young University of Hawai'i created the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) in 1963. The creation of PCC started the beginning of Hawai'i's number one paid attraction. The grounds of PPC are split into different villages representing Hawai'i, Sāmoa, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Fiji, Tahiti, the Marquesas, and Tonga. The Pacific Islander performers are international students at BYU Hawai'i. PCC can be interpreted as a live museum where the Pacific Islander performers are situated between the commercialization of their cultures and claims to authenticity. Working within PCC leaves the Pacific Islanders feeding into misconceptions about Oceania and its complexities. For example, with college aged performers always working in PCC, their, "youthful humor, these villagers present an idyll of Polynesia that evokes popular preconceptions of the unspoiled, uncomplicated life of the islands where natives still live in grass shacks" (Webb, 59). These cultural displays show tourists a superficial, static presentation of Polynesia with little indication of how Islanders are living today. The ease

of moving from island group to island group gives the illusions that all of Polynesia can be experienced in this one small space and that their cultures are homogeneous. The business of race-based tourism has helped to preserve a particular understanding of Oceania. Its success lies in catering to the expectations that tourists have while simultaneously providing entertainment. The villages, shows, and demonstrations are about the imagined spectacle of being from Pacific, rather than bringing to light the cultural, political, religious, and social complexities of being from Oceania.

Today, Pacific Islanders and other native peoples are countering the heavy commercialization and exploitation of their cultures through their own forms of tourism, collecting, gatherings, and commemoration. The growth of native own and run tourism has produced indigenous capital that aims to, “achieve ethnical, culturally appropriate, and successful Indigenous participation within the global economy” (Bunten, 285). Indigenous capital can come from cultural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, gaming, resorts, and other related services. These ventures can be criticized as further commercialization of native culture because there is still, “the unlawful (according to traditional protocol) appropriation and sale of collective intellectual property. From this viewpoint the very act of presenting culture outside of its appropriate context is not only inauthentic but also culturally illegal” (Bunten, 292). Unlike ethnic based tourism, indigenous owned travel is able to control how they are represented and what they want to share about their people. There is agency in how they organize their business and make indigenous capital. Rather than further commercializing their people, education becomes an important component of the job. With education being the driving force behind

indigenous owned tourism, stereotypes can be refuted and the complexities of being a native person today can be highlighted.

TRANSPACIFIC GATHERINGS

Within the Pacific Islander diaspora of San Diego, the annual Pacific Islander Festival Association (PIFA) brings together islanders from around the west coast of the U.S. to participate in a transpacific experience. Started in 1994, PIFA works to be an educational and cultural resource that perpetuates the traditions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The association offers high school and college scholarships, a Miss PIFA pageant, Taste of the Pacific fundraiser, and a weekend long festival during the month of September. The festival is the largest part of the association's work. It brings in over 50,000 people to Ski Beach, a man made island in San Diego's Mission Bay. The main focus of the festival tends to be the on going performances on the center stage as well as the food and merchandise booths. Many of the informational and food booths are ran by the Chamorro and other Pacific Islander social and nonprofit organizations. Some of the merchandise booths are from various Pacific Islander clothing brands, like Island Tat. PIFA's volunteer staff and board of directors also come from the different organizations that are specific to their home island groups. It is within the festival that Pacific Islanders from various backgrounds and different transpacific groups can work together to make the weekend a success. PIFA gives Pacific Islanders living away from their home islands the ability to create a diasporic, indigenous space where they can foster a transpacific identity.

For transpacific festivals, the imagery used on their promotional posters speaks to popular ideas about Pacific Islander identities. With PIFA taking on many roles throughout the year, its festival poster is meant to frame their theme and agenda. PIFA's festival posters act as the primary means of advertising for the organization, coming up on websites, shirts, and other promotional gear. In recent years photographs have not been used on the posters, rather PIFA's board of directors choose from drawn submissions that speak to that year's particular theme. For the past few years, the submissions picked have been from San Diego based Pacific Islander clothing brands. Like their shirts, the designers' interpretations of PIFA's yearly themes reiterate many of their same ideas about Pan Pacific identities.

In 2010, PIFA chose "unity" as their theme, pushing for a strong Pacific regional identity. What is meant to celebrate a Hau'ofian "Oceania," comes across as unity amongst Polynesians and a Chamorro. Created by Tatau Brand, this Samoan clothing company prides itself on being, "inspired by the BLOOD and PAIN of the TATOO" (<http://www.tataubrand.com/Shop/>). Tatau's design includes the profile of the upper bodies of six Pacific Islander men. They are putting their fists toward the center of the poster where PIFA's logo sits. The logo has a Pacific Islander man blowing into a conch shell, calling islanders together for the festival. One could argue that the "unity" pictured in the poster comes through the similarity of the men's bodies. They are all of the same large, muscular stature. What differentiates them is their skin color, hairstyle, and tattoos. Together these different characteristics signify which island group each hypermasculine figure is from. Of the six men, the Chamorro is the only person not of Polynesian decent. With Chamorros making up a significant amount of the PIFA's attendees and some of the

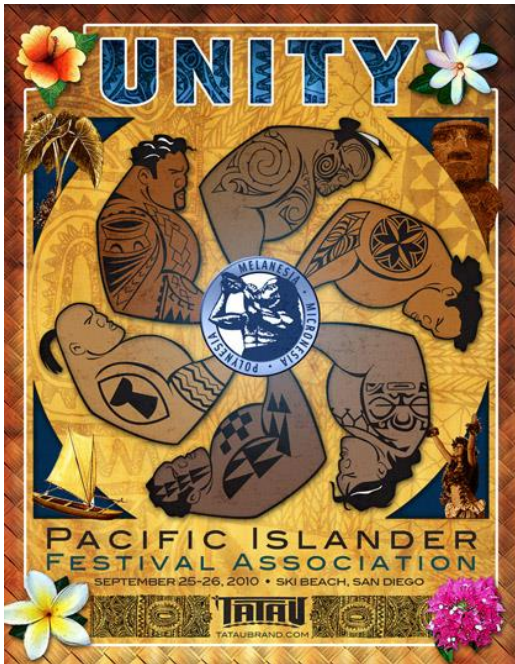


Figure 28. Unity

(<http://ilovemusubi.com/2010/09/pifa-san-diego-2010/>)

PIFA staff, Tatau made sure to include Chamorros in its sketch of Pacific unity. To fit into Tatau's vision, the Chamorro figure was given tattoos. Historically, Chamorros are not known to have tattoos, but they did have other body modifications, such as teeth staining and "dental decoration involved incising teeth with tiny lattice-like grooves" (Russel, 132). Other Micronesian islanders, such as Yapese and Marshallese, are known to have tattooing, however they are not included in the image. Besides the one Chamorro figure, there are no other Micronesian or Melanesian islanders depicted. This Polynesian centered interpretation of "unity" plays into popular notions of what the Pacific is. In many cases, Polynesia becomes the prevalent image of the region. The large scale and incredible diversity of Oceania is not acknowledged in PIFA's poster.

Similarly to how Chamorro clothing companies created male focused designs, PIFA's festival poster use a male gaze to articulate a unified indigenous identity. With PIFA's board of directors consisting of eight men and eight women, it is problematic to

see male figures taking on such a dominant role while women are unacknowledged in their posters. Men become the central figure time and time again in the designs that they choose. Within the “unity” poster, finding a woman figure is incredibly difficult. The corner areas of the poster include flowers native to different island groups, such as plumaria and tiare. In line with the flowers are images that most would interpret as artifacts or cultural objects from the Pacific. These cultural objects include kalo, moai, vaka, and a hula dancer. The Pacific Islander woman emerges from the bottom right corner of poster amongst these artifacts. The proverbial image of a hula dancer signifies a touristic past where the, “commodification of feminized leisure in the form of tourism unites the “islands” of woman,” exotic primitivism,” and Hawai’i in this package tour of the natural, held together under the sign of the “hula girl” (Desmond, 5). While the seven male counterparts are unified in body, tattoo, and stance, the lone hula dancer represents a passive and small (in importance and size) Pacific Islander woman. The designers at Tatau fail to recognize the significance of Pacific Islander women and their roles in unifying Pacific Islanders across the transpacific.

By 2012, PIFA’s transpacific theme moved from Pan Pacific unity to “Indigenous, Past to Present.” PIFA chose the Chamorro owned company, Island TAT, to design their promotional poster. Like Tatau, Island TAT’s brand is heavily influenced by Polynesian tattooing. Their picture uses Polynesian tattoo designs as a unifying feature, weaving together the various Pacific Islander images spread throughout the poster. “Indigenous, Past to Present” is meant to signify Pacific Islanders as native peoples who continue to have roots in their islands regardless of the modern times and diasporic locations. It acknowledges that Pacific Islanders are dynamic, keeping their indigeneity

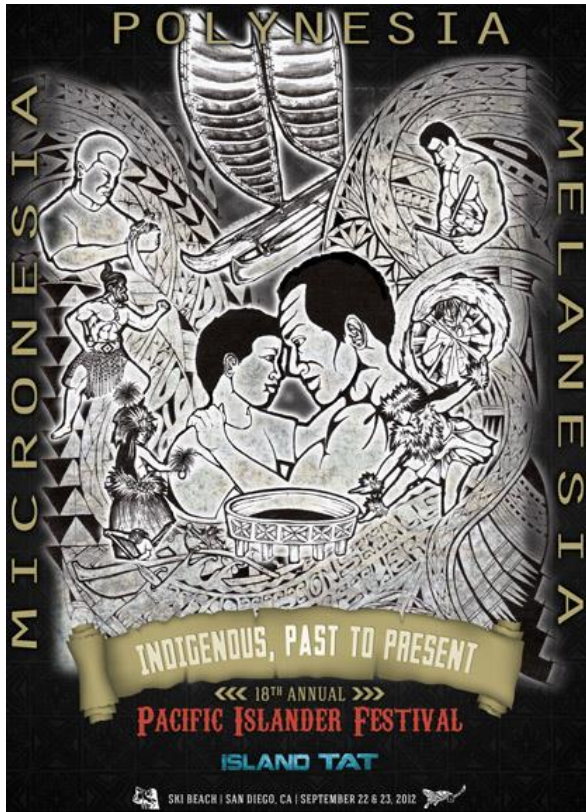


Figure 29. Indigenous, Past to Present
(<http://www.pifasandiego.com>)

an important component of their identities. This empowering theme does not fully come to life through Island TAT's poster design. Those who are shown as dynamic and complex figures are Pacific Islander men. The central figures in the poster are a man and a young boy, touching foreheads and resting their hands on each other's shoulders in affection. The boy wears a Western style shirt while the father like figure is shirt less, hinting to the dualistic life many Pacific Islanders face by being native in today and conforming to certain western standards. On the upper corners of the poster are two men tattooing, however one is using traditional techniques while the other uses a machine. Below them are two male dancers. One is a Maori man performing a traditional dance while across from him a Samoan man spins fire, a more recent dancing tradition. At the

bottom of the poster are men paddling an outrigger canoe in shirts, which is juxtaposed to a Fijian vaka sailing through the top of the poster. These contrasting images throughout the poster show the complexity of Pacific Islander men, straddling the ancient and modern, ensuring that their indigeneity continues. The images of women on the poster are few and inadequate. They again appear as dancers, this time with a kahiko (ancient) hula and Tahitian. This is interesting because of how important the group dance performances are to PIFA. People set up chairs, mats, and blankets on the lawn facing the stage, staying through the weekend to catch the different island dance groups. Besides purchasing food and cultural items from the booths, the dancers (most of which are women) draw in huge crowds. Pacific Islander women, as dancers and Miss PIFA, become the welcoming face and entertainment for the festival. The role of women in Island TAT's design shows them as, "people of the past.... With images of beautiful women thinly clad in cloth with hibiscus patterns, flowers in our hair, hips swaying under the coconut palm trees, beckoning the Western world into a world of magic and romance" (Kohu, vii). The dancers are not juxtaposed to any other images of women. There are no weavers, cooks, healers, chiefs, motherly figures, pageant queens (like Miss PIFA), and other important roles that women continue to fill within various Pacific Islander communities. More importantly, there is no indication of what roles or cultural issues are important to Pacific Islander women in the diaspora. There is no image to highlight their experiences and understandings that are, "set and located within a generation of Pacific Islanders who live and move primarily between two very different social/cultural formations" (Suaalii, 94). Instead the diasporic Pacific Islander woman is static, stuck in ancient Polynesia. Through PIFA's poster, she is no more than a dancer and entertainer.

Also acting in the tradition of transpacific festivals and gatherings is Che'lu's Chamorro Cultural Festival. The nonprofit's festival takes place in March to coincide with Chamorro Month in Guam. Since Che'lu is in partnership with the Jacob Center for Neighborhood Innovation, they hold the Chamorro Cultural Festival on their Market Creek Plaza grounds. The Chamorro Cultural Festival has been significantly growing in size since its first gathering in 2010. Chamorros are known to be, "gregarious and socially-minded, people travel for miles to attend funerals and death rituals as well as other cultural rituals and family celebrations" (Untalan, 47). Similarly to PIFA, thousands of Chamorros come together from throughout California, Arizona, Nevada, and the Mariana Islands to share in food, art, performances, workshops, and other activities.

The Chamorro Cultural Festival uses their promotional posters to not only give basic information about the festival but to push for a unified, diasporic Chamorro gathering. Their 2010 poster, also used as a flyer, geographically centers the festival as Chamorro through the flags of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Unlike the Guam Club and other aspects of Chamorro life in the diaspora that tend to be Guam focused, Che'lu works to unify Chamorros through their geographical ties. Even though using the flags for Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands is one way to attempt a reunification of Chamorros, it simultaneously signifies the political divisions that keep the archipelago severed. Rather than using ethnic based ties, the flags highlight differences. It speaks to the differences Chamorros from Guam and those from the Northern Mariana Islands experienced with the U.S. and Japan as colonizers. For example, during World War II, "while Chamorro loyalty to Japan meant betrayal and distrust in Guam, it simultaneously meant loyalty and, ultimately, survival in the Northern Marianas Islands" (Camacho, 58).

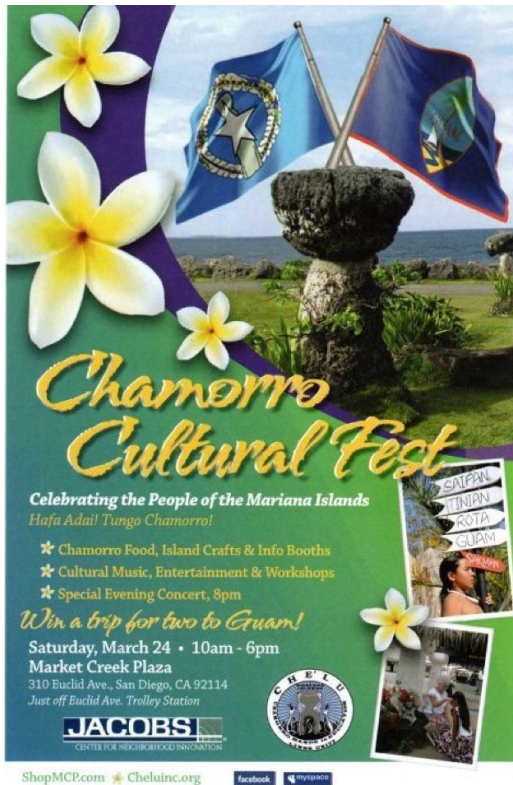


Figure 30. Chamorro Cultural Fest 2012

(<http://whatsnewinthevillage.com/2012/01/31/celebrating-the-people-of-the-mariana-islands-chamorro-cultural-fest/>)

These colonial relationships led to dissimilar experiences and memories of World War II. Having two separate flags for the archipelago also emphasizes the territoriality of Guam and the commonwealth status of the Northern Mariana Islands with the U.S. today. As the flags highlight divisions, it becomes easy to forget the thousands of years of Chamorro unification. The two small pictures in the bottom right corner of the poster allude to cultural ties that are shared amongst Chamorros. Having the Chamorro boy looking into the distance, towards the Marianas shows how the festival is trying to reach out and celebrate the Mariana Islands as home. Having a sign pointing toward a Sakman, or flying proa, also speaks to the navigational skills shared amongst Chamorros. Finally, the smaller picture of a Chamorro girl honoring her manamko, or elder, through nginge'

is important throughout Chamorro culture. *Nginge*’ describes the, “smelling or sniffing of the back part of an elder’s slightly raised right hand. Elders, or *manâmkko*, collectively understood to have wisdom, are called *mañaina*. The Chamorro practice of smelling or sniffing was a way of taking in the essence of one’s spirit” (<http://guampedia.com/nginge/>). These traditional practices show strong cultural connections across islands and colonial histories. Enlarging these cultural images and downplaying the flags could help to better express Chamorro unity.

The Chamorro Cultural Festival’s poster not only uses flags to show Chamorro unity, but it uses the latte stone as a means to means to showing a transpacific Chamorro identity. The latte stone is major focal point of the poster, topped with the Guam and Northern Mariana Islands Flag. Behind the latte stone is a romantic beach, absent of any native bodies. For Chamorros, latte stones were the foundational pillars to our ancient homes. By constructing an A-frame house on top of latte, the structured “offered these advantages: a long lasting structure, protections, ventilation, and prestige” (Cunningham, 50). Latte are found throughout Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. They come in various sizes depending on the societal statues of the ancient Chamorro family. They were often built parallel to rivers, not next to the open ocean. This particular photo of the latte has them in an unnatural space, far from the jungles and rivers that they are typically found in. Interestingly enough, this photo of the latte is from the Office of the Governor of Guam grounds. Like Chamorros in the diaspora, the latte have been uprooted and moved to new spaces that are tied to U.S. colonialism. The governor office grounds not only contain relocated latte, but it also holds the Latte of Freedom. The monument was announced in 1976 by Governor Ricardo Bordallo and was originally planned to coincide

with America's bicentennial and, "be on Guam, America's westernmost coast, to welcome visitors to the United States from Asia. In addition to being the newest American monument, the Latte of Freedom also symbolizes the unique heritage of Guam in both structure and purpose" (<http://guampedia.com/latte-of-freedom/>). Today the Latte of Freedom commemorates the twelve governors of Guam that have held office since the 1950 Organic Act of Guam. The ancient latte stones are now along side the Latte of Freedom that works to celebrate and honor the colonial ties Guam has with the United States. Even though latte stones for Chamorros in the diaspora and within the Mariana Islands are identity markers, the context from which the latte stones have been photographed for the poster works against a Chamorro focused gathering. With the Chamorro Cultural Festival trying to celebrate Chamorro culture and the Mariana Islands as home, perhaps Che'lu should find another symbol that better represents Chamorro mobility. With Che'lu's participation in the revitalization of Chamorro sea navigation with the building of a sakman, perhaps the boat might speak better to the profound movement of Chamorros throughout the United States today.

For the 2013 Chamorro Cultural Festival poster, Che'lu moved toward a Chamorro diasporic identity that is rooted in indigeneity. Rather than focusing on island specific flags, the new festival poster uses images of Chamorros today in ancient style clothing and practices. The only indication of flags comes in as the first "o" in Chamorro at the top of the poster. The "o" is a combination of the symbols found within the Guam and Northern Mariana Islands flags. The importance of cultural roots is emphasized in the festival's theme, "Celebrating the People of the Mariana Islands." With an even distribution of both women and men, the images show Chamorros partaking in traditional



Figure 31. Chamorro Cultural Festival 2013

(http://www.chelUSD.org/EVENTS/2013/CCF/ChamorroDay1F_web.jpg)

dances and chants that were not influenced by colonial powers. This equal representation of men and women is important because even though Chamorro society is matriarchal, “men and women were both respected as powerful and contributing members of society. The Chamorro people had a matrilineal system in which gender roles were balanced equitably so that men and women shared power and responsibility” (<http://guampedia.com/puntan-and-fuuna-gods-of-creation/#toc-brothers-and-sisters>). Not having one particular gender dominating the poster keeps in line with the culturally significant relationship of brothers and sisters. Having both genders take part in traditional dances and chants is extremely important because it is only recently that these

Chamorro traditions have become an important part of Chamorro identity. With heavy colonial influences and the condemnation of Chamorro cultural practices, much of ancient Chamorro dancing was lost. The revitalization of Chamorro dancing began with Francisco “Frank” B. Rabon how was, “awarded the title of “Master of Chamorro Dance” by the governor of Guam in the early 1990s for his lifetime work of reviving the concept of native Chamorro dance” (<http://guampedia.com/chamorro-dance/>). Chamoros like Rabon, look to historical documents and dances from neighboring island groups to help reconstruct Chamorro dance. The poster helps further the importance of Chamorro dance and chant, while highlighting how Chamorros abroad are helping to maintain these traditions. The photographs of Chamorro dancers are juxtaposed to sketches of ancient images, such as the massive latte at the House of Taga in Tinian, the maga’lahi, or Chamorro male chief, and an ancient A-frame house. These depictions of ancient Chamorro life along side the modern images of Chamorros show the links between the past and the present. Che’lu is trying to show how Chamorros in San Diego recognize their indigeneity and work to maintain their cultural ties. All of the people shown in the poster are from Chamorro dance groups in southern California. This shows how Chamorros in the diaspora still sustain and value their cultural ties to the Mariana Islands.

While the Chamorro Cultural Festival’s poster makes claims to Chamorro indigeneity, their location of where this identity is being created is unclear. At first glance, the poster looks as though the festival could be taking place in the Mariana Islands. This strong call to home from Che’lu is important because the festival becomes an example for even those within the Mariana Islands. While many Chamorros in the states are looking to the Mariana Islands for examples on how to maintain their cultural

roots, those in the islands are also looking to the diaspora on how to articulate an indigenous identity. The Guam Visitor's Bureau flies out for the yearly festival and broadcasts the event back to those in Guam. They sponsor different aspects of the day and take notes on how to run a large-scale Chamorro festival. The concerts put on by Che'lu also make the distinction between diaspora and home difficult. Chamorro bands from San Diego play along side bands flown in from the Mariana Islands and even Palau. The Chamorro Cultural Festival poster does a nice job in keeping the viewer guessing where Chamorros are articulating their native identities in such a way. With photos of Saipan's Bird Island and latte from the Office of the Governor of Guam on it, one might overlook the San Diego skyline at the top of the poster. A large maga'lahi and ancient Chamorro home are situated on top to the skyline. The imagery asserts Chamorros in their new transpacific community. A flame comes from beneath the maga'lahi's feet, signifying the survival of Chamorros in their second home. Together, the photographs, sketched images, and the skyline scene depict how Chamorros of San Diego see themselves as Chamorro while also making new spaces home. The poster does a nice job in celebrating Chamorro roots, rather than the physical space in which the celebration is being done.

The Chamorro Cultural Festival's new poster design pushes for a transpacific Chamorro identity that is deeply rooted in the inclusivity of Chamorros in their cultural roots and practices. To pull this theme together, political divisions are put aside to celebrate the cultural depth of Chamorros as a whole. Moving throughout the poster and adding color to the black and white images is fire. With the emergence and celebration of the indigenous Chamorro figure, the subtle fire that spreads across the poster indicates a

survival of Chamorros. Chamorros used fire as a daily part of their life and as a way to survive. Fire was used along with, “pottery, tools and other gathering and cooking implements tell us that they had a complex system of gathering, cultivating, fishing, preserving and cooking” (<http://guampedia.com/ancient-chamorro-food-and-diet/>). Using fire to bring the poster to life pulls together the various images to signify the survival of the Chamorro people and their traditions.

Pacific Islander festivals today do have roots in colonial gatherings of native peoples, however the complexities of Pacific Islander festivals within the transpacific home complicate these ideas. Even with these colonial ties, festivals within the diaspora serve functions other than to display and exploit Pacific Islanders. These festivals keep islanders connected to not only those who attend the events, but it also keeps them from being disconnected from their home islands. When Pacific Islanders buy cultural objects, such as clothing, art pieces, and food, at these festivals, it is not to further commercialize and exploit their heritage. The purchasing of cultural objects in a diaporic sense gives people a way to validate their existence, especially for those who cannot frequent their home islands. Buying a shirt that celebrates their islands reminds the person that they have roots elsewhere and tells the world that they are unique. Festivals like PIFA and the Chamorro Cultural Festival are not just indigenous spaces but diaporic. Within these transpacific settings, it is important to examine the representations of Pacific Islanders that are being perpetuated with their promotional gear. It is also important to examine how these gatherings contribute to ones understanding of home and indigenous identity. Are these festivals mirroring colonial practices used on our ancestors or are we making something meaningful for ourselves? Are these blind celebrations of roots or are we also

contributing to the decolonization efforts back home? While we celebrate Oceania, do we also address the issues and challenges for Pacific Islanders living in a new cultural and geographical context? Are Pacific Islanders performing their dances and other cultural traditions to feed into romantic notions of the Pacific or do we dance for the communities from which we come from? All of these questions are important when analyzing the unique roles festivals and gatherings fill for Pacific Islanders abroad.

CONCLUSION

This thesis explores the ways in which the Chamorro diaspora of San Diego, California articulates their indigenous identity. By using the concept of the transpacific home to frame this project, Chamorro migration and settlement outside of the Mariana Islands can be seen as complex and humanizing. The transpacific home shows how diasporic communities do not simply leave their native lands and sever ties after relocation. For Chamorros and other Pacific Islander groups that have been raised away from their home islands, their indigeneity still plays an important role in identity. Through the transpacific, diasporic Chamorros can see themselves as still connected to the Mariana Islands, moving past the idea of displacement and loss. The Chamorro community of San Diego is one example of how Pacific Islanders are constantly expanding the borders of Oceania, yet not losing authenticity in their recreation of home in their new geographic locations. The transpacific home brings forth the idea that even within the contemporary moment maintaining cultural links to home is important for many diasporic Chamorros.

The first chapter of this thesis describes the militarization of the Marianas Islands and San Diego. It then takes a closer look at how the social and economic pressures on Guam following World War II led to the first large scale outmigration of Chamorros to military cities in the United States. With Chamorros now moving to naval cities, like San Diego, they created organizations to help keep links to the Mariana Islands alive in their new city. The Sons and Daughters of Guam Club and Che'lu (Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity) Inc., continue to act as transpacific spaces that allow Chamorros

to recreate important cultural practices while also supporting one another in identity issues that are unique to living in the United States.

While the first chapter looks at how Chamorro organizations in San Diego help their community maintain their indigenous identity, chapter two examines how Chamorro identity in the diaspora is expressed through clothing. Through a transpacific lens, Chamorro shirt designs highlight how younger people still find their indigenous identity important even though they may have been raised outside of their home islands. By comparing the clothing brand Island TAT of San Diego to Fokai of Guam and Magas of Saipan, the variation in design of Chamorro identity and the specifics on Chamorro gender relations can be seen. Together the brands push the idea of what a decolonial and inclusive Chamorro brand can look like.

Chapter three examines Pacific Islander ran festivals within San Diego. These large-scale transpacific gatherings highlight how Chamorro and other Pacific Islander identities are celebrated. By discussing how Pacific Islander led gatherings have changed through time, one can see how diasporic festivals often work to express and reaffirm identities. Today, festivals and fairs in the Pacific diaspora act as a way to celebrate cultural roots. Through the Pacific Islander Festival (PIFA) and the Chamorro Cultural Festival, Pacific Islanders of San Diego show how they see themselves as diasporic people who still maintain strong ties to their home islands.

The purpose for pursuing transpacific centered research is to add to the larger discourse surrounding Pacific Islander movement and settlement in new geographical locations. Even though there are many resources that discuss the expansion of Oceania into new places like the United States and Australia, much of the work is centered on

Polynesian experiences. I hope my work adds to the notion of a growing Oceania and brings forth a new Micronesian experience. With few scholars having documented the unique historical events that have led to the large-scale outmigration of Chamorros, I hope my work can add to this understudied area of Chamorro history.

I believe that my thesis does not fully explore the complexity of diasporic identities or the rich resources that have been established to support Chamorros outside of the Mariana Islands. Due to time restraints I was unable to highlight all the spaces that are utilized by Chamorros in San Diego. Further research could include Chamorro church and nobena groups, restaurants, dance groups, musical groups, language programs, liberation and other celebrations, health organizations, senior groups, student organizations, youth services, veteran support groups, LGBTQIA support, cultural arts groups, and village specific organizations. With Chamorros planting their roots firmly in San Diego, the number of resources that could be investigated is widespread.

This thesis could also be expanded by examining the different diasporic Chamorro communities outside of San Diego. San Diego is one of many active Chamorro communities that aim to keep ties to the Mariana Islands strong. Other large Chamorro communities in need of research are places like northern California, Washington, Arizona, Hawai'i, Nevada, and Texas. Places like Hawai'i have active Chamorro communities which include university organizations, language classes, social organizations, food trucks, and even a website used to keep the community aware of Chamorro events and businesses. Exploring the different Chamorro "hotspots" throughout the U.S. could highlight the commonalities diasporic Chamorros share. At the

same time, looking at various diasporic communities could also show the specificities and unique issues these communities face.

Today there is also room to examine how the internet and other social media play a role in expressing indigeneity and keeping the transpacific home ever expanding. Guampedia is an example of how various groups are using the internet connect with Chamorros regardless of physical location. This scholar reviewed website works from the University of Guam and tries to make Chamorro history accessible to anyone with an internet access. Through informative articles, short videos, and e-books, Guampedia uses the internet to meet Chamorros, especially younger generations, wherever they are.

Similar to Guampedia, Goisland.net and its founder, Sandy Uslander, work to document Chamorro history and make it accessible online. Uslander writes a weekly column in the Guam's *Pacific Daily News* which discusses the events, experiences, and of Chamorros in the United States, typically of those from San Diego. She has sent articles and images back of the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club, Chamorro exhibits in national museums, the construction of a Sakman, or traditional boat, and other important events within this diasporic group. Even though Uslander's analysis of diasporic Chamorro events are mainly to document them, her work is helping to better connect Chamorros within the Mariana Islands to those within the United States. By using her newspaper column and website to highlight the active Chamorro communities in the diaspora, Uslander helps to strengthen ties and provide Chamorros back in the islands a better understanding of how Chamorros in the United States are still working to maintain their cultural identity.

Even with the limitations of this thesis, I hope that it lays the foundation for Chamorros to begin rethinking their connections to one another. This project can be one of many ways to help bring a better sense of unity amongst Chamorros. It is not only about rethinking the possibilities of a more unified identity within our island groups, but reimagining a Chamorro identity that is inclusive of those that are no longer on island. Through this understanding, we can better fight as a unified people for Chamorro language revitalization, self-determination, militarization, cultural maintenance, and environmental preservation.

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