

Multiple & Overlapping Identities

The Case of Guam

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Introduction

Over the last several decades, the discourse of multicultural education has emphasized the study of ethnic identity development in order to better understand diversity and gain more specific knowledge about different ethnic groups and ethnicity. Examining identity acknowledges that socio-cultural issues are interwoven with individual feelings, thoughts, and fears that lead people to have certain behavior toward themselves as well as others.

In particular, ethnic identity development theory (e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1979; Cross, 1991; Hardiman, 2001; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Helms & Cooks, 1999; Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000) has identified certain stages of identity development for both minority groups and dominant groups. Several studies have described a variety of identity models (e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1979; Carney & Kahn, 1984; Carter, 1995; Cross, 1991; Gay, 1984; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Helms, 1994; Jackson, 2001; Phinney, 1990; Tatum, 1992; Terry, 1977; Vandiver, 2001) and these various models consist of stages that have features in common.

For instance, identity development for minority groups typically includes such stages as conformity and acceptance (the stage of internalizing and valuing the majority culture as desirable and superior), resistance (the stage of rejecting and challenging the majority culture), and reflection and integration (the stage of redefining an independent sense of self and incorporating both one's culture and dominant social values into one's own identity).

Dominant group identity typically follows a different model in which two stages are commonly found. The beginning stage

is a lack of consciousness about race, with acceptance of the dominant culture as superior. The other common stage involves awareness and establishment of non-racist identity in order to take responsibility for social injustice.

However, in most of these studies the identity development models have too often ignored several ethnic minority groups within the United States. As Grant (1997) asserted, ethnic identity involves many different characteristics such as nationality, citizenship, and language. As a result, these significant "markers of identity" (p. 9) can be related to how each individual juxtaposes any given determinant of identity as well as what determinants they view as significant or insignificant in a socio-cultural, historical, geographic, and political realm, resulting in mirroring identity as a strategic and positional choice (Hall, 1996).

In addition to the importance of self-perspective on identity development in multicultural education, another critical question about self has to do with how an individual perceives and views the other. The identity of minority groups is not always a reality that can be completely determined by the will of a person in a minority group. Rather, it is often determined by others.

These "others" become a mirror which reflects both self and others in a way that can prevent understanding their true identities since they often see themselves as others see them. In this manner, the question of identity in a particular context moves from the subjective domain of the "self" to the objective domain of "others," illuminating what Sartre has called, "being-for-other" (1943), which refers to an individual's tendency to be dependent on others for one's sense of self.

Thus, subjectivity is not only based on others' gazes, but is also established by the continual process of struggle between ongoing power and resistance to that power (Foucault, 1966). The subject is not fixed,

but rather unceasingly changes through a variety of experiences, intentions, desires, and powers (Foucault, 1966). In other words, subjectivity is constantly in the process of reproduction and transformation.

As a result, each individual's identity may not be formed only through their dependence on others' perspectives. Rather, a group of people can shape and renew itself, and their individual selves, through a continual process of struggle.

Instead of considering ethnic identity as an unchangeable and permanent ontological foundation, in this study we view it as multilayered and continually evolving (Bauman, 2003; Foucault, 1966). We emphasize the dynamics of identity by examining how each educator we interviewed in Guam's post-colonial context understood and interpreted one's own ethnicity, which serves as a core of traditional ethnic identity study (Phinney, 1996).

Problems of Context: Guam

Guam is the western-most territory of the United States, situated in the Pacific Ocean 3,700 miles west-southwest of Hawaii. The largest island of Micronesia, Guam is 30 miles in length and ranges from 12 to 4 miles in width. Indigenous to Guam are the Chamorro people and their language.

The 2000 census, which has limited parameters for disentangling Guam's diverse population of 154,805, lists 75,851 Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, 51,106 Asian, and 10,660 White persons within Guam. Approximately 37% of Guam residents categorize themselves as Chamorro and 47% were born off the island (Census, 2000). Guam residents claiming two or more ethnic origins or races in the census included 13,687 or 9% of the population. Those speaking only English at home number 52,831 (34%), while roughly 30,000 speak Chamorro (19%), 30,000 speak Philippine (19%), and 24,000 (15%) speak another language.

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Guam is an “important crossroads for an assortment of multinational and multiethnic interests” and is a complex, creolized culture brought on by centuries of “intercultural mixing as the principal form of indigenous social and cultural articulation” (Diaz, 2010, p. 17). The island is experiencing rapid social and economic changes, but over 20% of Guamanians live in poverty (Census, 2000; Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005).

A history of colonial dynamics has very much informed multiculturalism in Guam. For roughly 500 hundred years without pause, Guam has experienced colonialism of some variety. In 1521, Magellan sighted Guam, which not only marked the beginning of long-term Spanish colonization but also the murder of many residents. In 1898, the Treaty of Paris transferred Guam to the United States as a territorial possession. Guam was held by the U.S. until 1941 when the Japanese invaded and occupied the island.

The United States liberated Guam from Japan in 1944 and by 1950 had established the Organic Act, which brought about home rule in Guam as an unincorporated territory of the United States, thus providing a special form of U.S. citizenship. Within the larger teleological political trajectory of democratization, home rule was a significant milestone (Diaz, 2010).

Alternatively the Spanish, Japanese, and the United States have instituted policies that transformed Chamorro life, leading some to suggest that the aggregate effect was “cultural genocide” (Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005, p. 149). For example, since the first contact with the west in 1521, the native Chamorro population experienced the death of the majority of the population, language transformation, dismantling of the matrilineal hierarchical system, and the introduction of Christianity, which ultimately displaced the native naturalistic religion.

As a result of the Japanese period, the Americanization of the Chamorro people received significant assistance, because the Japanese invasion and brutal occupation drove Chamorro to their American “colonial overseer, with religious zeal and cultural prescriptions of gratitude and loyalty” (Diaz, 2010, p. 13).

Today, native Chamorro struggle “to make it in their own home in today’s very complicated world” and Chamorro families experience “overwhelming suffering,” including high rates of physical ailments such as diabetes, strokes, heart disease, and decreased general health compared

to other residents of Guam (Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005, p. 169). In addition, Chamorro are over-represented in the penal system and experience higher rates of suicide and family violence than that of other ethnicities, as many are “unable to adjust and fully benefit from the modernization, globalization, and technical advancements that a selected few, including some indigenous people, are able to enjoy” (Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005, p. 166). All of this is similar to other instances of indigenous people suffering within the confluence of present and historic colonization and globalization:

The failure to thrive is generalized and perpetuated even outside their native lands, because in U.S. communities all over the mainland, native peoples like Hawaiians, Chamorus, and Maoris are struggling for economic and cultural survival. Clearly, it is a struggle that they are losing. We are rapidly witnessing the deaths of cultures all over the world and in this part of the world, there seems to be little that is being done. (Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005, p. 166)

In short, forces of globalization, urbanization, popular culture, and the presence of the U.S. military have influenced Chamorro cultural transformation, especially over the past 50 years (Hattori, 2011). Here we find challenged ideas of “indigeneity based on presumptions about cultural purity and insularity” and a “thick veneer” culture that has interweaving histories which ultimately provide context for “ferocity of indigeneity” (Diaz, 2010, p. 27). The Chamorro people experience multiple and overlapping identities, being both indigenous to the Mariana Islands and as part of the U.S. They derive most income from Japanese tourism and the presence of the U.S. military, which possesses 30% of the land and constitutes 20% of the population (Hattori, 2001).

A complicated context thus informs education in Guam. For example, the University of Guam (UOG) highlights the confluence of ethnicities in its student population, enjoying status as the most diverse university within the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Faculty at UOG are 20% Chamorro, 58% Caucasian, 10% Asian, and 5% Pilipino (Johnson & Inoue, 2001).

Yet numerous challenges exist as public education has experienced colonial forces and nefarious consequences of importing American public education (Hattori, 2011). In public schools, for example, reading is taught with American

basal programs with few books highlighting anything about Guam. Some educational institutions made attempts towards a more culturally responsive education through Chamorro language classes in the 1970s, but according to Hattori U.S. cultural hegemony is firmly entrenched and is a force contrary to maintaining the indigenous history and culture (Hattori, 2011).

To address needs of a multicultural student population, teachers have positioned students as writers and illustrators and have taken on an active role in modifying and adapting available curriculum for local needs (Foley & Petty, 1996). Moreover, Hattori (2011) has noted the Chamorro cultural values of interdependence, respect for nature, filial piety, respect for elders, and respect for social position as *inafa’maolek*, or “making it good for each other” (p. 221).

The “absence of this indigenous epistemology in favor of the standard American curriculum” is also found outside of education in the social, economic, and political institutions and the “massive land takings that concurred with the ‘gift’ of U.S. citizenship” (Hattori, 2011, p. 221). Most clearly Americanization is evident in language use as only 22% of Guam’s residents still speak the Chamorro language.

Methodology

Considered as outsiders because we were not from Guam, we were known to the respondents as researchers from the U.S. mainland and we projected ourselves as being keenly interested in the challenges and pathways to broaching controversial issues and multicultural education in the unique context of Guam. Our previous international experiences and research in international contexts allowed us to be conscious of such limitations and to assume a more transnational and global perspective on controversial issue instruction.

As a preliminary study we employed qualitative methods primarily because they are well-suited for addressing research problems concerning norms, structures, conditions, and processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), features that were at the heart of our research questions. These questions contained normative elements and assumed a constructivist ontology, fitting the post-positivistic nature of qualitative methods which asserts that there is not one reality, but rather multiple interpretations and renderings of the world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2001).

Although many cross-cultural re-

searchers select countries on the basis of where they can gain access, we feel that access is not sufficient justification to conduct a study. Instead we needed to provide thoughtful justifications as to why we were pursuing research where we were (Hahn, 2006). In this case, the dearth of educational research in this field, the importance of Guam within the Pacific and global community, and the importance of understanding the next generation of multicultural democratic citizens provided our primary justifications.

Drawing on an established network of contacts within UOG and the Guam Public Schools, we embarked on a study to explore the following research question:

Given the diverse and overlapping identities within Guam, how do teachers and teacher educators think about identity as an educational and sociocultural context?

Data Sources

During the course of this study we collected data in three forms: interview responses, curricular materials, and field notes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 elementary classroom teachers, eight secondary social studies teachers, three university professors and administrators, and 10 principals. All of the respondents work for the Guam Public Schools or UOG.

In each case, simultaneous transcription was performed using a laptop computer in order to facilitate maximum ease and comfort for respondents. This was done because through our experiences conducting research in other societies, we have come to realize the general aversion respondents have to anything they report being captured in a recorded format.

We engaged in informal conversations with numerous community members and captured these data within field notes. Finally, we visited numerous historical and cultural sites of significance to better understand the context informing education within Guam.

In recruiting participants for the study, we employed an exhaustive strategy of inviting every teacher in the Guam Public School System to participate. In keeping with Guam's Department of Education instructions, we contacted each school administrator through email during the months preceding the data collection. These administrators acted as liaisons between us and prospective respondents and in many cases the administrators

themselves volunteered to serve as respondents.

A total of 36 educators agreed to participate and each was interviewed. This sample was non-random and purposive as it sought out all informants of the target population. We also collected and analyzed curricular documents from Guam schools, including textbooks, competency objectives, and trade books that serve as a source of information to teachers regarding multicultural education and controversial issues.

Data Analysis

Rather than apply analytical tools *a priori*, we followed both the suggestions of numerous qualitative methodologists as well as the direction of the data to inform our emergent approach. Data were reduced and organized by recurring themes that fit within the established research questions. In an attempt to retain conceptuality, we took care to not dilute "thick description into thin description," that is, not to weaken the depth and value of the data (Steiner-Khamsi, Torney-Purta, & Schwille, 2002).

By examining recurring themes and comparing these themes to other instances across interviews, we engaged in a form of constant comparative analysis (Glazer & Strauss, 1967). This constant comparison resulted in independent category development by the two researchers, leading to clarification of each category and the condensation and expansion of categories, triangulated against both the data and each researcher's interpretation (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008).

Our final categories and themes were placed into meaningful sequences that formed the sections of our findings in response to the research questions (Glesne, 2005). These categories informed theme production and captured related interview responses, creating a process of data reduction into manageable forms and reassembled data which enabled interpretations (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Although findings in this context are not necessarily applicable to another context, they have the potential to generate hypotheses for other current or future contexts and can inform policy and practice implications not only for the context under study, but for similar contexts as well (Hahn & Alviar-Martin, 2008; Schofield, 1990).

Findings

Mixed and overlapping identities are quite common in Guam. In addition to Chamorro and U.S. identification, as well

as blended backgrounds of Filipino, Asian, and Outer Island ethnicities, many in Guam identify first with the village they are from rather than with their ethnic background.

One middle school teacher's narrative demonstrated such a mixed identity when she indicated that:

... that is a problem. If you are born on Guam you are Guamanian American. Those who are from the Philippines are Asian and Chamorro and Chuukese are Pacific Islanders. And I'm mixed and so many are mixed—what am I?

These issues of identity are complicated and expansive and constitute controversy in Guam. Due to this nature of these identity issues, Guamanian teachers and students rarely discuss them in schools. As a respondent from higher education pointedly stated;

Teachers don't want to touch it. They say their job is to teach math, not deal with this because it produces controversy.

We explored the perceptions and ideas of identity that Guamanian teachers had and connected them to their educational contexts. First, in the sections that follow, we address Chamorro, the native ethnic group in Guam, and the ways in which identifying as Chamorro has cascading implications for relationships within and outside of Guam. We then explore the concept of Guamanian, as an identity construct that many Chamorros reject within a complicated colonial and independence context.

Finally, we disengage or untangle the relationship of Guam and the U.S. as part of identity formation. This relationship with the U.S. is contained within an additional layer that includes the identity of Outer Islander and Chuukese immigrants, all of which further highlights and shapes the complex contours of identity within Guam.

Chamorro

The indigenous ethnic group Chamorro is not easily delineated. Identities in Guam are multiple and overlapping. Considering the island's history of immigration, intermarriage, and status as a U.S. territory, and we often found the idea of Chamorro ethnicity to be quite fluid.

For example, one respondent in higher education suggested that Chamorros are "not a hyphenated people" but that being indigenous necessarily includes multiple identities. He went on to assert that Chamorros are the "official people of Guam and

the official culture of Guam.” He continued by asserting that there is a divergence in the degree to which Chamorros want to exert more influence or control of Chamorro identity within Guamanian institutions.

One middle school principal felt that Chamorro identity very much depends on who one speaks with. For him, any native of Guam, independent of ethnic background, “will identify as being Chamorro” and Chamorros can exist despite intermarriage with other ethnic groups. The generation before his used the term “Guamanian,” with 90% of Guam’s population being Chamorro, thus making the terms Chamorro and Guamanian interchangeable.

Currently, less than 50% of Guam’s population is Chamorro, since “anyone can come here and become Guamanian,” and this led to numerous respondents indicating the importance of identifying as Chamorro. Once the clear majority group, the Chamorro people are now a plurality given the influx of additional Filipinos, Outer Island immigrants, and military personnel.

The southern part of Guam is most heavily Chamorro while the northern part, including the major cities, airport, and U.S. Air Force Base, is a much more diverse mixture of Outer Islanders, Filipino, Asians, and those from the U.S. mainland. Teachers in the south remarked that “everyone is practically related to everyone else here,” and as a result, with frequent intermarriage of ethnic groups, there is a sense of social capital related to discipline and educational remediation.

Over the past 25 years, movements to strengthen the Chamorro identity have emerged, including dance groups, clubs, and public mandates requiring the teaching of the Chamorro language. One respondent in higher education characterized this as “a movement to prioritize the culture and identity.”

For instance, there is a strong emphasis for all students in Guam to learn Chamorro. One elementary teacher noted it is “the indigenous language of the host people, although the language of instruction is in English.” At the university level, however, much of the attention to Chamorro is directed toward infighting over nuanced distinctions, such as how to spell “Chamorro,” what the correct traditional dances are, and to what extent efforts should be made to aggressively exert the culture within Guam.

When discussing who a Chamorro is, one middle school principal emphasized the Chamorro people’s core values which made them “survive as an ethnic

group.” Those core values, he suggested, are actually what determines whether or not someone is Chamorro, rather than ethnic proportionality. Chamorro values, he noted, include a focus on the family, respect, shame, and intergenerational as well as geographical connections.

He suggested that the “strong sense of shame carried by Chamorros” is connected to an infinite sense of reciprocity with others. He noted that if a “visitor hurts, the Chamorro hurts too.” When someone is in need, the Chamorros want to respond because “they too will be in need.” Because these core values actually determine ethnicity, he felt “anyone can come to Guam and be a Chamorro” and “that is how we have survived for hundreds of years.”

One elementary principal at a school where Chamorros are a minority stated:

We [Chamorro] are very accepting—you always find prejudice, but you don’t really find it here. We [Chamorro and immigrant populations] are all alike in every way and we are all the same.

A high school social studies teacher made sense of this assertion by citing students who

... love to discuss different races but they don’t want to talk badly about anyone. They really don’t want to criticize anyone, which is part of the Pacific culture.

Similarly, one middle school principal asserted that the core and pervasive Chamorro value of respect ultimately serves to both promote and discourage conversation, most often avoiding those topics that are contested or controversial.

Others, including a respondent in higher education, added a different but related perspective, stating that as a Chamorro it is easier to form distinctions between “us” (Chamorro) and “them” (i.e., Outer Islanders). She indicated that the Chamorro have a simple concept of distinguishing others by identifying only two groups outside of Chamorro—one is “Gilagu (others who are White) and the other is Gipalau (other Brown people).” However, Chamorros often think, she suggested, that they are all from Palau—“just one large group of others” because “Chamorros don’t recognize these as different groups of people.”

Living in the typhoon belt and home to frequent natural disasters has also made the Chamorro identity and culture ready to accept change as a part of everyday life and still remain positive. For example, Chamorros do not have an understanding of family heirlooms for they “own nothing that is attached to longevity.” One univer-

sity professor told us that, because they have dealt with disaster for so long—such as “Super Typhoon,” which once destroyed “90% of the houses and displaced the majority of the population”—a theme of constant change has always emerged in Chamorro identity. The professor noted:

Despite the fact that Guam is at its best in a disaster, Chamorros are optimistic and happy because everyone gets moving. They are worried about friends and families. We have a long-term memory of having to deal with trauma, recovering, getting past it, and moving forward.

In spite of the accepting spirit of the Chamorro people, several respondents reiterated the status of Chamorro as the “official” or “original” people of Guam. An elementary ESL teacher suggested that Chamorros are still at the top of any cultural hierarchy and enjoy a sense of the “dominant identity.” In addition, there is “assimilation toward a U.S. identity in many ways,” because, as one elementary principal indicated, people in Guam “are so Westernized—even the Chamorro” and Guam is a “melting pot—it’s a Western melting pot—made in America.”

In discussing such Westernization in Guam, a Chamorro teacher claimed that due to becoming a teacher within a Western educational milieu and enduring repeated criticism from her family that her identity is no longer Chamorro, her “inside is White but I’m still Chamorro.”

As a result of more intermarriage across ethnic lines, conflict has diffused. Therefore, some have suggested that “if there was a dominant culture, it would be Chamorros from Guam” and another elementary teacher felt “there is very much a hierarchy [among ethnicities]” with Chamorro occupying a privileged position.

In addition to the process of Westernization, World War II served to irrevocably influence Chamorro culture and its traditions. Before the 1940s, “everyone was reliant on their farms.” Although many worked in lower-level jobs, mainly due to discrimination, most Guam residents relied on sustenance from farms. Between 1940 and 1950, a university respondent posited, “94% of the farms disappeared and much of the land fell into military ownership.” With devastation from the war and military annexation of land, Chamorros were “forced into a cash economy” and sustainability is now very much located within that system. Thus, this resulted in their dependence on external economic factors whereby “if shipping was cut off to

Guam, there would be chaos in a week. We have no economic backbone.”

Until recently, Discovery Day was a mainstay in the curriculum, commemorating March 7th, 1521, when Magellan “discovered” Guam, although this day actually is marked by murder and the beginnings of colonization. Schools supplanted this celebration in the school calendar with “Chamorro Month.” Even though its name does not reflect the rich multiculturalism and complicated identity formation of Guam in a sufficient way, several elementary teachers emphasized that Chamorro Month is really dedicated to the preservation and respect of all cultures, in which students from different backgrounds showcase the unique elements of their ethnicity.

In this pan-ethnic approach, students work to preserve cultural identity. Among our respondents two social studies teachers and a principal in a middle school viewed this as essential for children not only from different cultures, but also for Chamorros who “are very different” and who “have lost so many skills because we are all so Westernized.” As one middle school social studies teacher mentioned, children can have an opportunity for “learning to make canoes—learning from these other cultures.”

Guamanian

Those unfamiliar with Guam often suggest that the concept of being Guamanian should have some currency as it inclusively brings together multiple backgrounds and advances an identity for all of those living on Guam. But as one respondent in higher education suggested, the concept “Guamanian” was exported to Guam as a term meant to separate Chamorros living in Saipan and those living in Guam. Originally interchangeable with Chamorro, Guamanian now refers primarily to residency in Guam, with only non-Chamorros employing the term.

All of our respondents had vague, confusing ideas about the meaning of Guamanian. For instance, an elementary teacher confessed, “I really don’t know what it means to be Guamanian . . . born in Guam? I’m not sure.” Meanwhile, it would take “five years to explain” who is Chamorro and Guamanian, according to an elementary school guidance counselor.

Another higher education respondent’s remarks clearly reflected this obscurity of Guamanian. He stressed that the concept of Guamanian is an empty one, containing no real sense of identity “whereas Cham-

orro and Pilipino might have their ethnic identity tattooed in some fashion on their arm, who would want to have a tattoo, ‘Guamanian?’” This respondent went on to suggest that most “wince” at the term.

One elementary school principal also recalled that in the past the term was used, “but lately nobody says Guamanian.” The fluid nature of Chamorro self-identification helps explain this, as described by a female second grade teacher. She has lived in Guam for 40 years and is a second-generation Filipino immigrant. In spite of this fact, she did not identify herself as either Filipino or Guamanian. Rather, she chose her identity as Chamorro, saying that “I feel that a lot of our families are half Chamorro and half something else.”

The current governor of Guam is supportive of fostering a pan-Guam identity with the concept of Guamanian but, as a higher education respondent claimed,

. . . local people don’t say they are Guamanian. There is no such thing as being Guamanian—rather, I am from Guam. Only those who are not from here like the name, Guamanian.

Similarly, a high school social studies teacher suggested Guamanian is a “weird term” while other respondents noted that “we don’t separate ourselves in that way.”

Respondents from higher education suggested that the real identity controversy relates to social inequality in terms of “who is on the bottom of the ladder—[the] newest immigrants are there . . . always. Now those are Chuukese.” For this reason, one middle school social studies teacher tends to use the term Guamanian more in his class. He noted that:

Guamanian is a nice term to put everyone in the same boat so as to not separate people by ethnicity . . . I tell the students they may wish to identify as Filipino or Chamorro but I talk more about being Guamanian.

Guam, U.S.A

Guam license plates contain two slogans: “Tano Y Chamorro” (“Land of the Chamorro” in the Chamorro language) and “Guam, USA” (in English). Prior to 1986, license plates read “Hafa Adai” (standard greeting of “hello” in Chamorro). A respondent in higher education suggested the notation on the license plate was to remind everyone of their “second-class citizenship” and “being American within our identity is really quite thin.”

One elementary teacher pointed to the license plate as giving a sense of belonging

and identity to the students and a respondent in higher education indicated that there is a division over the extent to which citizenship in the United States is a normative issue. Some are proud of this designation, but many feel as though they are not treated like other citizens. New immigrants, he suggested, may feel they are immigrating to Guam while others stress that they are immigrating to the United States, saying “no, I’m immigrating to Guam, USA.”

This “social bargain,” which one higher education respondent articulated for immigrants who enter Guam, is quite complicated given the multiple ethnic identities. For instance, most respondents suggested the affiliation with the United States was purely one of citizenship and had very little to do with their self-reported identity.

One middle school teacher posited that “you don’t find people saying ‘I’m an American’—it’s assumed already. Being American is implied.” However, he also asserted that this contested normative issue, of what Guam’s relationship should be in relation to the U.S., is very much a live issue. Although he used to desire independence and complete autonomy for Guam, he is no longer sure as the “issue lacks clarity.”

He used Miss Guam as an example, since she competes against Miss America in world beauty competitions even though they are technically both American: “What would you say to Miss Guam? ‘It’s really hot here and it’s far from San Francisco?’ That about sums it up!”

This respondent continued to state:

[Most people on Guam are] oblivious to how far Chuuk and Yap are from here. But they know how far Japan is or Hawaii or San Francisco is—so that is how your psychological speaking is linked to identity—raising people to be where they are, not pro or anti-American.

For this respondent, framing the issue of identity is critical in education. According to him, “it’s the teachers’ job to help them navigate their incompletely formed identities.”

On the question of the fluidity of Chamorro as an ethnicity, other respondents stressed how important it is to not focus on distinctions. For example, elementary teachers indicated that:

. . . there are some parents who say they are only Chamorro and not American, but I think we’ve been under the U.S. so long that there is no separation—ever since we were liberated from the Japanese, we don’t separate the two.

One high school teacher felt White peo-

ple are often called “Americans,” while even though those born on Guam and who have U.S. citizenship default to the Chamorro classification. Focusing on Chamorro customs and holidays, as well as core values of the U.S. constitution and U.S. holidays, these teachers felt there is a consistent blend of Chamorro and American culture fostered within the schools. Both the U.S. national anthem and Guam hymn are sung in schools most days, and both the U.S. and Guam flags hang outside of each school.

One school’s recent winter program was titled “A tribute to America” in order to commemorate the 10 years since the 9/11 attacks. In this elementary school of Chamorro, Filipino, and Chuukese students, the unifying focus was on traditional mainland Christmas songs, patriotic themes, and the U.S. flag. One teacher claimed that:

... it doesn’t bother them that they don’t vote for the president—they can still have the right to vote. They just vote for local people and they understand that [the concept of voting].

For those teachers and students who are involved in the decolonization movement, citizenship and other affiliations with the U.S. are something they are more than happy to relinquish. However, to those who “hold a view of citizenship as a reward for their suffering—I was beaten and then got citizenship,” being American is still very meaningful and significant. Therefore, as these teachers indicated, “that’s a very heated issue—anytime we talk about decolonization that’s probably at the top—citizenship and economic issues.”

In spite of having an often loose association with the U.S. in terms of identity, the schools in Guam employ textbooks and assessments written on the mainland. The central role of Guam’s Department of Education relates to seeking uniformity of school curriculum. Some principals readily and happily adopt such materials in desperate attempts to boost test scores among highly proportions of immigrant students who lack skills in English and Chamorro.

In the main, however, there is great concern that the textbooks cover and discuss issues that are quite literally foreign and are not mindful of Guam or its history. Because of this irrelevant curriculum, a higher education respondent expressed his concern: “If you close the doors and windows to your classroom, would students know you are in Guam? If not, there is a real problem here.”

A principal also voiced concerns about using the Stanford Achievement Test’s

Tenth Edition (SAT10) in fourth grade, which is the basis for school report cards. Rather than teach Guam history with regularity, which is standard practice for 4th grade social studies in the mainland along with each state’s history, the school is more focused on what the SAT10 measures. One second grade teacher talked about her frustration with “using mainland social studies textbooks—all textbooks are bought off island—all my other resources are off island.”

This imported curriculum has proved to be a controversy. A higher education respondent felt the “stateside books totally negate indigenous knowledge.” Two middle school social studies teachers indicated that it is really up to the teachers how Guam history is taught, if at all, since it is limited to the fourth grade. Rather, “they too teach to the test (SAT10) and study treatment of Native Americans and try to relate it to the example of the Spanish here.”

As a result, one respondent in higher education felt that Guam schools too often neglect their own community and culture. He stated that it is easy for the teachers to “ignore the familiar” under these educational circumstances:

Why require them to understand those things so distant from here? Many of the kids have not been to the mainland and less than 5% will venture beyond Hawaii.

Hence, one of the biggest challenges these teachers found was to

... relate that world [the U.S. mainland] with our world. We teach to the SAT10 and we have to teach to these tests. Everything has to be done toward that.

Outer Islanders and Chuukese

Our study respondents asserted a reality of school life as “total integration” where “kids really play with one another based on likes, not cultures. It’s the interests that groups them.” Another elementary school principal from the northern part of Guam felt “race and ethnicity is not an issue in elementary school” and a teacher from that school recalled that she “never thought about it—it’s all kind of meshed together—a diverse melting pot.”

In spite of this inclusive and fluid nature of what it means to be Chamorro, respondents revealed how easy it is to not be accepted as Chamorro. Outer Islanders, in particular those from Chuuk, constitute another controversy within Guam. A middle school principal suggested that the common

vernacular for referring to Chuukese is “FOB,” or “fresh off the boat.”

Respondents suggested that many come to Guam to get residency and, as a result, their allegiance is not to Guam but rather they use it as “a tool to become a U.S. Citizen.” Others come to Guam in order to have their children since they will then be U.S. citizens at birth. Although all of the outer islands rejected the offer of U.S. Territorial status, they enjoy “Free Association” and can come to Guam without a visa and then “have their citizenship through their babies.”

Chamorro and English are taught not only for unifying and pragmatic reasons, but also to remind new immigrants that “Chamorro is the indigenous language of the host people” in Guam.

One of “the host people” in Guam, an elementary school respondent who is 25% Japanese and received her education on the mainland, shared ideas on how to understand children of the other ethnic groups. Because her generation was “embarrassed to speak Chamorro” and “we would look down on those who speak Chamorro,” she now feels remorseful:

Especially when I see the students now tease each other about the Chuukese . . . those who are born in Guam who speak Chuukese even tease the new students. When asked who is Chuukese in class, students are reluctant and scared to raised hands. But we say never to be ashamed of culture. To embrace it. Be proud of it.

A middle school teacher also spoke of the Chuukese as “our brothers and sisters on neighboring islands” who “come to Guam for a better life . . . but they are of a different culture and there is culture shock.” Many principals and teachers are sympathetic—after all, this is quite a transition for many students, many of whom “took the canoe to get to school” when they lived in Chuuk. Other students are just “rarely supervised by parents” and “the challenging part of this school is really the home—talking about these issues and addressing the issues. They are willing to assist but it doesn’t happen.”

Another controversial multicultural issue is the incongruity of Chamorro and Outer Islander values. Although the schools make efforts to provide outreach to parents, they often are frustrated and “tearing out our hair” with the lack of participation of immigrant parents. An elementary teacher has found “very different values of childhood education” and that too often parents will “just nod and agree while not understanding.”

One elementary teacher found that “although we are trying to get them to mix in with the other students, when they have recess they all group together. That’s natural I guess.” One elementary teacher invested time in presentations on “hitting and touching. What is appropriate and what is not . . . we say what is the ‘Western way’ and the different ways.”

Another elementary teacher suggested that

... these kids don’t know how to act . . . this is the ‘American way.’ It may be different in your culture, but we are in America and this is the right way. In their culture it is something else we need to address disparities of language and culture. We have to reteach it and reteach it.

One elementary school principal found

... most problems are out of misunderstanding and different ethnic backgrounds. In their culture, it’s ok. They didn’t know that here—simple things like taking things, eye contact, praise, body language, gestures, facial expression, silence. Everything.”

There are also differences related to concepts of public and private property. For Chamorros in Guam, families will only fish in one area. If another family came there to fish, the Chamorro family would leave and return another day. Newer immigrants are not aware of this traditional fishing spot system, and as a result, conflicts will sometimes arise.

Other teachers highlighted how Outer Island immigrants will “stand too close in the grocery line, never making eye contact with in-laws of the opposite sex . . . violence starts from staring like this.” Respondents viewed much of the work with Outer Island immigrants as simple basic integration into western civilization. Having neither English nor Chamorro language skills is certainly a major obstacle, but there are also challenging obstacles all groups face.

Some respondents brought the children’s home situation into the discussion.

Many of the children have no walls or floors or water or power, so we have to deal with issues like that. When we do home visits, sometimes we can’t even find the places where they live. I think if we didn’t have to deal with all the financial issues.

In response to this situation, they mentioned that

... we also focus on what it means to be a western family; we do hygiene, breakfast, homework, a routine . . . that is Western.

In the other backgrounds, they don’t know what is expected. When walking through the schools there are pockets of students separated by race.

Much of the work of one elementary school principal is therefore heavily focused on getting new immigrants and their families acclimated. One teacher attempted to find a way to help and educate the child and also the family by

... having workshops for parents and students. We also have an ESL program, character development class, a good touch and bad touch program, and teaching kids through music and dance.

In short, the focus is on “integration into western style school and a western or civilized paradigm; not a real focus on inter or multicultural education. Just getting them to school is the main priority.”

Another elementary teacher thus suggested that “we do the assimilation inadvertently. We don’t have a lot of training in multicultural education.” A middle school principal was a bit more optimistic, indicating that:

We are assimilated with the general population. But we also maintain some customs and different ways of thinking . . . they group together within this school [predominantly Chamorro] and we have isolated cases of racism, but those kids are not really understanding. I think the kids here have accepted the outer island kids.

Although teachers openly described their school instruction as “Americanization” and “Westernization” in particular, many situated it as underscoring fundamental values of equal rights. For instance, more specific topics come up in relation to law and culture. As Sandu (1997) already indicated, an elementary principal and her elementary teachers had some students who considered gender inequality usual and normal and their parents did not send their children until they are eight or nine year of age:

Since in those cultures the fathers are higher up and truancy is not a law-related issue in the other islands, but here it is the law. They have been in Guam all these years, but they really don’t know the law that children have to be in school at 5. They [those who coming from Chuuk] are adjusting and transitioning to Guam, but so many things they don’t know at all. We have to report truancy and the male dominant thing is not acceptable. We can’t blame the students because they’re coming from that environment.

Although several teachers indicated

their acceptance and understanding, it was difficult to find many teachers who discuss different cultures in their classroom. Rather, like the middle school teacher above, most of teacher told us that “I don’t talk about it in class—I don’t speak about that issue.”

Consistently mentioned as a controversial issue, immigration was immediately tied to funding, health care, public assistance, and “economic drain.” A common refrain was that the “Chuukese are using up all the food stamps” and “they think maybe not enough services because the immigrants are taking them all up.”

During our talk with one middle school teacher, he actually discussed how he celebrates difference in his classroom. Unlike many other teachers in this study, his students worry about jobs asking “Why don’t you hire a Chamorro? Why are you hiring the Chuukese guys?” Another middle school teacher noted that the “outer islanders are a cost—there is a sentiment that there is a cost for education, health care, and public assistance.”

A number of respondents felt that Chuukese and other recent immigrants are exacting a drain on an already fragile economy. Citing numerous benefits ranging from food stamps and “easy gain through poverty and government programs,” one elementary teacher underscored and stressed this discord.

The migration of Outer Islanders clearly impacts schools, especially in the north of Guam, where teachers “feel it.” A teacher discussed “how the kids mingle and the inability to adapt to a new culture—the overcrowded classrooms—demands for new schools to meet immigration.” Respondents also cited ways in which immigrants have values that are at odds with the U.S. constitution, which clearly constitutes a controversial issue.

For example, one middle school teacher suggested that celebrating and practicing culture is important, but “we have to follow the laws of Guam.” Respondents primarily reference the issue of truancy and starting kindergarten at an appropriate age, but it also has to do with misogynistic behaviors displayed by both children and adults. A high school teacher suggested that there is

... a backlash here, but it’s tough to talk about. Mainly, we don’t talk about it out of habit not to offend. The Chamorro and Filipino do feel this is more their place.

The clash of Chamorro and Outer Island culture reveals itself in various forms

of conflict including bullying. Some middle school teachers identified bullying along ethnic lines as a controversial issue, one that further leads to gangs and perpetuates division within society as students become adults. These teachers' interpretation of bullying varied, whereby some respondents undermined this assertion claiming that bullying of this sort was "isolated" and "A lot of it has to do with student identity within the school group. Once they get past and accept it, it's not a problem."

But two other middle school teachers suggested "bullying is all by race" and one recalled that

... when I grew up, it was all Chamorro versus Filipino conflict. Now Chamorro and Chuukese have conflict. What I've always tried to address is that we are all Micronesian.

In addition, middle school teachers posited most cultural conflict comes "from the mainland—anyone, not just White Americans—it could be a Chamorro from the mainland." In some schools, gangs ultimately form along cultural lines, which constitute another controversial issue. Teachers use this as a "teachable moment—we take time to discuss our differences and similarities."

One middle school teacher perceived Outer Island immigrants as "sticking together, not say anything in class, and not socializing with others. It's part of their culture too." A middle school principal suggested that the school she came from

... didn't have that friction—it was a bigger school and the first year we had a riot—a big clash, but after that we had the team leaders getting together and addressing it with the teachers ... when we have an issue we discuss it in assemblies too.

A respondent from higher education indicated "a lot of fighting in high schools—mostly ethnic grouping." The ethnic grouping is really not as clear cut as Chamorro versus Chuukese. Rather, as one high school teacher asserted,

When they say Chuukese that can be hundreds of different islands and different languages and those kids identify with their island, not the main island of Chuuk. We do get a big influx from the main island, but they are don't identify with "Chuuk" much—they are something else.

From this perspective, outside the classroom is a narrative of misunderstanding involving fruit trees perceived to be in usufruct (the right to utilize and enjoy the profits or advantages of something belong-

ing to another), gang fights, stabbings, and unspoken rules about fishing grounds.

One higher education respondent revealed a sentiment of some in Guam to prevent the Chuukese from coming to Guam. But the reality is "a lot of them were born in Guam. Many can't really go back home as they would now be considered Guamanian." Underlying all of this tension is the larger perception of Chuukese taking on disproportionate and finite resources from the "original" members of Guam, the Chamorro.

Discussion and Conclusion

Identity serves as a fulcrum educational issue within Guam. The "official people," Chamorro, are not only declining in number in relation to new immigrants and member of the military, but they are also increasingly dispersed through ethnic intermarriage. As a result, the inclusivity of "Chamorro" serves to simultaneously retain and strengthen the ethnicity while irrevocably change it toward a more geographic and value-laden concept.

This open-door ethnicity begets controversy in the dual identity of U.S. territory and sovereign state, while maintaining a stance of hospitality, helpfulness, and acceptance. Yet, avoiding activities which run counter to core Chamorro values and having a deep aversion to "talk badly about anyone," the Chamorro people risk a deepening fatalism, passivity, and increased colonialism.

Alternative identifications, including Guamanian, are a threat to Chamorro-ness and are a painful reminder of colonialism's hoary role in Guam's history. Tensions with the mainland U.S. involve simultaneous pride and benefit, as well as delegitimizing indigenous knowledge, political marginalization, and geographic exploitation. Textbooks from the mainland and the prominence of the SAT10 speak to an ongoing cultural and intellectual colonialism, which is, in turn, passed on to Outer Island immigrants at the hands of Chamorro-led U.S. public education institutions.

Occupying this position of both local hegemony and U.S. subservient has brought forth a delicate balancing act of resisting further colonization, while proudly engaging in westernization and civilizing new immigrants. Given the "drain" of new immigrants and their free association created by mainland law, Chamorros and those in Guam experience mixing of values and cultures at multiple levels. The position of intersection serves as a point

of departure for numerous controversial issues involving economics, politics, culture, and geography.

The enduring effects of 490 years of colonialism are also present. The generational and often engrained passivity and fosters a default setting of *fait accompli*. As the Japanese continue to develop hotels and buy more real estate and the U.S. military annexes more land and moves in more personnel, those in Guam, both locals and immigrants, often express an accepting response.

Active citizens who engage issues find succor in experiencing, at time, some sense of efficacy which those in Guam rarely indicate. An essential characteristic of democratic societies is the ability of citizens to discuss controversial issues in order to celebrate diversity, respect individuals and groups, extend equal rights to all human beings, respect evidence in the formation of beliefs, and be open to changing one's mind within a criticality informed by rational inquiry (Chikoko, Gilmour, Harber, & Serf, 2011).

Schools in Guam function to Americanize immigrants by adjusting different socio-cultural values to American mainstream beliefs and practices which are considered norms, such as the matters of hygiene, manners, and farming and food preparation process. However, the educators in this study manifested their different ways of understanding and an empathy for new immigrant children and identifying who they are.

Due to the unique Guamanian circumstance of multiple, mixed, and complicated identity formation, they must deal with a triple standard not only for themselves but also their students, including reviving Guam's native culture of Chamorro, embracing the different cultures from new immigrants, and incorporating them into American mainland's educational practices and culture at the same time.

Their "markers of identity" (Grant, 1997, p. 9) are formulated by compromising diverse identities and roles existing in a Guam context. In this process of marking identity, the respondents indicate that Guam can simultaneously be majority Chamorro while acknowledging "the others" as minorities who to date have received insufficient attention as Americans.

As a result, efforts are needed to mirror new immigrants to reflect themselves and their past experience. Simultaneously, each of these groups continues to struggle developing their unique identities by taking account of their own views of and needs

as they are living within a unique and different historical, cultural, geographic area.

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