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THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE
GARMENT INDUSTRY IN HAWAII

By

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Abstract: The historical development of garment production in Hawaii from precontact to the present is described and analyzed in terms of the continuities and changes that have occurred in its labor process (i.e., the organization of the process of garment production). Both primary and secondary data are used in this historical analysis; the pre-1965 sections in this paper are a reanalysis of historical data gathered on the industry by Furdaburk, while the analysis of current conditions relies on data recently collected from interviews with owners and managers of garment manufacturing firms. These data show a recurring tradition of women as the producers of garments and the connection between household production and industrial production. But they also show several changes in the process of production. Most notably, changes are seen in the decline of certain craft-based production techniques, in the ethnic backgrounds of the workforce, in greater state involvement in the industry, in the differentiation and specialization of the parts of the industrial production process and in the relationships between production and marketing functions.

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THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARMENT INDUSTRY IN HAWAII¹

INTRODUCTION

The nature, structure and consequences of work continue to intrigue social scientists and social philosophers, policy makers and lay observers. Changes in the levels of employment, in the types of work that are available, in the composition of the workforce, and in the conditions and consequences of work are some of the issues of contemporary concern. Furthermore, these issues are often interrelated so that concerns about one area, such as levels of employment, are frequently raised in relationship to other concerns such as deindustrialization and/or reindustrialization.

Such is the case of the garment industry in Hawaii. Since 1974, both production and employment in this industry have declined, and a number of the 130 or so firms have gone out of business. These developments have not gone unnoticed. Since 1977, the state government, particularly the Department of Planning and Economic Development, has become involved in various efforts to revitalize this industry, including partial subsidization of the industry's marketing and educational efforts.

This paper reviews the historical development of the garment industry in Hawaii from precontact to the present and analyzes the changes that have occurred in the organization of this productive activity. Of particular concern in this analysis is the identification of the key factors involved in the emergence of this industry and in the transformation of the labor process in each of its historical periods. Before proceeding with the analysis, however, this paper briefly reviews some major ideas on labor process.

INDUSTRY AND LABOR PROCESS

The term industry is generally used to refer to the organization of the production and distribution of a particular category of goods and services. After examining several neoclassical economic definitions of industry, Zald (1978) noted that the concept implies that the organization is embodied in particular forms or units called firms and is oriented toward a particular end called a market.

But the concept of industry must also be socio-historically based. Neo-Marxian theorists have pointed out that the development of an industry within the capitalist mode of production hinges on the transformation of two factors related to production. The first is its commoditization or transformation of purpose -- from production for use-value to production for exchange-value.² Production for exchange value constitutes a redirection of production toward the market, and it involves the increasingly intensive use of labor power in order to extract surplus value. The second is the transformation of the labor process. That is, the integrated functions of conception and execution are successively fragmented by changes in the social organization of knowledge, materials, settings, equipment, individuals and their activities. Although the transformation of the two factors may occur at different points in time and over different lengths of

time, these theorists claim that both are necessary conditions under the capitalist mode of production. That is because conception and execution functions are generally integrated under the conditions of production for use-value, whereas they become increasingly fragmented under the conditions of production for exchange-value.

The transformation in the first factor is discussed by Braverman with reference to Marx's concepts of productive and unproductive labor. Keeping in mind that the distinction between these concepts does not involve a prescriptive or moral judgement, Braverman notes that:

. . . Marx defined productive labor under capitalism as labor which produced commodity value, and hence surplus value for capital. This excludes all labor which is not exchanged against capital" (Braverman 1974:411).

What is stressed here is that, under capitalism, the value of an item or service is not to be found intrinsically in itself, but rather extrinsically to itself, in the surplus value it produces. Accordingly, the shift in economic production of items and services from predominantly the use of unproductive to productive labor signals a shift in the mode of production from precapitalist to capitalist production.

Braverman's major contribution in Labor and Monopoly Capital, however, was in refocusing attention on the nature of the labor process, and in making note of the way in which the integrated functions of conception and execution have been successively reorganized under the capitalist mode of production. He argued that as capitalism progressed from its competitive to monopoly capital stages, conception and execution functions become increasingly separated. Thus, capitalists and their representatives (management) dominate the conception functions while labor is relegated to the execution functions. Scientific management, also known as Taylorism, decomposes work into increasingly smaller units and remuneration rates are adjusted to these smaller units of work. The net result, according to Braverman, is the deskilling and degrading of work.

Both neoclassical and neoMarxist theories agree that the drive to extract ever greater surplus value creates the continual pressure to rationalize production and thus change the labor process. NeoMarxist theorists, however, emphasize that the changes in the labor process must be understood in terms of the relations of production and class conflict. Edwards (1979) emphasizes that capitalist control takes priority over efficiency in the social organization of production for surplus value and understands the transformation of the labor process in terms of an evolution in the types of control used by management in the workplace: from simple control to technological control to bureaucratic control. Burawoy (1979), however, emphasizes that the hierarchical relations of production also mean that the other side of capitalists' efforts to control labor is labor's efforts to resist that control. Understanding the negotiated aspects of work, then, is his key concern. In this regard, he has examined how other factors, notably the state, are brought into this negotiation process (1981).

Recent discussions of labor process transformations have noted its relationship to labor market segmentation (Gordon et al. 1982). Others have noted that the segmentation of labor along gender (and racial/ethnic) lines has been used in the introduction of new technology (Hacker 1982; Glenn and Feldberg 1983) and in the internationalization of the assembly line (Lim 1978; Snow 1983). For many workers it has meant increasing surveillance, deskilling and degradation (Zimbalist 1979; Glenn and Feldberg 1982). With a few exceptions (Burawoy 1981; Fernandez-Kelley 1982), the state-labor process relationship appears to be largely ignored as is the industry-labor process relationship (Lamphere 1979).

This paper attempts to examine the historical development of the garment industry in Hawaii and the changes that have occurred in its labor process. In doing so, it focuses on the following questions. First, what are the historical continuities and discontinuities in the organization of the productive process? In this regard, we examine characteristics of the producers of the garments, the locus of production, and the purpose of production. Second, is there fragmentation of the production process and/or deskilling, and what are the implications for conflict? Finally, how do historical and external factors such as "contact," the war, tourism and immigration affect the organization of production?

DATA AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The proposed historical analysis relies on several sources of data, some primary and some secondary. The bulk of the pre-1975 analysis of the industry is conducted on data collected for a study of the industry by Emma Lila Fundaburk and her associates at the University of Hawaii's Economic Research Center in 1965. This is supplemented by data taken from secondary sources such as business or trade publications and government documents. Much of the data on the most recent period are taken from interviews currently being conducted on the population of garment manufacturers. Since data collection is still in progress, these are tentative findings and reflect patterns which have emerged up to this point.³ As a result, these findings may be modified at a later date when a more thorough analysis of the entire data set is possible.

Fundaburk's classification of the development of the Hawaiian garment manufacturing industry into four distinct periods is used in this analysis. Although these classifications are somewhat arbitrary, they represent the emergence of certain phenomena or changes in certain conditions in the industry. This paper preserves those designations; however, it also strives to understand the events or patterns in terms of the implications that these might have for the restructuring of the labor process. The periodization, then, is as follows: Preindustrial (pre-1922); Transition (1922-1941); War and Post-War Years (1942-1954); and Rapid Growth (1955-1974).⁴ To these four periods will be added one more: Deindustrialization (1975 to the present).

HISTORICAL PERIODS

The Preindustrial Years (pre-1922)

The pre-industrial years include the century-and-a-half after contact⁵ as well as the millenium before Capt. James Cook's arrival in the Hawaiian Islands in the late 18th century. The contrast between the pre- and postcontact eras is substantial and deserves some attention here.

In precontact Hawaii, the predominant form of dress for women was the pa'u. This consisted of a rectangular piece of kapa (or tapa) fabric which was wrapped around the woman's body from her waist, the length reaching to mid-thigh or just below the knee. Some women also wore additional pieces thrown loosely over their shoulders but these were optional. Men wore the malo or loincloth which was made of the same material. Each family member required a set of pa'u or malo because sharing personal clothing was not acceptable. Sheets of kapa were used as coverlets for sleeping as well as for clothing. Additionally, kapa sheets were used as items of ceremonial exchange (e.g., as dowry and as an acknowledgement of kinship relations). Finally, parental competence was also indicated by the kapa, for if a child did not have a sleeping kapa, it was taken as an indication that the child had lazy parents (Handy and Pukui 1972).

The production of kapa was clearly an important activity, and it was delegated to the women in the households. It was usually made in early summer from the inner bark of certain trees which were first soaked in water, then pounded, formed into sheets, and laid out to dry. Thus, in precontact Hawaii, kapa production was clearly for use-value, and the labor process involved the combined use of indigenous resources, traditionally conveyed technical knowledge, and physical skill and labor obtained within the household.

After contact, and particularly in the early 1800s with the instigation of the sandalwood trade and then the whaling industry, fabrics made of silk, satin and gingham began to replace the kapa fabric for the pa'u and malo. This was especially true among the Ali'i (or chief caste). An even more important change in dress began in the 1820s and 1830s with the coming of the New England missionaries who introduced dressmaking and tailoring techniques. New England-style dresses, which were called "Mother Hubbards," were modified to fit the larger frames of the indigenous people; pieces of kapa with calico-style printing were often sewn together for this. Later, these dresses took on more form-fitting styles from which emerged the holoku, a long fitted outer dress which was worn with a loose-fitting undergarment, the muumuu. Eventually, the latter came to be worn as an outer garment as well.

The Great Mahele (land division) of 1848, the Masters and Servants Act of 1850, and the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876 all paved the way for nearly a century of a plantation-dominated sugar economy. Although the first sugar plantation was started in 1835, the sugar industry did not really develop until the last half of the 19th century. When it did, it created a need for work clothing for the imported labor.

Fundaburk found no public information on garment production prior to 1880; however, a Register of Foreigners Residing in Honolulu in January 1847 listed eight Tailors (Greer 1970:92-95). From this Register, and the patterns noted by Abbott on the continental U.S., it can be inferred that dressmaking, when it was done, was usually performed within the household. Men's clothing on the other hand, was being constructed outside the home. The names on the Register also suggest that all but one of the tailors were male, and all were Caucasian. Since about 95% of the population of Hawaii in 1850 was indigenous, kapa production probably continued, but it was probably being replaced by the alternative materials available through the mercantile trade and the growing pressure to dress in the western mode.

By 1880, when a City Directory was published, a small number of shops had emerged under the headings "clothing manufacturers," "tailors," and "dressmakers" (all in Honolulu), as had one sewing machine dealer. In contrast to the 1847 Register of Foreigners, most of these merchants had Chinese surnames, and it was very likely that they had recently completed their labor contracts with the sugar plantations. Since there is no evidence to the contrary, we can assume that most garment production continued to be done in the households or by individual craftspeople on a made-to-order basis.

While the shops listed in the 1880 Directory may have used family members as unpaid workers, the 1912 Blascoer study suggested that Portuguese women (who had also come as contract labor for the sugar industry) were likely to be employed as seamstresses and needlewomen, usually for \$1.00 to \$3.00 per day. The work day was usually eight and a half hours, but the work was very sporadic, usually between three to six weeks per year. Most of these women reported that they were self-taught in their skills which suggests a carry-over of their gender-based activities. No mention was made of the techniques that were used, but since sewing machines were available, they were probably used by at least some of the shops.

In the pre-1922 years, then, the production of garments in Hawaii underwent considerable change. Among the indigenous people, production of garments was for use-value rather than for exchange-value. Women were the producers, and production involved working with indigenously obtained materials and applying technical knowledge, skill and effort. In the period after contact, new fabrics and dressmaking techniques were introduced and these, over time, had the effect of making kapa production irrelevant. Additionally, the concept of production for exchange value was introduced, first with sandalwood production and later with the development of the sugar industry.

Proletarianization was very limited until the last quarter of the 19th century and was found mostly in the sugar industry. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, it began to be seen in other sectors of the economy as well. The producers of clothing also underwent some change. Initially, clothing was produced exclusively by women, for household members. But, by the mid-nineteenth century, a handful of Caucasian males were commercially operating as tailors, and by the end of the century, Chinese men operated the shops. It is only in the early twentieth century, however, that there

is any evidence of proletarianization; this is seen in the sporadic employment of immigrant Portuguese women as seamstresses. Clearly, then, production of garments was precapitalist in this period, both in terms of its objectives and in terms of its organization (or labor process). These conditions changed, however, in the period from 1922 to 1941 and began to resemble the conditions found earlier in the continental United States in a stage Edith Abbott (1910) termed "the transition."

The Transition (1922-1941)

Three notable trends emerged in 1922, and the developments of the following twenty years were built on these trends. These were the establishment of the first factory-manufactured clothing firm, the importation of ready-to-wear garments manufactured on the mainland, and the proliferation of home sewers.

The first factory, the Hawaiian Clothing Manufacturing Company, Ltd. (later renamed Sailor Moku products, Ltd.), produced Men's, Ladies' and Children's clothing exclusively for the wholesale market and used its own trademark in labeling its mass produced manufactured goods. Most of its production was in "sailor moku" or overalls, and this coincided with the growth and solidification of the plantation-structured sugar industry. This firm served as a model for the organization of production of ready-made clothing for future firms. Within two years, another firm emerged, and in a few years after that, yet a third, the Union Supply Company, which became a major supplier of uniforms for the military. The number of firms increased steadily so that by 1941, there were fifteen firms listed as garment manufacturers in the City and County Directory.

The second important trend was the importation of ready-to-wear garments which were manufactured in the continental U.S., especially for the new tourist industry. It signaled the growth of retailing directed to a specific market. A Liberty House (local retailer) advertisement in the Paradise of the Pacific magazine, for example, urged tourists to purchase their vacation wardrobes after they arrived in Hawaii. It noted that the store carried the same known brand-names like "Jantzen" and "Gantner and Mattern" at prices comparable to those on the mainland, but additionally, "in colors and materials suitable for Hawaii's balmy climate" (Fundaburk 1965, 11, 1:24-25). The trend in importation also meant a net outflow of money. In 1926 the Chamber of Commerce published a report that expressed concern over the dollar costs of importing ready-made clothing to the islands and supported the idea of factory production to service the local market.

Finally, Fundaburk notes the growing number of home sewers as well as dressmaking, tailoring, and made-to-order retail stores. The number of dressmakers and tailors listed in city directories in the 1920s and the 1930s hovered around a couple hundred each, and there were also about a dozen sewing machine dealers and companies. Home sewers not only supported the machine dealerships, but they also formed the basis for the industry's labor force. Most of these home sewers had attended one of a number of private sewing schools that provided informal education to a large number of

second-generation Japanese women.⁶ Just as factory manufacturing in Europe and the continental U.S. had been built on the preexisting pool of skilled craftspeople, "this vast reservoir of sewing knowledge in Honolulu was a substantial foundation for the development of factory manufacturing of garments in Hawaii" (Fundaburk 1965, II, 1:25).

Together, these trends set the stage for the developments of the next twenty years. The first factory served as a model for those that followed, shifting the locus of production from households and small commercial shops to factories. While work clothing was being produced locally, ready-made vacation wear was still being imported. This changed, however, in the 1930s as individual tourists began to patronize the small made-to-order shops, such as Musa-shiya the Shirtmaker, for specially-made shirts. These shirts were copied from the shirts worn by Japanese school children, whose mothers had constructed them from scraps of brightly printed kimono cloth, and came to be known as "Aloha" shirts. Recognizing the demand, factories such as King-Smith began producing them in large quantities. By 1936, two firms, Branfleet (later Kahala Sportswear) and the Kamehameha Garment Company, began to shift the focus of the garment industry to a larger and more export-oriented market. Their products, factory-made sportswear, provided the direction and product line that continues to dominate large segments of the industry today.

These developments were accompanied by shifts in the characteristics of the manufacturers and their workers. In contrast to the 1880 City Directory listings in which most of the surnames were Chinese, the 1922 lists were mostly Japanese. By 1941 the surnames were ethnically diverse, but mainly Chinese and Caucasian. This probably reflected the greater capital requirements of factory production vis-a-vis shop or household production. For example, the Union Supply Company reportedly required \$200,000 in capitalization, and this was pooled among its four owners.

A 1939 Bureau of Labor Statistics report by James Shoemaker showed that only about 10% of the workforce in the garment industry were men. Among the predominantly female workforce, the ethnic composition had changed from largely Portuguese in 1912, to nearly 80% Japanese or Chinese by 1939. A 44-hour week (5 days of 8 hours per day, and 4 hours on Saturday) was typical with the median hourly earnings for women being 25 cents, considerably lower than the earnings of women in the garment industry in the continental U.S. The 1939 report also noted that the technology (equipment in the shops) was fairly simple (Fundaburk 1965, II, 1:85).

This period, from 1922-1941, can be considered the transition period because it reflected the changes in the production process. With the establishment of factories, there was increasing proletarianization of the producers of garments. Although the sex distribution of the workforce remained largely female the distribution of their ethnic backgrounds changed. The ethnic backgrounds of the firm owners also seemed to have changed, reflecting greater capital requirements. Initially, the factories produced garments for the local market, but by the end of this period, they had developed a product for the local tourist market which was then extended to the export market. By the end of this period, then, commodity production

for exchange-value was established. And, while there is little in the way of specific description of the changes in the labor process, the shift in the locus of production from households and small commercial shops to at least a mixture of small commercial shops and factories reflect the transformation of the labor process from craft-production to mass-production and signals the arrival of capitalist production.

The War and Post-War Years (1942-1954)

The period from 1942 to 1954 saw the development of a somewhat autonomous industry at the local level. In large measure, this was produced by the conditions posed by World War II which curtailed shipping and made both importation and exportation of clothing difficult. It also brought large numbers of a new type of visitor to the islands -- military personnel.

The curtailment of shipping between Hawaii and the continental U.S. during the years from 1942 to 1945 meant that retailers of ready-to-wear clothing could not obtain their stocks as easily as they had in the past. It also meant that the fledgling garment manufacturers had trouble getting their sportswear to their newly established markets and, therefore, needed to develop new markets for their products. The establishment of working relationships between the manufacturers and the retailers turned out to be the solution to their respective dilemmas. This, however, required some adjustments in the presentation of goods. The result was that local retailers did not mention that the goods they were selling to the local consumer were produced in Hawaii, and local manufacturers began to use the term "handblocked prints" to describe their patterns instead of the previously-used "Hawaiian prints." Printed clothing became more acceptable to the local population as the scarcity of mainland ready-to-wear clothing continued, and by the end of the war years, a local market for Hawaiian garments had been established. More important, there was the development and the cementing of manufacturer-retailer relations which continued for most of the next forty years.

The second development was the influx of military personnel who became immediate consumers of Hawaiian sportswear, as well as publicists of the products of the garment industry. Initially, these people purchased Hawaiian clothing to wear locally as well as to send back home as souvenirs. This had a ripple effect of introducing Hawaiian-made clothing to a new, nontourist market in the continental U.S. which proved to be especially fruitful in the post-war export-rebuilding phase of the industry.

After the war, the growth in the number of firms continued. In the years immediately following the war, the number of firms in Honolulu climbed from 17 in 1946 to 48 in 1950 (Fundaburk 1965, I, 1:40). There was experimentation with new fabrics, designs, and prints and, with it, changes in the technology of printing. Most of the textile printing immediately after the war was done by mainland textile converters. By 1950, however, "screen printing" had emerged, led by companies like Alfred Shaheen and Von Hamm Textiles. This procedure permitted the printing of smaller yardages, expressly for local designers. More important, it permitted brighter and more shaded prints which, from 1947 on, received greater national and international exposure through yearly Aloha Week publicity events.

These developments in technology led to the 1949 formation of a trade association, the Hawaii Garment Manufacturers Guild. It was initiated by the ten largest local manufacturers in the interest of promoting their Hawaiian fashions nationally, as well as to begin working together on concerns of the industry. High on their list of concerns were the needs for skilled machine operators and for greater publicity to enable the industry to expand markets. The result of additional promotion and publicity was a fairly rapid growth of the industry's volume of production; in the years from 1952 to 1954, this amounted to \$5-6 million in wholesale volume (Fundaburk 1965, I, 1:44). Financing was also a problem for many of the firms, particularly the newly established ones. As an owner of one of the newly established firms noted,

. . . the big problem was access to money -- the discrimination was awful, the younger folks don't really know, only had Bank of Hawaii and Bishop Bank and they wouldn't give you credit for loans because they said this was just a fad business -- really hard until statehood and the tourists, and new banks like CPB and City Bank (interview 2/21/85:2-3).⁷

The war and postwar years, then, can be regarded as the Industrial Period when the Hawaiian garment industry developed autonomously and became fully established. Because of their isolation from the national export market during the war years, manufacturers established cooperative relations with local retailers, which continued until very recently, and were able to create a local market for their goods. Additionally, the military personnel stationed in Hawaii during the war years who bought the locally produced Hawaiian sportswear helped to extend the national interest in Hawaiian sportswear beyond its former, strictly tourist, constituency. This turned out to be quite important when, with the development of the new screen-printing technology and publicity, the industry began to define itself as an industry and to expand its national export markets.

The Period of Rapid Growth (1955-74)

Fundaburk refers to the years from 1955 to 1964 as the period of rapid growth. Actually, the time frame should be extended to 1974 since the industry continued to grow during those years. Like other participants in the economy in this period, the garment industry benefitted "because in the boomtime Hawaiian economy of 1955-74 there was ample room to accomodate everybody" (Kent 1983:106). In this period, the industry increased its volume of production and export. There were also increases in the number of firms, greater organization and professionalization, and greater attention paid to the industry by representatives of business, labor, and the state. Interest groups outside of Hawaii, including national and Japanese manufacturers and organized labor, also became interested in the industry.

From 1955 to 1964, the industry trebled its annual wholesale volume from \$7 million to \$20 million. The growth in production volume continued until 1974 when it peaked at \$66 million (Salmon 1979:74). The local market established during the war and postwar years continued to support industry products, but additionally, with the tremendous growth in tourism, a

substantial tourist market developed. Between 1964 and 1974, the number of tourists rose from 563,925 to 2,786,489 (Hawaii 1983:201). The increase in publicity and interest in Hawaii as it became the fiftieth state of the U.S. in 1959 helped, but so also did the aggressive efforts by Hawaiian manufacturers to increase their sales in the continental U.S. As expansion took place, however, the industry increasingly began to face problems.

In the mid-fifties, the industry began an organized effort to address its most important concern -- the need for skilled machine operators. Through joint efforts with the Department of Education, the Hawaii Garment Manufacturers Guild created a training course for power machine operators at Honolulu Technical School (now Honolulu Community College) which involved aptitude screening tests and 45-75 days of training. The proposed target group was young women from 18-35 years. The effort failed, chiefly for the lack of students, but it signaled the first of several efforts at state and industry cooperation.

Although labor supply continued to be the major problem, financing was also a problem and it became more acute as manufacturers required greater capitalization to expand their markets. Increasingly shortages in capital and labor interacted as those firms that exported to the continental U.S. found themselves subject to Federal minimum wage laws and higher labor and production costs.

While the industry grew considerably during this period, it differentiated. Of about 49 firms operating in 1956, 27 had 20 or fewer employees and only three firms had over a hundred employees; the employees in the larger firms accounted for 35% of the total industry employment. The nature of employment also changed. There was increasing division of labor and specialization of the productive process, particularly in the larger firms. By 1956, there were 16 different production occupations listed as well as an accompanying contingent of office and management occupations. The key occupation, of course, was power machine operator, and it was mostly filled by young women who possessed at least an eighth grade education (Fundaburk 1965, II, 2:234-235; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations 1957). Although ethnic backgrounds are not mentioned most of the production employees were Japanese women.

. . . in those days mostly Japanese, because nobody else could sew -- mostly nisei -- because not much opportunity in jobs. So the quality was really good, the caliber was, if could go to school like today, they would go to college (interview, 2/21/85:2).

Initial interest of organized labor in the islands' garment industry began in 1958 when the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union sent a representative to investigate conditions. They did not proceed with plans to organize garment workers in Hawaii, but in the process, initiated a State investigation of the practice of "homework."⁸ The first attempt to organize in the industry came in 1961, when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union won the right to represent some 233 workers of the largest garment-textile firm (Fundaburk 1965, II, 2:318-320).

In the meantime, the garment industry continued to expand and markets went beyond the continental U.S. to Japan. This was facilitated by greater efforts to "professionalize." Through the establishment of a local chapter of the Fashion Group, Inc., an international organization, linkages were created with professional organizations. Expansion had two interrelated effects. On the one hand, it led to greater popularity of and respect and demand for Hawaiian designs and products; on the other hand, it led to overproduction as many non-Hawaiian firms began to engage in "copy catting." This saturated the market and led to a slight decline in the industry's sales volume in the mid-sixties.

This period, then, was characterized by tremendous growth and change. There was greater attention paid to marketing locally, nationally, and internationally. The industry also faced continued labor shortages and the beginnings of labor conflict, which led to state and other organizations developing interest in the industry.

The Current Situation (1975 to the present)

From 1974 to 1976, both production and employment in the garment industry declined. A dozen of the 130 or so firms went out of business, but new firms have emerged. Consequently, in 1977, the State of Hawaii Department of Planning and Economic Development (DPED) again expressed interest in the industry. The motivation for state involvement was two-fold. On the one hand, there was the Comprehensive State Plan which recommended that the State's economic development efforts center on "nonpolluting" industries such as tourism, high technology (electronics), alternative energy, regional center for transnational corporations operating in Asia and the Pacific, etc.; on the other hand, there was the realization that the old agricultural mainstays of the islands' economy, sugar and pineapple, were being lost because of the coming end of sugar price supports and the earlier transnationalization of pineapple production by local capital in the 1960s.

Based on the results of a 1977 large-scale study of the industry by Kurt Salmon Associates, the DPED embarked upon a three-year, two-pronged effort to assist the industry in its marketing and manufacturing areas in 1980. The marketing effort was implemented in connection with the Fashion Guild of Hawaii, the industry's manufacturing association, and it involved partial subsidization of the costs of promoting apparel produced by local designers and manufacturers. These efforts followed from the Salmon report's conclusions which suggested that the industry needed to focus on and penetrate the national and international export markets. At least one of the two trade shows held each year by the Fashion Guild has been held in the continental U.S. and has been partially subsidized by the DPED.

The second effort, directed at improving aspects of the manufacturing process in the industry, had two facets: increasing the supply of skilled labor and the upgrading of production techniques. With regard to the securing of skilled labor, the DPED contracted with Honolulu Community College to oversee the recruitment and the training of students enrolled in the Power Machine Operators Training School. Its objective was to identify,

train and provide a new pool of workers for the industry, whose workforce's average age is now over 50 years. The second component of the manufacturing intervention program was the subsidization of the services of an industrial engineering consultant who was to work individually with eight firms selected by the Garment Industry Training Program Advisory Committee to help them improve their production techniques. The consultant was also contracted to provide a number of workshops on costing, time-motion studies, etc. for the entire industry.

The effects of the DPED's intervention have yet to be fully identified and assessed.⁹ In the meantime, however, certain developments have occurred in the industry. One notable feature is that the nature of the workforce has changed; it is now composed predominantly of immigrant Filipino women. Most firms report that their retirement-age seamstresses are nisei Japanese and that their younger "forty-ish" seamstresses are Filipino. In fact, a recent survey of Ilokano immigrants on Oahu found that 11% of the women worked as seamstresses or other textile workers (1985:6). Filipino women also make up the largest proportion of the Garment Industry Training Program's Power Machine Operators Training classes. The instructors felt that they were the best students because they had some familiarity with dressmaking from their experiences back in the Philippines, but "there's also a lot of untraining to do too because they tend to spend too much time on certain operations, and we need to get them to cut down on the time they spend on those" (interview, 5/16/83:4).

There has also been a considerable decline in the sales of garments produced for the tourist market, and there are several reasons for this. First, the price of printed fabrics rose quite steeply, making the price of finished garments quite high. This had the effect of depressing their sales. Additionally, the general trend toward more universal and casual clothing, coupled with increasingly less affluent tourists, have reduced purchases of special tourist clothing. Many established manufacturers have therefore shifted their production toward the local market, but even here there are problems.

For many of the local manufacturers who produced muumuus¹⁰ for the local market, the emergence of the "factory-to-you" operations have created a crisis situation. Many of them bemoan the fact that their research and design efforts are "stolen" from them soon after their produced goods are displayed on retailers' racks. They assert that the factory-to-you operations buy their creations off the racks, take the garments apart for patterns, use cheaper grade materials and contract out sewing operations, and then sell them to the consumer at prices which are either at or below the wholesale prices of manufacturers. The result has been an oversaturation of the already limited local market with muumuus.

To cope with the factory-to-you competition, four muumuu manufacturers have chosen to by-pass the established retailers and have established their own retail outlets. The smaller manufacturers have established boutique-type outlets, but one manufacturer clearly planned its vertical organization with volume in mind.

sportswear was taking lots of R and D, the market was changing and retailers have a lot of control here -- they put you in a niche -- it's very hard . . . so we've gone into a vertical operation -- we own our own retail shops and produce for the domestic market -- of course it's been evolving over a number of years -- we now have eight stores and we produce exclusively for our own stores (Interview, 3/11/85:2).

While some of the manufacturers have been moving into retailing, some retailers have moved into manufacturing. Many of the established local retailers are following the lead of the larger transnationalized retail chains which have contracted out the production of various goods, including clothing, to several off-shore sites, particularly in Asia. One interviewee noted that one of the large local retailers has contracted out production in Asia: "they see what the safe trends are and they try to stay in the middle somewhere so they're not so affected by the lag time" (Interview 3/11/85:7).

Of all the new patterns, however, the growth of contracting is probably the most important. Nearly all the manufacturing firms surveyed thus far have used contractors at some time, and firms are increasingly using contracting as a regular part of their production process. The reasons for the increased use of contracting are varied and have ranged from having an overflow of work and having to meet delivery dates, to the need for special equipment, to the need to reduce the cost of labor. The first two reasons are more likely to be given by the owners or managers of the smaller firms where production schedules are often erratic and capitalization is small. The last reason seems more likely to be given by the medium and larger firms. One medium-size firm owner estimated his production to be "about 60-40 -- 60% in-house and 40% contractors" (Interview, 2/14/85:3).

The specialization of functions in the industry is not an entirely new pattern. In fact, it is consistent with the patterns found by Nee and Nee in the San Francisco Chinatown garment shops and by Lamphere on the East Coast, with the distinction made between "inside" shops (manufacturers) and "outside" shops (contractors). Furthermore, the outside shops or contractors generally operate at an even lower level of capitalization and so tend to subject their workers to more exploitive conditions. Some manufacturers seem to be aware of this likelihood; one owner admitted that he suspects his contractors probably use homework and other methods I don't even want to know about . . ." but "because of the savings on capital expenses -- overhead and equipment costs" he will continue to use contractors (Interview, 2/14/85:3). On the other hand, contracting may also provide entrepreneurial opportunities to immigrants who may be excluded from more lucrative employment in the society (Waldinger 1984).

Contracting, however, seems to run the gamut from the modern practice of producing "off-shore" in Hong Kong, India, and other locations to the traditional practice of using home workers. Although the practice of home work is illegal, it still goes on. Several firm managers or owners admit to using home sewers and many seem to be unaware that the practice is illegal. One firm found out the hard way when they were investigated by the Federal

Department of Labor. As is probably the case in other locations, the issue of the use of home sewers is controversial and is clouded by the fact that there seem to be two types of home sewers. One group is made up of older retired seamstresses who just want to make some extra money and are familiar enough with the industry so that their remuneration can not be called oppressive. The other group, however, is made up of newly arrived immigrants. This group is usually young, often handicapped by their inability to speak English, and with young children. It is this group that is most likely to be oppressively exploited by the practice of home sewing, and the practice seems likely to continue.

The garment industry in Hawaii is still virtually untouched by organized labor. The one firm that was organized by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in the 1960s reorganized itself and shifted most of its production outside Hawaii in the early 1980s. An organizing drive on another firm in the early 1980s resulted in merely a year of representation by a union before it was decertified. The difficulty of organizing labor will very likely continue because of the competitive nature of this industry. Firms tend to be small with moderate to low profitability, and a paternalistic culture seems to prevail. The larger firms have reorganized and have located a good part of their production outside Hawaii or rely heavily on contractors; thus, the chances of this industry being reached by organized labor are very slight.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined the development of the garment industry in Hawaii from its preindustrial beginnings to the present, using both existing data and data currently being gathered on the industry. Some common threads run through the history of the production of clothing. The work has been predominantly done by women, and by women who have had difficulty getting better paying employment. It has also found that the organization of the process of producing clothing has undergone substantial change.

Production of clothing in precontact Hawaii was done by women using indigenous materials and the application of traditional knowledge and skills. The labor process, therefore, was characterized by a unity of conception and execution functions and production was for immediate consumption rather than for exchange in a market. When new materials and new techniques were introduced, the old kapa-making was replaced by sewing, initially in the home and later by dressmakers and tailors. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, the production of garments changed from made-to-order to ready-made clothing. Garments were produced in factories using proletarianized labor for generating surplus value.

Marketing, therefore, became an increasingly important concern and there ensued a search for wider markets. But the access to those new markets was constrained by external political factors, notably World War II. Following statehood and the development of the tourist economy fueled by transnational capital, the garment industry once again expanded. By the mid-seventies, however, the industry had peaked and was on the decline. The industry has therefore moved into a transition period where new patterns are emerging,

including vertical organization, specialization and various types of contracting. Contracting may involve off-shore production in the case of larger firms; more often, however, small local firms, usually operated by immigrants, are being used. Sometimes, the distinction between contractor and home work is blurred.

These patterns suggest that segmentation of both capital and labor may currently be going on in the garment industry, and it may mean increasing deskilling of workers is taking place. It may also have implications for class conflict. If the degree of exploitation of workers is greatest among the contractors, manufacturers may be able to maximize their appropriation of surplus value and yet avoid conflict with their workforce when they use contractors.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Labor Studies Division Colloquium on Immigrant Workers and Third World Labor, August 23-26, 1985, in Washington, D.C. I would like to thank Patricia Steinhoff, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Hagen Koo, Herbert Barringer, George Won, Robert Stauffer, Robert Ellefson, and the anonymous reviewers of the Women in International Development Publication Series for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I also received financial support from the Barbara Mower Scholarship, the Soroptimist International, and the Hawaii Educational Association during the period of this research, insights from my mother, and moral support from my family.
2. Margaret Benston, in "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," expands on this point raised by Ernest Mandel.
3. This analysis was conducted on interviews conducted as of March 15, 1985.
4. In Fundaburk's study, the last period was 1955-1964; however, in this paper, this period will be extended to 1974 since industry continued to experience growth until 1974.
5. The term "contact" refers to the arrival of the British explorer, Captain James Cook, in 1778. It marks the end of the relative isolation of the indigenous Hawaiian society and the beginning of Hawaii's colonization and its integration into the international economy.
6. Private sewing schools not only provided many working class nisei Japanese women with practical skills such as garment construction and pattern making techniques, but they also provided a gender-appropriate opportunity and context for females to socialize, to obtain a sense of mastery and accomplishment, and, especially for the women who operated these schools, an opportunity to generate income.
7. Until the mid-fifties in Hawaii, when the Democratic Party came to power through a Labor-Japanese coalition and chartered other banks, two major banks controlled most of the financing in the territory of Hawaii -- Bishop Bank (later renamed First Hawaiian Bank) and Bank of Hawaii -- both of which were tied to the predominantly Haole or Caucasian interests and agency system.
8. After a representative of the ILGWU raised concerns about home work in October of 1958, an investigation was conducted. It consisted of a survey taken on December 1-5 of that year and "found 285 homeworkers employed by 40 firms. Two investigators talked to officials in 141 firms . . . but the problem is a territorial one, not Federal, according to the report" (Fundaburk, 1965, II, 2:241-245).
9. It is a major subject in my dissertation research and data are still being collected.

10. Muumuus are loose-fitting dresses, usually floor-length. They can be worn for casual wear or for dressy wear depending upon the style and materials used.

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