

HAWAII: A STUDY IN DEPENDENCY DYNAMICS
Triple Dependency or Self-reliance?*

by Johan Galtung
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
Wallotstraße 19
1000 Berlin 33

March 1983

Hawaii's location not so far from the middle of the Pacific also serves to define its dependency pattern: on both rims of the Pacific, both dependent on the US mainland and on East Asia, meaning in the first run on Japan. The structure and the process of this dependency is rather well-known and rather classical. It can be analyzed in terms of production factors: Hawaii offers nature and cheap or cheaper labour,⁽¹⁾ the rims offer capital for investment, technology and the administrative skills of corporations that increasingly become multinational, and then transnational corporations with local branches in Hawaii. For production of goods/services all five are needed. The place is in the hands of outside owners, in New York and San Francisco, Tokyo and Hong Kong, etc.⁽²⁾

As time passes, then, the pattern of dependency changes character. Nature changes from lithosphere and biosphere used to grow agricultural products, such as pineapple and sugarcane, towards hydrosphere and atmosphere, for swimming and tanning of tourists. The investment is less in agricultural production, more in tourism. Tourism grows, becomes highly successful and becomes the first industry of the archipelago, outdoing agriculture.⁽³⁾ The population becomes richer, even very rich on the average, and as that process takes place labour is no longer so cheap. The "comparative advantages" start disappearing.

However, Hawaii cannot live from tourism alone; other industries are also needed. But as land for agriculture and labour for rural work can both be found more cheaply elsewhere the plantation sector of economic activity tends to become stagnant. Other industries will have to come into the picture, and there are not that many. Moreover, none of them will have the great advantage of agriculture, that of being green, of blending relatively well with nature. Pineapples are even so short that they do not take any view away, sugarcane does but is relatively acceptable in terms of looks (the same applies to marijuana). But any other type of industry looks much like the facilities built for tourism: it becomes a jungle of concrete, buildings low or high, blocking views, depriving Hawaii of that which made Hawaii so attractive for tourism: exceptionally attractive nature. So, just like tourism will tend to kill itself by developing the type of facilities that make the country less attractive, alternatives to tourism will tend to have an even more negative impact on that particular industry.

The consequence is well known: both tourism and also other activities tend to seek out, to the outer islands of the archipelago. Oahu may lose in relative significance. Travel to the other islands becomes more and more frequent, they rise in attractiveness. But as they do so the same processes are reproduced and although there is still some time-distance to go, and although the Big Island may not be that hit simply because of its bigness, it is only all too evident where the whole thing may end: by making Hawaii relatively speaking unattractive both to agrobusiness in search of cheap land and cheap labour, and to tourists in search of something genuine. What would be left at that point would be something relatively similar to the mainland. In that case the comparative disadvantage of the archipelago might come in for full: it is after all located a certain number of hours and several hundred dollars away. There have to be clear advantages to compensate for those factors from an investment and tourism point of view.

The game is played the same way from the Eastern rim of the Pacific. For capital invested to pay off it either has to be invested where the other production factors are cheaply available, or where those factors are of less significance - high technology being the obvious example where neither much land nor much labour would be needed. But still the problem would be, why Hawaii? No doubt to compete with, and balance, US mainland capital. But also for the same reason as for tourism: nature, and life-style. As both of them are not infinite and renewable resources but something fragile, even highly capable of degradation, the game has to be played with the type of concern and tact and sensitivity that is usually not found when the centre of decision-making is far away, on the rims of the Pacific rather than in the self-appointed "hub", in Hawaii itself. The Japanese tourist industry, sending myriads of Japanese tourists with Japan Airlines, guided in flocks with a leader with a banner around the island in Japanese, well accommodated in a Japanese owned hotel with Japanese dishes, doing their souvenir shopping in Japanese department stores before they are transported on a Japanese bus in order to go back to Japan on Japan Airlines, is proverbial.⁽⁴⁾ Obviously this is a population not exactly in search of new life-styles but untrained in getting outside their own, certainly in search of new nature, possibly even of space. Even crowded Oahu competes well with

much of Japan in that regard. And in search of "having been to Hawaii."⁽⁵⁾

It should be noted that Hawaii is almost ideal as a doubly dependent country because it has population bridge-heads readily available for both sides. On the one hand there is the classical White Anglosaxon Protestant elite (WASP) originating from the mainland, serving as local agents for US based enterprises; on the other hand the Japanese immigrants that can serve in a similar way for the enterprises originating from Japan. But Japan is only a part of the East Asian Pacific rim. Behind Japan is the second wave of mini-Japans, and then the third way of the other ASEAN countries and after that - who knows - China herself. Tremendous economic forces released though the break-down of Western colonialism, and also of Western neo-colonialism - however gradual the process may be, able to compete with the US.

Thus the Eastern rim of the Pacific is considerably more than merely Japan. And just like the Western rim they all have potential bridge-heads in Hawaii due to the multi-ethnic, not only multi-racial composition of the population. Clearly, in making so much use of Hawaii they are not building economic cycles ending in Hawaii. Hawaii is a stepping stone, for the Western seaboard towards the East, for the Eastern seaboard towards the West. Not only is it ideally located, it is also well endowed and composed from the point of view of natural and human resources, at least as long as its role is that of a relatively modest stepping stone, and in the field of tourism.

However, Hawaii has also been a stepping stone in another sense and even dramatically so: from a military point of view. As the headquarter (CINCPAC) of the US Pacific fleet it points westward from the US; from the point of view of the Eastern seaboard it is the logical and obvious inbetween point that has to be handled in one way or the other. The symbolic name in this connection is, of course, Pearl Harbor; the symbolic date 7 December 1941. But that date gives a superficial image of international affairs. Since the black ships of commodore Perry appeared in Tokyo bay in 1854 the role of Hawaii was already given: as the point of departure for control of the Western part of the Pacific. The Japanese knew this; they knew that in order to have a free hand in that part of the world Pearl Harbor had somehow to be neutralized.

The US also knew this but did not seem to take the adequate precautions, or were sufficiently duped by the Japanese maneuvers further North not to prepare for the attack. So the attack came out of the blue, early, in the morning between 7.40 and 9.00 a.m. It was not "adequately" avenged before 8.45 a.m. 6th August 1945: the first nuclear genocide in human history, preceded by the lonely plane in the mornings, every day, two weeks before to dupe the Japanese the same way. The plane that dropped the bomb did not come directly from Hawaii. The ranges did not permit that those days, nor did the Japanese planes come directly off bases in Japan. They both used stepping stones: other Pacific islands in the first case, aircraft carriers in the second.^[6]

And those stepping stones continue playing their role in Hawaiian relations with the rest of the world. Being at the tail end of strong and extremely well spun economic cycles emanating from both sides of the Pacific, being doubly dependent and also militarily exposed, the situation of Hawaii is vulnerable. The mechanisms are well-known: Hawaii is a dependency in the economic sense, and economic peripheries will be discarded when other peripheries can pay off more handsomely. And the military peripheries have an even more ominous role to play. Being essentially forward bases they are highly exposed since they obviously constitute strategic targets of supreme importance. Pearl Harbor I (7 December 1941) was already the proof of this. To the extent that thermo-nuclear devices are stored in Pearl Harbor and elsewhere (for use by the submarines). Pearl Harbor II will be a certainty in case of a United States-Soviet Union war in the Pacific. The difference, of course, is that this time the destruction will be much more far reaching. The missiles the Soviet Union would be likely to place off the US coast (in submarines, but more likely on surface ships outside the EEZ) would have a range making Hawaii perfectly attainable, not only for an SS-18, but also for an SS-20, and the various new missiles now being produced by the Soviet Union in response to the recent generations from the United States. Lack of precision,

accuracy in hitting a precise target, may be compensated quantitatively, by numbers. But even one of them hitting Pearl Harbor would have a disastrous impact on Honolulu and on Oahu in general. One might even, with a flat understatement, say that it would be rather bad for tourism in the future.

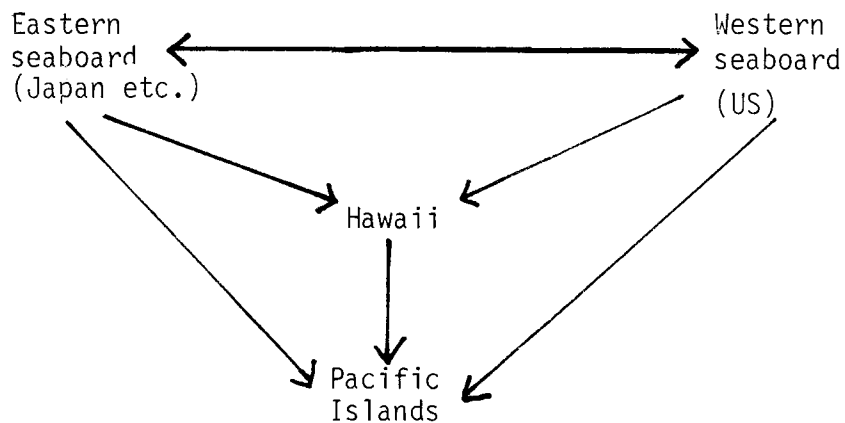
A little parallel: when the Italian political leadership decided where to place the Cruise Missiles in their quota they did not choose to place them right outside the Parliament although the missiles were seen as increasing, not decreasing Italian security. They place them very close to the southern tip of Sicily. And when the French are carrying out their nuclear tests for their nuclear force they did not do so on metropolitan French territory or off the French coast although the tests are supposedly rather harmless. They chose an island in the Pacific, Mururoa. Needless to say, Bikini-Eniwetok was to the United States what Mururoa is to France; and in the same vein Hawaii is to Washington what Sicily is to Rome. A military periphery, and at the same time a forward base.

What can one do in a situation of double dependency? Of course, one can play one against the other, and one can try to become less dependent. But there is also a third possibility which seems important in the case of Hawaii. This can be done in two ways: by finding smaller islands that can relate to Hawaii (and inside the Hawaiian archipelago, making the periphery more dependent on the Oahu center), and by using the stepping stone theory less ambitiously, not towards the other rim of the Pacific, but with Hawaii as an inbetween towards smaller Pacific islands. Obviously the symmetry then breaks down: there are no islands between Hawaii and the Californian coasts that could be reached through Hawaii from Japan, whereas there are, literally speaking oceans of islands further out to the West, from Hawaii.

Hawaii has played it both ways: both as a stepping stone from the US mainland, and as more independent Hawaiian action. Thus in the field of social sciences and social action with which I would be most acquainted one finds both the rather obvious role of the East-West Center, partly State Department financed, dependent; and more independent Hawaiian initiatives. In both cases one may talk about the same transfer of a model, of reproducing Hawaiian/mainland relations in Pacific island/Hawaiian relations. Hawaii would promise the more processed in return for the less processed, in the fields of economics, politics, social structure and culture.

The net result is indicated in figure 1 with four actors in the Pacific: Western seaboard with the US overshadowing the others; the Eastern seaboard with the four waves referred to above; Hawaii itself, and the small Pacific islands.

Figure 1 An Image of the Pacific



The figure has the disadvantage of overemphasizing the role of Hawaii. Obviously the US and Japan relate to each other directly more than to Hawaii, obviously they also make the small Pacific Islands dependent on them without going through Hawaii. But this paper is about Hawaii, hence the departure from reality in order to make things more clear. And one of the things becoming clearer through this type of exaggeration is how unwarranted such appellations as "the hub of the Pacific" or "Geneva of the Pacific" are. The hub of a wheel has spokes radiating outwards; from and to Hawaii spokes go in different direction. And the same applies to the Geneva metaphor: it presupposes a certain autonomy, which in the last instance derives from a national sovereignty and neutrality. Switzerland could not have played that role as a member state of the USA, or as a Republik of the USSR; that alone makes the metaphor highly inappropriate. That CINCPAC makes Hawaii a military hub is not to be disputed, however.

The question is how this figure will evolve in the future. Hawaii by and large being on the dependent end that depends more on the rims than on the "hub" - although this is not a one hundred per cent truth, only useful as a point of departure.

The world economy is changing. The point of gravity has been rapidly moving from the Northwestern corner of the world, where the US has been the major power for a long time, towards the Southeastern corner of the world, East and Southeast Asia, where Japan has been a dominant power for the last generation. Clearly this means a change in economic balance that cannot but affect, and has already affected Hawaii profoundly. This means not only a higher visibility of Japanese economic penetration in Hawaii than ever before. That it also shows up very clearly in status terms is obvious to everybody. Even if the Japanese should not make use of Japanese Americans, niseis, sanseis and yonseis, in Hawaii directly in penetration and stepping stone activities, the implication is obviously a relative decline of the WASP, and rise for people of Japanese origin. And should it happen, as I think it will and

even very soon, that Japan starts declining and falling then the successor system on the Eastern rim of the Pacific is well mirrored inside Hawaii: there are Koreans, Taiwanese, Cantonese well represented in Hawaii, possibly less so for Singapore. And should that second wave also become less important, yielding in significance to the other four ASEAN countries, then at least the Filipinos are well represented in Hawaii.

That brings out fully the first implication of the positioning of Hawaii as indicated in Figure 1: Hawaii is remarkably adjustable. But this flexibility is not without other social consequences. The internal stratification of Hawaiian society used to mirror rather adequately the global stratification of countries, with the US mainland WASPs on top, then the Japanese Hawaiians, then other Asian descendants (perhaps with some Chinese on top among them), and then at the bottom the Pacific islanders, including the Hawaiians themselves. But as the world changes so will the internal pecking order inside Hawaii. The University of Hawaii president used to have a WASP name, today he has a Japanese name, tomorrow the name may well be Park or Kim, Lee or Lim. We shall see - the important thing is to note that one price that has to be paid for double dependency is in terms of changing internal ranking order reflecting changing orders among the centers.

A second price to be paid is considerably more ominous: the United States and Japan are already in a dramatic economic conflict with far reaching consequences out of which we have only seen the beginning. What will that imply for the relations between the major groups; of mainland and Japanese origin? Will one be pitted against the other? And what if this conflict should take on even military overtones - not necessarily a second Pearl Harbor, but a second pre-Pearl Harbor, blockades in order to stem the rise, in economic terms, of the Rising Sun? This may seem very far fetched today, but perhaps not tomorrow - and might lead to a replay of some of the ugliness and

suffering incurred by the Japanese-American community during and after the Second World War. Unless, that is, psychologically and socially effective preventive steps are taken already now. However assimilated Japanese-Americans look it may all change with more polarization.

Third, there is the possible withdrawal, already referred to above, away from Hawaii as a key Pacific dependency because other Pacific islands can offer better comparative advantages. This will apply to both the Western and Eastern seaboard, and might tend to intensify Hawaiian efforts to conquer these islands before the rims come in for full; or at least to try to ensure that the economic cycles are spun through Hawaii. With today's communication systems that seems a rather impossible game to play. There is nothing there to prevent direct relations. All of the islands are closer to Japan than Hawaii is, and although Hawaii possesses some expertise, mainly by virtue of being a Pacific dependency itself, and in some cases through more direct contact, this is the type of expertise that is very quickly acquired by others. The pedagogical value of Hawaii is more likely to be negative: what not to do.

And this, fourth, plays into what should be an important source of concern about the future of Hawaii: how will the other Pacific islands, over time, relate to Hawaii? When will there be a take-off for a Hate Hawaii Movement (HHM)? It should be noted that such a movement might not only feed on reactions found everywhere against becoming dependent, becoming a periphery. It could also emerge from a calculation of the costs and benefits of being exploited directly by the Big Brothers as opposed to indirectly, by some little brother in the Pacific (Hawaii) wanting a commission, not to mention being exploited only directly by that little brother himself. Of course, the legitimacy of Hawaii for Pacific islands wanting more, not less independence is minimal, not to say negative: being the fiftieth US state from 1958 it can also serve as a model of incorporation, more or less successful; certainly not as a model of independence.

Hence, I think it is realistic to expect that Hawaii now enters a problematic period with decreasing pay-offs from dependency,

with competition among the centers of which Hawaii is a double or multiple dependency, and with resistance from the smaller islands Hawaii has tried to make dependent on herself. As Hawaii herself is a "micro-cosmos of the Pacific" (I think that is a more apt term than both "hub" and "Geneva") all of this will have repercussions inside Hawaii, possibly strong ones. Thus, if Pacific Islands should move to a higher level of independence, Pacific islanders inside Hawaii, including Hawaiians themselves, would rise in status. And this might also to some extent work the other way round: as they rise in status, or if they so do, it might have some impact in other parts of the Pacific. In any case Hawaii is likely to lose; some of these "games" are close to zero sum.

And this leads one, of course, to ask whether there is some viable alternative to such relatively dire future scenarios. Of course there is one, and the general heading would be in terms of higher levels of Hawaiian self-reliance.⁵¹ And the point of departure for that would be a clear realisation of the tremendous advantages, in comparative and more importantly natural terms that Hawaii possesses. In terms of natural resources this is obvious: not only rich in soil, air and water and sunshine, to some extent also in minerals (eg, modules), and very much so in energy, although not in the fading energy resource known as oil. And it is perhaps even more clear in terms of human resources. Even given the less applaudable parts, particularly in the relation to the original inhabitants and owners of the whole archipelago, the racial and ethnic harmony are remarkable. The richness, the diversity as a mirror of important world cultures and groupings is there, although not all of this is made use of. It would have been a much more effective resource had the descendants from Asian countries kept their contacts as closely and well preserved as the WASPs have kept theirs, and if the school system had practised the obvious, having an Asian language as the first or second language for everybody, and Hawaiian as a local lingo with which everybody should also be well acquainted. But, however this is there are not many places in the world where pleasant human relations are combined so well with efficiency as in Hawaii. There is certainly no scarcity in the world of the pleasant

and the inefficient going well together, nor is there any scarcity in the world of places where the unpleasant and the efficient go very well together. The Hawaiian combination is rare.

The economy of a more self-reliant Hawaii should not be so very problematic either. In order to produce goods and services one needs nature, labor, capital, research and administration. Self-reliance is a perspective under which one would always first, for any goods and services one wants to produce, make use of one's own factors: one's own natural resources, one's own labor, one's own capital, research facilities and findings and skills, one's own administrative capability. My own guess would be that Hawaii probably has an excess of all these five rather than a deficit, including energy as witnessed by the recent advances in geo thermal energy and possibilities of using the waves and the tides of the Pacific. It is very hard to accept the idea that Hawaii should in any sense be threatened by a crisis due to scarcity of own resources. It may be under the threat of a crisis or several crises for the many reasons mentioned. But that one million human beings should not be able to develop a highly satisfactory self-reliant economy on the basis of the archipelago would be difficult to accept. Of course there will be deficits somewhere and excesses somewhere that open for trade - only that under the perspective of self-reliance that trade would as much as possible be steered towards equals in order not to become dependent on the stronger or make the weaker dependent on oneself.

And that, of course, opens for the other possibilities of the marvellous Pacific "basin". Today one is mesmerized by the giants, by the United States and Japan. But beyond this there are other partners also deserving cooperation with Hawaii: the entire South America, South of Rio Grande; the Pacific islands on an equitable basis; the East Asian and ASEAN countries. There are important first steps to be taken, such as direct air connections. And there is even the hope that many people would have, that one day regular passenger ships might again

ply the waves of that ocean, even helped by the tremendous and highly renewable energy source known as wind, useful not only for sailing/surfing.

To this should then be added another advantage: that of being an island/archipelago. It defines the unit of self-reliance in clear, geographical terms. Of course, people and ideas, goods and services can get in and out at any time; this is not a closed society. But at the same time it is so clear what it would mean for Hawaii to be a society in the technical sociological sense of (potential) self-sufficiency; demographically, economically, socially, culturally, militarily - and above all politically. It is relatively clear what it would mean should such a seven-fold program be realized - once in the future. There is literally speaking a planning horizon in space, the horizon itself. Only the future, hopefully, knows no such borders.

At any rate, such visions would be compatible with what remains the basic asset of Hawaii, in fact the "comparative advantage" that most people have on top of their mind in spite of what else they might be talking about: the way of life. This is what attracts people to Hawaii, not one more concrete desert or skyscraper jungle. In a self-reliant Hawaii of the future no doubt that would be the "hub" of the Hawaiian construction, making Hawaii a center in its own right, but with no ambitions of converting other countries into its periphery. Needless to say, Hawaii will neither be able to, nor want to push the two rim Centers out of their Hawaiian Periphery. They will only loosen their grip if other places are more attractive, or in the context of a general economic crisis. But either condition may one day obtain. Better be prepared for it, not the least in terms of self-respect.