

Completion Report

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Subject of Research Project

Multilayered Discrimination and Possibility of Minority Solidarity Seen through Early Immigrants in Hawaii – Focusing on Koreans and Okinawans

This study explores the issues of discrimination and the potential for solidarity between Korean and Okinawan immigrants within early Hawaiian immigrant communities. The plantation economy in Hawaii established a rigid racial and ethnic hierarchy, placing Koreans and Okinawans at the lower levels of this structure, where they faced discrimination not only from the broader society but also within their respective communities. Early Korean immigrants were often employed as strikebreakers, which led to conflicts with other immigrant groups, particularly the Japanese, who had already established themselves in Hawaii.

The plantation system was organized in a pyramidal structure, with white plantation owners at the top and various Asian immigrant groups at the bottom. Within this structure, discrimination existed even among Asian groups, with Koreans and Okinawans often occupying the lowest tiers. Plantation owners employed strategies to divide workers along ethnic lines to prevent solidarity, exacerbating tensions between ethnic groups.

Despite the shared experience of oppression, building solidarity between Koreans and Okinawans was extremely difficult. While there were some examples of cooperation, such as labor strikes, these were limited, and deep-seated mistrust and ethnic tensions hindered broader collaboration. Nevertheless, the study emphasizes the gradual formation of broader solidarity that transcended ethnic divisions, as demonstrated through the experiences of early Hawaiian immigrants. This suggests that fostering an inclusive and cooperative society in a multicultural context requires a nuanced understanding of ethnic relations.

In conclusion, this study illustrates the process by which cooperation gradually developed within the early Hawaiian immigrant community, despite discrimination and ethnic conflict. This highlights the potential for building an inclusive and cooperative society by addressing the complexities of ethnic relations, providing important insights into the formation of solidarity among minority groups in modern multicultural societies.