Introduction: Anthropological archaeology in the Philippines within the last forty years has uncovered empirical evidence for long-term involvement of Philippine groups in regional trade since at least the first millennium B.C. Sixteenth-century Spanish chroniclers also observed Southeast and East Asian boats trading in Philippine seas, foreign merchants living at coastal villages, and a complex network of datus and rajas (local chiefs) mediating economic activities. Questions about the pre-Spanish Philippine political economy that emerge from this picture include the following: What kinds of political, economic and cultural relationships did pre-Spanish Philippine groups have with other societies in the region? And, in turn, how were foreign merchants and goods incorporated into the domestic economy of Philippine societies? What economic systems (e.g. utilitarian, subsistence, ritual, prestige) were primary and how did they relate to different specialized production? The intensification of regional trade in the 10th to 16th centuries contributed to the emergence of several pre-Spanish Philippine polities (Manila, Cebu, Butuan, and Tanjay) associated with elite leaders, cooperatives, and alliance networks. How were these power structures expressive of different socio-political organization (e.g. hierarchical chiefdoms, corporations, self-organization, heterarchical systems)?

My dissertation research will examine the linkages between local economic intensification and statecraft development in the central Philippines (Visayas) during the latter centuries of the pre-Spanish era (c. 10th to 16th centuries A.D.). Specifically, this research centers on the premodern political economy of Cebu Island. Cebu was a major regional trading center for multiple islands in the 14th-16th centuries and afterwards served as a buffer zone between Spanish Manila and the Muslim sultanates in Mindanao. It was the site of the first Christian mass in the Philippines and Magellan’s demise.
The island’s significance as a pre-Spanish regional hub is supported by historical documents and previous archaeology (ACECI 2007; Hutterer 1973; Nishimura 1988).

My research has three objectives. The first objective is to conduct a regional-scale project that describes one coastal site and associated upland settlements in Carcar, Cebu in terms of (1) its linkages with outside groups through diagnostic trade goods, (2) the distribution of settlements across an environmentally heterogeneous landscape, and (3) the nature of the domestic economy as it relates to the rise of political stratification. The analysis of ceramic, lithic and faunal remains will provide the primary archaeological datasets to investigate local economic systems, while Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be implemented in a landscape analysis of site distribution. The second objective is to compare the archaeological assemblage of this site with artifact collections from other sites in the Visayas (particularly from Negros, Bohol, and northern Mindanao) in order to situate the Cebu case within an archipelagic sphere bounded by the Bohol and Sulu Seas. In so doing, this research aims to evaluate extant political economy models and assess the degree that heterarchical relationships and the archipelagic environment inform Philippine political economy. Lastly, concerned that social scientists and historians have long considered economic intensification and increasing interregional interaction as primary catalysts for cultural and environmental change in history, my research also seeks to interpret the impact of premodern human economic activities on the physical landscape.

Few archaeologists and historians have studied political economy in a regional context in the Philippines. Reasons for this lack include the relatively small community of trained Philippine archaeologists and the dominance of non-theory-driven research in Philippine
archaeology today. This disjuncture is most evident in the majority of salvage archaeology projects of the National Museum. Moreover, there is a lack of funding for regional-scale surveys and archaeological research in the Philippines. This situation is unfortunate especially since Philippine groups had a critical role in premodern Southeast Asian economy that has yet to be clearly delineated. My dissertation research will contribute long-term perspectives necessary for examining the historical trajectory of contemporary politics and economics in Southeast Asia.

**Theoretical perspectives:** My research will be informed by and contribute to two broad areas of scholarship. The first concerns the theoretical approaches on premodern political economy in archaeology and history, especially the growing literature on maritime polities in Southeast Asia (Allen 1999; Andaya 1993; Bacus 1995; Christie 1995; Hall 1985; Hutterer and Macdonald 1982; Junker 1999, 2004; Manguin 2004; Nishimura 1988; Reid 1993; Warren 2002). *Archaeological* political economy is distinguished by its reliance on *empirically-grounded* research to address variability in the relationship between politics and economy in the past (Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Smith 2004). Although far from an integrated theoretical movement, political economy approaches generally view economic systems as open, examine institutional relationships, and are concerned with social inequality. In the Philippines, political economy models have been used to describe the emergence of chiefdom polities particularly for Negros and Cebu (Bacus 1995; Hutterer 1977; Junker 1999; Nishimura 1988). Based on conspicuous prestige goods trade, these scholars view sociopolitical development as a consequence of elite motives to generate wealth and enhance status through the management of labor in mobilizing resources for interregional trade (Bronson 1977; Hutterer 1977; Junker 1999). They support that, at least by the 16th century, there existed loosely centralized, lowland polities that cohered
through alliance networks (Junker 1999). Settlement distribution materialized as a hierarchical, dendritic pattern consisting of multi-tiered centers over a bimodal landscape of a coastal core and inland peripheral sites of specialized production (Bronson 1977; Junker 1999). Alternative models that emphasize more heterarchical political and economic relations have been suggested for the central Philippines, although they have yet to be tested empirically (Peterson 2003).

While expanding on extant political economy models, my dissertation will depart by testing heterarchical relationships in economic strategies and settlement distribution. While heterarchy does not preclude the interpretations of existing models in the Philippines, it adds a new dimension that addresses power relations that were more likely poorly defined, unbounded and heterogeneous. Scholars hypothesized that Southeast Asian societies are based on an “ego-focused” social system with cognatic kinship, which allows for more flexible political cycling (White 1995; Wolters 1999). Historical accounts also seem to point to ambiguous political networks—Chinese dynastic records depicted Philippine rulers as powerful and having strong kingdoms, while the Spanish observed weak political structures; still, Malay oral tradition seemed to indicate that Philippine societies were nebulous and fluid (Junker 1998). While these sources may be a reflection of the commentators, the contradistinction between a centralizing/hierarchical and decentralizing/heterarchical political organization in historical records may point to a more complex political situation than previously thought.

The second area of scholarship that this research will connect is in landscape studies. The landscape provided the template for research in extant political economy models, however landscapes were not explicitly defined as the unit of study.\(^2\) The variable Philippine landscape

\(^1\) Hierarchy refers to “the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways” (Crumley 1994: 3).

\(^2\) Geographers have been using the concept of landscape for most of the last century to distinguish between natural and cultural elements, however archaeologists have adopted its explicit usage only recently (Anschuetz et al.)
created the opportunity for natives to organize their settlements in a number of ways according to
differential access to natural resources. Sixteenth-century Spanish documents observed two
groups living along the coast and in the mountains—the former supplied fish, salt and other
marine resources, while the latter produced rice and cotton (Loarca 1582[1903]). Scholars often
cite this “symbiosis” as the basis of local indigenous economic exchange systems prior to
Spanish colonialism (e.g. Gunn 1996; Hutterer 1977; Junker 1999; Peterson 2003; Scott 1994).
A closer reading of this bimodality is necessary. While a bimodal coast-mountain geographic
division appears in Spanish historical documents, for those areas where the proximity between
the coast and mountains are negligible, this geographic division may be imaginary. In places
such as Cebu where the coast and the mountains are within a few hours walking distance from
each other, native populations may not have been bounded to a coast-or-mountain modality; but
people more likely used multiple geographic landscapes (Peterson 2003: 82). Moreover, the
proximity of islands in the Visayas may have been conducive for cultural landscapes that go
beyond a single island’s boundaries (see Andaya, L.Y. 1993). The challenge for Philippine
archaeologists is to expand their conception of landscapes to include both land and sea and
connect multiple localities on multiple islands. Because my research area is located in an
archipelagic environment and compares inter-insular archaeological assemblages, it offers the
opportunity to develop an archipelagic landscape approach that may be more appropriate for
central Philippines.

My dissertation research aims to move beyond a study that views premodern Philippine
political economy in terms of vertical stratification and deterministic evolutionary typologies.
Existing political economy models of early Philippine polities have generally been land-based

2001:164-167). The landscape can be defined simply as the organization of human-environmental relationships over
space and reflects both social (political and economic) and environmental (geomorphological and biological)
elements of human relationships (Cramley and Marquardt 1990: 73-75).
and/or restricted to river drainages. The unique characteristics of the Visayan archipelagic setting may have supported a more fluid and nebulous premodern political economy in which the openness of the sea and unfettered land strips allowed for liberal shifts in power and control. Additional comparative models are therefore necessary.

**Project Description:**

**Research Area:** The bulk of the research will be located on the coastal plain and upland areas of Carcar municipality about 50 kilometers southwest of Cebu City. In May 2007, I conducted a dissertation feasibility project and located a coastal residential site at the edge of an old mangrove. Visual analysis of surface artifact scatter suggests that the site may have been a major 14th-16th century village, possibly one of the numerous clusters of stilt houses described by Pigafetta during Magellan’s initial arrival. The extent of the site stretches beyond the property of the landowner (about two hectares). This site is chosen because of its proximity to the coast, evidence for both domestic and long-distance trade activities, and ease of access to the site. Numerous smaller sites were also detected in the upland areas nearby.

**Phase I: Survey and Excavation at Carcar, Cebu** (see photo)

The first phase of this project aims to determine the nature of archaeological remains in Carcar municipality and analyze site distribution in coastal and upland areas. Full-coverage survey and systematic excavation will be applied to the coastal site identified earlier. GIS, plane table and alidade, and total station will be used to map in detail the artifact and feature distribution. Excavations will be spread throughout the 2-hectare property in both random and non-random units. While the concentration of archaeological artifacts will come from the coastal site, surface artifacts in the
upland area will also be collected. Because of its large extent, the upland areas will be sample surveyed using foot transects. Selected clusters of artifacts on the surface that demonstrate potential for buried sites will be systematically excavated. The sampling in the upland area will be extrapolated for the final analysis. Through this method, I will be able to compare economic strategies (through diagnostic artifacts) between the coastal site and the upland areas. Distributional data inputted into a GIS database can also easily compare site locations and different environmental and geographic factors (i.e. proximity to specialized natural resources).

Phase II: Laboratory Analysis of Artifact Assemblage from Carcar, Cebu Sites

The second phase will consist of laboratory analysis of collected artifact assemblages in order to determine the nature of various economic strategies utilized in this area. I hypothesize that heterarchical relationships in terms of simultaneous economic systems—the production/consumption of utilitarian versus ritual or subsistence versus prestige goods—were operating within a single geographic area. While distribution densities may suggest hierarchical relationships between coastal and inland sites in terms of ritual and prestige goods, densities of utilitarian goods may produce contrary results, which conform more overall to a heterarchical economic system (see Potter and King 1995). In order to test this for the Cebu case, artifact densities will be calculated for different sites. Artifact analysis will concentrate on ceramics, lithics and faunal remains because they are the best preserved and are the most numerous at sites (see photo). Ceramics and lithics, in particular, also provide stylistic and compositional variation that can infer their function (e.g. utilitarian, ritual, or both) and origin of manufacture (especially those transported over long distances). Artifact densities will also be compared with proximity to natural resources to determine the degree to which site location influences specialized production.
**Phase III: Comparative Analysis with Other Artifact Assemblages**

The third phase will consist of comparing the artifact assemblage excavated at Carcar, Cebu with artifact assemblages previously collected on other sites on Cebu, Negros, Bohol, and northern Mindanao in order to begin to move beyond the Carcar region and interpret political, economic and cultural relationships within the archipelagic environment of the Bohol and Sulu Seas. These collections are housed at the National Museum in Manila and the University of San Carlos in Cebu. I hypothesize that various settlements within this archipelago shared certain commonalities during the late pre-Spanish period, especially in terms of economic activities, when long-distance maritime trading (i.e. with China, India, and the Middle East) intensified. The influx of foreign merchants may have contributed to a certain degree of cultural cohesion among disparate groups living on different islands. Premodern economic connections and the archipelagic environment may explain contemporary cultural conditions, for instance, the spread of *bisaya* (or the Cebuano language) as the lingua franca of the central Philippines today.

**Timeline, Affiliations and Support:** This project will require twelve months of funding in the Philippines. For the first two months, I will be based in Manila and reconnect with the country, various scholars and institutions with whom I have developed professional relationships, especially the National Museum of the Philippines and the Archaeological Studies Program at University of the Philippines, Diliman (UP-ASP). I will make housing and travel arrangements, obtain proper National Museum permits and secure access to sites in Carcar. I have already received verbal permission from the landowners of the mentioned coastal site to proceed with archaeological research on their property. Initial analysis of related artifact collection holdings at the National Museum will also begin at this time. Mr. Wilfredo Ronquillo (Head of
Archaeology Division), Dr. Eusebio Dizon (Scientist I and Curator), Ms. Amalia de la Torre (Head of the Records Department), Ms. Nida Cuevas (Staff archaeologist) have all been supportive of my research and offered space for artifact analysis and storage. At the UP-ASP, I will make arrangements to give a series of lectures to faculty and students. Dr. Victor Paz (Director) and Dr. Mandy Mijares (Professor) have welcomed me as one of their own students. I have agreed to include several of their graduate students on my research team.

For six months, I will be based in Cebu City mostly, but reside in Carcar (a one-hour bus ride) during the Phase I data collection. I will be affiliated with the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, chaired by Mr. Jose Eleazar Bersales. Mr. Bersales will provide me with workspace for artifact analysis, storage, and library and internet access at the university while in Phase II. In turn, I have made arrangements to give occasional talks to the department. Dr. Erlinda Alburro, director of the Cebuano Studies Center, has given me access to their library’s numerous volumes, dissertations, journals and articles that specifically concern the history of Cebu.

For the last four months, I will be based in Manila to carry out Phase III at the National Museum and begin write-up of analytical results. If needed, I will return to Cebu occasionally for follow-up research. Being present for the full twelve months and completing the analytical portion of my research in the Philippines is imperative because access to the data collection will be limited upon return to Hawai‘i.

**Preparatory Training:** My previous education, language skills and experiences abroad attest to my qualifications to carry out and complete this research. I received my B.A. from Columbia University where my interests in anthropological archaeology, especially political economy,
initially developed. While at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (UHM) and the East West Center, that interest became more focused on Southeast Asian and Philippine studies. My doctoral committee in the anthropology department has been unquestionably supportive and each member has continually worked closely with me from my MA to the present PhD track. Dr. Miriam Stark (chair of my committee) meticulously guides me through creative intellectual discussions on Southeast Asian archaeology and teaches me to hone my writing and analytical abilities. Dr. Michael Graves, who introduced me to Hawaiian archaeology in 1999, and Dr. James Bayman provide me with their expertise in landscape and economic archaeology respectively. Dr. John Peterson (University of Guam), whose own Fulbright research in Cebu directly precludes my own, was the first to suggest my current research area and continually advises me in Cebuano archaeology. And Dr. Leonard Andaya (UHM History) critically situates my research topic within premodern Southeast Asian history and new understandings of archipelagic interactions.

I am a fluent speaker of Tagalog through four years of coursework in the UHM Philippine Literature and Language Program and one intensive summer abroad program in Manila sponsored by UH in 2005. In May 2007, I completed a PhD dissertation feasibility project during which my research areas were chosen, sites visited, preliminary permissions obtained, affiliations secured and research obstacles anticipated. After my Fulbright tenure abroad, I intend to return to the U.S. to complete my PhD studies. As one of the few (if not only) Filipino American graduate students in American archaeology today, I offer unparalleled links between American and Filipino perspectives, which will translate into my future teaching, mentoring, and collaborative opportunities. As a career goal, I intend to teach at a university.