"Local" Culture in the City & County of Honolulu

by

Eli Wilson
Class of 2009

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Sociology

Middletown, Connecticut   April, 2009

Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank all of the wonderful employees at the Department of Public Services that graciously agreed to talk with me about their workplace, their culture, and their experiences. Each provided me with hours' worth of rich data, much of which I could not include in this thesis. I can't express how much their collective cooperation helped me along the way. If not for confidentiality, I would gratefully list every person here individually.

In addition, none of this would have been possible without the assistance of two separate, but equally venerable institutions: the Davenport Grant Committee and the Po'okela Fellowship Program. The Davenport Grant provided me with the funding necessary to get this project afoot, and the Po'okela program granted me the exciting and invaluable opportunity of interning at the Honolulu City & County government. Within the Po'okela program, I especially want to say *mahalo* to Kara Iwasaki and Tracyn Wong for their caring support and assistance. Between the employees at the Department of Public Services and those heading the Po'okela program, I am confident that what I experienced during the summer of 2008 is the best of "Local" culture!

I would also like to thank the two professors who advised me throughout this project, Professor Alex Dupuy and Professor Daniel Long. I appreciate all the time and effort both these wise men spent helping me remain on course with this thesis. Each had

tremendous ability to "roll with the punches" that I inevitably threw their way during this project.

I reserve special thanks for Barney Asato, whose assistance with helping me perform my research on "Local" culture was priceless. His knowledge, enthusiasm and relentless optimism continues to be an inspiration for me. Having gone out of his way to assist me in conducting research well after the end of my internship, I consider him a true friend. Likewise, I also want to thank Jessica for her support of my endeavors.

Lastly, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, Scott and Christine. There were many times during the researching and writing of this thesis where doubt loomed large. It is at times like these that their loving encouragement – as only a parent can truly bestow – helped me push through to new successes. I dedicate this project to them.

Table of Contents

Introduction

On the first day of my internship with the City and County of Honolulu, my to-be mentor Ben warmly greeted me, and the two of us immediately commenced in an exhaustive "welcome" tour of the office. Along the way, Ben took time to introduce me to many different City and County employees, all of which greeted me with genuine enthusiasm. Each was housed in a clean cubicle with movable walls stacked just high enough to prevent discrete viewing of their personal workspace. Although the cubicles were packed together tightly, the ambient laughter, camaraderie, and friendliness present in the office lent spaciousness to the room. Towards the end of our tour, Ben and I passed by an office space that, quite unusually, was noticeably distanced from the other cubicles. Approaching the walled cubicle, Ben and I ran into an employee who I took to be its inhabitant. He was a stout, middle-aged Caucasian man named Thomas, who was in the middle of packing the contents of his office into large, brown cardboard boxes. Ben motioned to Thomas, who greeted us with a tired smile. The ensuing brief conversation felt stilted and overly formal compared to my previous introductions. We didn't stay long in Thomas' office, but long enough for me sense there was something inexplicably different about our interaction with Thomas that I couldn't put my finger on. It certainly was at odds with the consistently warm, lively, and family-like atmosphere I had

encountered prior. As we walked on to visit the lunch area, I began asking Ben questions about Thomas. "I'll tell you later," Ben had told me at the time.

A couple of days later and much better acquainted with my new workplace, Ben revisited the "Thomas issue" (as he had begun to call it) over lunch. "Ah, Thomas," he said with a slight chuckle, "*Local* people just don't like him. They just don't get along with him." Puzzled, I asked him why. "He's just so *un*-Local, you know, his mannerisms, his personality . . . he just rubs Locals the wrong way." Being a self-proclaimed "Local" person himself, Ben spoke of an entire group's dislike of Thomas' persona. "Thomas used to be the head of this department, you know. But ever since the new administration took over, they have pushed him further and further from central admin. So, as you saw the other day, he is now moving his office to the other side of the building, on their request." Ben shakes his head and smiles. "Poor guy."

As I would soon find out, the "new administration" Ben was referring to was comprised almost exclusively of "Locals." In fact, all but one of the eight highest-ranked employees in the city department were also "Local." Interestingly, each of these Local employees shared another striking commonality: all were *non-White*.

A bit later in my tenure with the City Government, I interviewed Aaron, a middle-aged Japanese-American with a respectable job as a supervisor in the engineering division of a department. He explained to me that he had lived in Hawaii his whole life, yet did not feel he was "Local." When I probed further he explained, "When I was young, the Local kids used to beat me up. I used to be, you know, kind of a quiet kid, liked to read." Aaron added that to him, "Local culture" was associated with a "tough guy" image, a persona he could not assume or relate to while growing up. At a distance

6

from "the Local kids" throughout his school years, Aaron still does not feel like a "Local" to Hawaii. Associated with being tough and skipping school, he disagrees that being "Local" can be an important or useful trait in the workplace. Ironically, when I asked other employees to describe Aaron, many described his demeanor as "very Local." "Aaron doesn't like to confront people, you know, make waves. That to me is a real Local way of approaching things," a city employee mused to me over a mid-morning Snack break.

I present these scenarios without the intention of encapsulating or defining "Local" culture in Hawaii. Nor should they be interpreted as over-generalizations of socio-cultural process in Hawaii. What I learned from countless interactions with people such as Ben, Thomas and Aaron cannot be summarized so neatly. This thesis is essentially a story that begins with these first two examples and continues until the last page. The underlying goal is to challenge the benevolent myth of Hawaii as a multi-cultural paradise, embracing of people of all races, cultures, and backgrounds; Hawaii as a place devoid of expectations, stuffy hierarchies, and prejudices.[1]

There is no question that Hawaii is home to many different races and ethnicities. And as such, the unique culture of the islands, popularly referred to as "Local" culture, reflects the eclectic cultural heritages of the residents of Hawaii. Perhaps this is precisely why "Local" culture is so difficult to define. At its core, many Locals would agree that "Local" identity and culture reflects a deep pride in place, a pride of *being from Hawaii*. Yet in ways much less clear and coherent, the concept of "Local" in Hawaii traverses irregular terrain, arranging race, culture, gender, migration, class, authenticity and

---

[1] Okamura, Jonathan. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*. Temple University Press, 2008, p.7.

indigeneity in unique ways. The result is much more complex and problematic than the "Hawaiian paradise" discourse that travel guides and tourism brochures suggest. The two scenarios presented in the opening paragraphs are meant to be just a small taste of delicate cultural relationships present in Hawaii. Ben, Thomas, and Aaron are all social actors that contribute to the ongoing cultural production of "Local" discourse in Hawaii. In this way, the process of defining and signifying something as "Local" is largely informal. "Local" cannot be found in a textbook or government publication; it is expressed most candidly through popular anecdotes, ethnic banter, and social comparisons, as checkered as Hawaii's history itself.

The influence of "Local" culture does not escape the setting of the Honolulu city government. By measures that will be described in detail later, such public sector employment is even held to be "more Local" than private-sector business establishments by some. Perhaps because city employees perceive there to be a higher concentration of "Locals" in the public sector, on more than one described their office as "*the* Local workplace." However, not all "Locals" are equal. In particular, members of different ethnic groups fall in very different places within the city government hierarchy: "Local" Japanese occupy higher-paying, white-collar jobs, while Local Hawaiians and Filipinos tend towards the lower rungs of city work (manual labor). How can "Local" be understood given such social and cultural heterogeneity? It is my intention to interrogate the *concept* of Local identity and culture to show how it serves as a powerful double-edged and often contradictory force, reinforcing both solidarity *and* inequality for its constituents. Focusing exclusively in how "Local" plays out, so to speak, within a department in the city government allows me valuable insight in not only how "Local" is

defined, but also how it influences income, position, and social status. In the process, "Local" in Hawaii will be better approached on both micro and macro terms, revealing complex relationship with other constructed socio-cultural groups in Hawaii such as "Mainlanders", "Caucasians", "Tourists", "Super Locals" and even "Native Hawaiians."

Some people will argue that there is no set way to define "Local" culture in Hawaii. I would concur with this notion, for the most part. Unlike specific constructs such as gender (or race, if essentialized in skin color), "Local" culture is rather nebulous, eluding *fixed* physical or metaphysical markings. As a renown scholar on Hawaii named Jonathan Okamura says, "Local is essentially a relative category; groups and individuals are viewed as Local in relation to others who are not so perceived."[2] No matter the essential relativity of the concept, it is how "Local" is *used* in Hawaii that is the focus of this study. As I will show over the next five chapters, "Local" is constantly appropriated towards certain social, political, or economic ends by privileged social actors. In brief, what *work* does the concept of "Local" do in Hawaii?

A Brief Sketch of the History of "Local" in Hawaii

It would be a disservice to readers to proceed any further without first describing the unique history and complexity surrounding the term "Local" in Hawaii. The first reference to "Local" dates back to 1931 in the media coverage of a famous murder incident forever remembered as "the Massie case." After a night of drinking, five

---

[2] Okamura, Jonathan. "Why are There No Asian Americans in Hawaii: the Continuing Significance of Local identity." *Social Process in Hawaii,* vol. 35 (1994), p.165.

working-class, non-White teenagers raped and murdered a White woman, wife of a Navy lieutenant. In reporting the incident, the Honolulu Advertiser used the term "local" to describe the five accused murderers whose "racial and class status and origins in the islands contrasted sharply with those of their White, military accusers from the continental United States."[3] Among the accused murderers, two were Native Hawaiians, two Japanese, and one Chinese-Hawaiian. From the outset, "local" was first used to describe non-White residents of Hawaii of lower class, at times conspicuously pointing to their physical, cultural and class differences from Whites. As the Massie case continued to draw ongoing media coverage, it quite unintentionally coined the term "local," immediately charging it with social significance.

Since its historically origins, the notion of "Local"[4] in Hawaii has rarely existed as a static concept. Insofar as "Local" is in part defined *vis-à-vis* other social categories such as White or "middle-class" (as was the parlance of the Massey coverage), the state of Local identity and culture has been shown to sway with the times. Historically conceived as a lower or working-class culture, "Local" experienced an important boost in prestige during the 1954 "Democratic Revolution." Seizing power from the Republican party on the strength of labor union support, the Democrats changed the landscape of Hawaii politics for decades. Importantly, many local Japanese Americans rose to power, experiencing socio-economic advancement in the form of white-collar government posts

---

[3] Okamura, Jonathan. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 113.
[4] Notice that during the coverage of the Massey Case, "local" was not capitalized. Although subject to debate, I present "Local" as a proper noun with capitalization; insofar as "Local" culture refers to far more than geographic locality, it is my stance that it should be presented and referenced in this fashion.

and professional occupations.[5] Insofar as many Japanese Americans living in Hawaii are considered to be "Local," their upward mobility to government positions reflected in many ways an empowerment of both "Local" people and culture. As Chris Leong writes, "for the first time, 'locals' had a part in determining the political and economic future of the islands."[6] However, this advancement was uneven, since many Hawaiians, Filipinos, Chinese, and other ethnic groups did not enjoy the same economic upswing. As has been the case for much of the history of "Local," there is far more to the story than a series of upward linear advances for all parts of the community.

Another influential period for "Local" culture was the "Hawaiian renaissance" of the 1970s. During this era, interest in Hawaiian arts and culture was revitalized, enjoying unprecedented levels of scholarly and popular attention. As cultural forms "born and bred" by the people of Hawaii, many aspects of Hawaiian culture quickly became incorporated into "Local" culture. Most noticeably, as Okamura (1980) argues, Hawaiian forms of music, dance, folklore, food, recreation, dress, and language became of interest to "Local" audiences during this era.[7]

Media portrayals of "Local" continue to exert a strong influence over historical and contemporary conceptions of "Local" identity. John Rosa has recently asserted that media representations of the Massie case have contributed to the "cultural production of collective identity."[8] He argues that the media coverage of the Massie case not only

---

[5] CITATION, perhaps "Land and Power", George Cooper.
[6] Leong, Chris. *You Local or What? An Exploration of Identity in Hawaii.* PhD dissertation, 1997. 29.
[7] Okamura, Jonathan. "Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii." *Amerasia* vol.17 no.2 (1980): 119-137.
[8] Rosa, John. "Local Story: The Massie Case Narrative and the Cultural Production of Local Identity in Hawai'i". *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2000.

coined the term "local," but also laid the groundwork from which the solidarity of "Local" (both as a people and culture) has since been forwarded. This discourse also ensures the continued racialization of "Local" as distinct and opposite of middle-class Whites, frequently referred to as "Haoles"[9] in Hawaii. Okamura also argues that "Local" is continually – and more contemporarily – produced and framed by journalistic articles in regular Hawaii newspapers and magazines. These articles are often presented in highly subjective and/or humorous forms, such as the popular bullet-point list, "You Know You're Local If . . ." published by *The Honolulu Advertiser* in 1996. A heated discussion over the definition of "Local" was triggered by columnist Catherine Toth in her 2008 editorial entitled, "Obama . . . Local – or trying to be?"[10] This set off a flurry of online blog-post discussions about the many ways in which President Obama, who went to High high school in Hawaii, should or should not be considered "Local." Interestingly, since President Obama reflects such a diverse racial and cultural background, much of this discussion centered around whether President Obama was *"Local" enough* to be considered a "Local." Regarding these productions, Okamura states that "the media can reinforce certain commonly accepted views about local identity and culture that are stereotypic in nature and do not reflect significant changes in their definition."[11]

Existing scholarly approaches to understanding "Local" are sparse, and largely cover only descriptive or historical narratives of the culture. For example Chris Leong's 1997 dissertation, "You Local or What? An Exploration into Identity in Hawaii" seeks to define what it means to be local through in-depth interviews with a variety of "local"

---

[9] The Hawaiian word for people of Caucasian race.

[10] Toth, Catherine. "Obama . . . local – or trying to be?" *The Honolulu Advertiser*, August 12, 2008, Classifieds section.

[11] Okamura, Jonathan. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 113-114.

focus groups.[12] Harry Kitano (1969), Jonathan Okamura (1980, 1992, 2008), Eric

Yamamoto (1975), and John Wooden (1995) all have probed Local culture/identity to

varying degrees, but without unearthing its significance in shaping socio-political

processes in Hawaii. My study seeks to do exactly what previous "Local"-related

projects have not: explore the *workings* of "Local", including how it functions in the

differentiation of social space into complex and contradictory arrangements. As much as

it is not my focus, I do not ignore how those I interviewed – in many cases the "Locals"

themselves – define "Local" culture; their views often reflect useful ways in which it is

both casually understood and expounded. These interviews produced much uniformity

on the concept of "Local." Yet they also yielded many significant inconsistencies.

Therefore, rather than awkwardly piecing together an inevitably incomplete and over-

generalized "definition" of "Local," I embrace contradictions in my data, as will be

reflected in the many sub-categories, tensions, and partial-definitions expressed

throughout this thesis. Although this format shall disadvantage readers unfamiliar with

the concept of "Local," I feel it will lend an appropriately "fractured" gaze into how

"Local" is expressed in Hawaii.

Before immersing in details, I must warn the reader of a common misperception.

"Local" culture is not to be perceived as synonymous with "Hawaiian" culture. The

latter refers to the specific historical culture of the peoples indigenous to the Hawaiian

Islands. "Local" culture is a much more recent construction, the result of the many

immigrant groups who have come to Hawaii in the past two centuries. In this way,

---

[12] Leong, Chris. *You Local or What? An Exploration of Identity in Hawaii*, 33-42.

Japanese values, Korean cooking styles, Filipino celebrations, and Hawaiian dance are all just a small part of the cultural patchwork that is "Local."

The concept of "Local" continues to be articulated, produced, and appropriated by social actors in Hawaii of widely discrepant levels of power and influence. From a bank CEO to the media to the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, the cultural production of "Local" identity cannot be disassociated from its checkered past. Nor can it be described in simple terms. However, irrespective of history, what manifests today is a unique culture endemic to the islands, and familiar to all who call Hawaii home. Mention "Local" to any long-time resident and you will certainly be subject to strong opinions: in some cases swelled pride, in others scathing criticism. However, without exception, everybody who calls Hawaii home can be counted on for an emphatic discussion of the meaning and significance of "Local" identity.

Methodology

The situation that I found myself in during the summer of 2008 was completely unplanned, but as it turned out, extremely fortunate. Having received a research grant to explore the "intersection of identity, race, and culture in Hawaii," I arrived home to Honolulu with not the faintest clue how to approach this topic. In the meantime, I had quietly been in back-and-forth contact with a Honolulu city government employee, setting up a summer internship with the City & County of Honolulu. I had intended for these two activities to be entirely separate. That is, the internship was to be an internship, and my sociological project, well, *research*. As it panned out, from the first day interning in the city government I found myself consistently engaging in fascinating discussions

with various employees, establishing open lines of communication with a good number

of them. Many of my conversations (as well as situations) either actively or passively

related to the very topic I intended to separately research: "Local" culture and identity!

Here, it is difficult for me to explain how I moved so quickly from being introduced for

the first time to city employees twice my age to gaining their trust and friendship without

first describing my own characteristics as a researcher. Not one week into my internship

I found myself facing both subtle and direct questions about whether or not *I* was

"Local." Being from Hawaii myself, one may question why it would not be readily

apparent that I am indeed a "Local." I am also of half-Japanese, half-English ancestry,

making me just the kind of mixed-racial individual that is commonly associated with

Hawaii. However, for reasons that will be described in much greater detail in later

chapters, my "Localness" is neither obvious nor certain. Outwardly I appear

unmistakably *Haole*, especially when seen dressed "formally" in a collared shirt and

slacks, my daily attire during my city internship. My fellow employees, many of whom

were non-White and "Local," were either skeptical or simply in disbelief when I

confessed I was half-Japanese. They often would stare blankly at me until I would

mention loving my grandfather's homemade "Maguro Chazuke" (a traditional Japanese

dish), or getting a Waiola's "Shave Ice" after work (a "Local" hangout). At mention of

"Local" insignia, a smile would often creep onto my acquaintance's face. This was

typically followed by a comment along the lines of, "Oooohh, so you really *are* Local!"

As a result, regardless of whether or not I can be considered a full blown "Local" or not,

my "Local" rapport with fellow employees allowed me to re-formulate tool my research

project to capitalize on my lead with "Local" city employees. That first week of my

internship, I had formally submitted a change-of-subject request to my research advisor

in order to concentrate fully on this inadvertent treasure chest of data.

Over three-months I collected data as a participant-observer working in a

department of the Honolulu city government. My "in" as a researcher was due to the fact

that I was otherwise a full-time (close to 40-hours a week) intern working with a senior

employee that acted as a "mentor" on selected projects. I was stationed in a white-collar,

administrative wing of one of the city's most prominent departments. My data collection

was two-fold. First, I recorded daily observations, quotes, and activities that were of

"Local" interest. These occurred most frequently during meetings, over lunch, and while

discretely listening and watching my co-workers interact. In addition to extensive

background reading, personal interviews constituted the bulk of my formal research.

This data was collected through first-hand interviews with 26 total employees, each

lasting roughly one-hour. Interviewees were selected primarily from a purposive and

"snowball"[13] sampling. Although this is not ideal for achieving a representative sample

of interviewees, it allowed me to gain access to subjects that would otherwise be

unavailable. Throughout my research, strategic interviews with employees who

possessed under-represented qualities (for instance, the perspective of "Locals" of certain

ethnicities) was also conducted. A few follow-up interviews were also performed when I

visited the Honolulu city government during the winter of 2008-2009 in Honolulu. All

interviews were conducted using hand-written notes. I made this decision in order to

preserve the air of informality and ease necessary to conduct honest, effective

---

[13] A technique of sociological analysis where existing study subjects recruit future
subjects from among their acquaintances.

interviews.[14] Lastly, countless informal conversations I had with city employees over lunch, while running errands, visiting work sites, and during down time also inform this study though remain undocumented.

"Local" identity is something that conjures much pride for many living in the islands, and consequently, it can be the subject of much defensiveness if proclaimed or asserted by an "inauthentic" "Local" (worse, an *outsider*). The same logic applies, I think, when attempting to conduct research on "Local" involving human subjects: being perceived as an outsider handicaps one's ability to gather candid information from the intended subjects. Although I myself was born and raised in Honolulu, I do not profess to be an authority in defining "Local." Complicating my own experience with "Local" culture further is the fact that I was educated at Punahou School, an institution largely perceived as a privileged, White enclave.[15] In terms of rapport with "Local" informants, I was fortunate to be able to draw on "Local" knowledge (such as streets, beaches, restaurants, etc), speech inflections, and to some extent, behaviors in order to smooth this process. With this in mind, my objective and strategy as a researcher was to observe, listen to, and interact with city employees – both "Locals" and non-"Locals" – seeking to gain insight into how they made sense of the world around them. As James Scott says,

---

[14] My interview methods were deeply influenced by a desire to capture employees speaking as candidly as possible about "Local" culture. In consulting with Ben, we decided that any use of a computer or tape recorder might cause subjects to alter or conceal their true answers.

[15] This popular perception holds remarkable purchase amongst residents in Hawaii, despite being a mixture of fact and fiction. Punahou School is a private, K-12 educational institution that is widely perceived as the most prestigious in Hawaii. Although it does inevitably represent a middle-upper class institution on the basis of its five-figure tuition (despite substantial financial-aid assistance), it is far from all-White. In my graduating class of roughly 400 students, over half were Asian American or of mixed-race background. As is often the case, popular perceptions of institutions such as Punahou School often stand at some distance from reality.

A good deal of behavior, including speech, is automatic and unreflective, based on understandings that are seldom if ever raised to the level of consciousness. A careful observer must provide an interpretation of such behavior that is more than just a repetition of the "commonsense" knowledge of participants. . . .. Human agents may also provide contradictory accounts of their own behavior, or they may wish to conceal their understanding from the observer or from one another. Hence, the same standards of interpretation apply, although the ground is admittedly treacherous.

Coupled with my own lived-in knowledge on the subject, I have used this ethnographic process to piece together a commentary on how the concept of "Local" operates in the city of Honolulu, and perhaps more broadly, Hawaii.

Thesis Outline

My research is organized into seven chapters. The consistent theme that underlies much of my discussion is how "Local" culture often manifested in complex ways, producing both positive and negative consequences for those who consider themselves "Local." The organization of this thesis moves generally from a description of the "Local" city setting to a detailed analysis of how "Local" discourse affects the social, political, and economic landscape in Honolulu. Although to some extent the parsing of "Local" processes into separate chapters represents a rather artificial process, it greatly improves the clarity and presentation of this research. Understanding "Local" is anything but simple, a truth that is best revealed through grasping its different components.

Chapter One consists of a necessary literature review that will reveal the strong influence of both social theory as well as scholarly work on social process in Hawaii on my own work. With respect to existing work done of such topics such as social closure, ethnic niche, socialization, cultural capital, and ethnic inequality, I show how the research and theory maintained in my own work builds on previous literature while simultaneously trailblazing through uncharted territories of scholarship.

Chapter Two describes the Honolulu city government where I spent my three-month tenure as an intern. In this chapter I explore the socio-geographic setting of the municipal government in Honolulu, including its history when relevant. Importantly, I describe the substantively different social, spatial, and aesthetic arrangements of blue-collar work and white-collar work in Honolulu. Considering that this setting frames a good deal of my critical analysis of Local culture, I take time here to describe *how* and *why* city employment is perceived the "'Local' workplace."

Chapter Three deals with the relationship between different forms of group membership in Honolulu. More specifically, this chapter raises the question, what is the relationship between one's ethnicity, class, and "Local" standing? Here I draw from Roger Waldinger's idea of "Ethnic Niche", noting ways in which "Local" operates as a strategic "ethnicity" that influences one's access to certain positions in the city government. Weber's idea of "Social Closure" is also utilized to suggest ways in which "Locals" secure strategic occupational advantages in the city government. I will also draw heavily from my own interview data here, much of which points to the continued importance of "Local networking" in the sorting out of who gets key jobs and promotions. Lastly, I relate the idea of *social capital* to that of "Local networking," to close this chapter.

Chapter Four breaks down "Local" into useful sub-components of analysis. Exploring the world of blue and white-collar work in more detail, I explore differences within "Local" in exciting ways that have real consequence for their respective subjects. Specifically, I describe the "Local" categories of "bilingual" and "super-Local," suggesting ways in which they socialize "Locals" in different ways. Taking time to

maintain the essential thread uniting these two groups, I argue that membership to each of these specific sub-groupings can lead to significantly different life chances, outlooks, and practices. As is the case in chapter three, I also show how ethnicity, class, and social *capital* play an important role in this differentiation. I draw primarily from work by Paul Willis and Jay Macleod in this section, with ongoing reference to Bourdieu and Jonathan Okamura.

Chapter four addresses the contradictory lived-experiences of Haoles in Hawaii. As a group Caucasians have always enjoyed socio-economic privilege in the islands, often at the expense of indigenous (Hawaiian, in this case) and "Local" peoples. As a result, no critical engagement with Local culture and identity would be complete without addressing the various representations (real or fabricated) of the Haole in Hawaii. I discuss "the Haole" and its association with privilege, greed, selfishness and power while simultaneously *disassociating* it from "Local." The latter ensures that Haoles, though high in social class, remain low in status in the eyes of the many in Hawaii. Lastly, I will re-examine "Local" for its capacity as a tool of resistance. In doing so, I ask critically, can "Local", as a people and culture, be understood as legitimate resistance to greater American cultural and economic hegemony? Or perhaps more contentiously, can "Locals," using whatever resources are available to them, truly challenge the socio-economic dominance of *Haoles* in Hawaii?

Chapter One: Literature Review

The term "Local," has long been colloquially used to refer to the unique culture that exists in Hawaii. Anyone who has visited Hawaii understands that expressions such as "Local culture," "Local people" or "Local style" appear virtually everywhere. Ironically, the precise meanings of these expressions are anything but clear. This can create a plethora of challenges for social researchers studying Hawaii, as they must inevitably grasp at straws when talking about the phenomena of "Local." Given its prevalence, "Local" culture and identity in Hawaii demands scholarly engagement; "Local" shapes the way many people in Hawaii understand themselves in a way that is ripe for thorough analysis. I shall begin my own ethnographic analysis of the influence of "Local" in Honolulu by discussing ways in which it has previously been approached academically.

As I described in the introduction, "Local" culture has seen conflicting meanings, definitions, and articulations throughout the twentieth century. This heritage first dates to the 1930s, where "Local" was used as a highly racialized and classed label: the coverage of the Massey case emphasized the *contrast* between a White Navy lieutenant and a group of non-white, working-class "Local boys." This racial divide dates back to the

plantation days, where White Americans often supervised non-white, immigrant laborers. As explained earlier, the working-class associations of "Local" first began to change in earnest in the 1950s with the rise of non-White "Locals" (Japanese Americans, primarily) to government positions.[16] However, the rise of a distinct "Local" culture, arguably, did not begin until the latter half of the twentieth century, thanks to powerful social changes in Hawaii that include the Hawaiian renaissance as well as a swelling *foreign* presence (through investors and tourists, primarily). During this period, Wayne Wooden has argued that "Local" culture began to be seen as a source of cultural pride for the people of Hawaii, one that was opposed and distinct from foreign cultures, including that even of "mainland" America. Together with the incorporation of Hawaiian forms of art and culture, "Local" experienced both increased cultural distinctiveness and bolstered solidarity during this time. As Wooden states, during the 1970s "'local' becomes the primary referent of youth in Hawaii whom neither wish to become too American (Haole) nor too ethnic (Japanese) but instead identify with the shared island experience of other youth of Hawaii."[17] Throughout the rise of "Local" culture in the twentieth century, the tension between acceptance and identity has only increased. Today what remains true about all such historical accounts of "Local" culture, people, foods, etc. is a sense of ambiguity. The result is a contemporary situation where, as Wooden says, "different people have vastly different notions as to what local is, who can identify with being local,

---

[16] Cooper, George and Gavan Daws. *Land and Power in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1990. pp. 455-458.
[17] Wooden, Wayne. *What Price Paradise*. Washington: University of America Press (1981); 66. As quoted in Leong, Chris, *You Local or What?* p.40.

what values does a local person have, and which groups contribute and benefit from a local culture."[18]

In this section I describe the theoretical groundwork supporting and/or framing my own arguments in this thesis. To analyze the workings of "Local" culture in Hawaii demands a review of both scholarly works on "Local," as well as relevant social theory on concepts such as group formation, social stratification, and social capital. Without the weave of these two fields of study, this research would not contain the level of insight that I have strived for. In contrast to much of the existing work on "Local" identity, this study aims for a proper *analysis* of how "Local" *operates* in Honolulu. The integration of social theory and cultural literature has afforded me new and exciting ways of understanding this unique social dynamic. Yet as enabling as the existing scholarship is for the framework of my own research, it has holes. These holes have provided me with both opportunity and limitation. In terms of the former, it accords my own work the exciting opportunity of filling in gaps in the literature, and perhaps even paving new ground. Yet insofar as there exists few other comparable studies about "Local," I caution the reader against generalizing the meaning of this study much farther than the social geography of the Honolulu city & county government.

The meaning of "Local" is still far from clear, seemingly angled differently at every turn. Thankfully, this study asks questions that do not necessarily demands fixed answers: how is "Local" *used* to differentiate social space in Hawaii; who is considered a "Local"; lastly, what specific advantages or disadvantages might membership status influence? In relation to each of these inquiries, very little scholarly work has been done.

---

[18] Wooden, Wayne. *What Price Paradise*, 85.

On the outset of this thesis, perhaps only one thing is certain: I write this piece with the direct intention of contesting simplistic narratives that imply the effect of "Local" culture to be one which unambiguously promotes multicultural equality, tolerance for foreigners, and interracial blending.[19]

The scholarship on society in Hawaii I have found most insightful for this study emphasizes the ways in which power is unequally distributed. Unfortunately, besides historical accounts focused on the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, examples of this type of critique are limited. Eli Wittaker's 1986 work, *The Mainland Haole: The White Experience*, is one of the first to suggest the presence of social exclusion, antagonism and inequality. However, as the title indicates, this analysis is largely anecdotal, and focused primarily on the divide between Whites and non-White Hawaii residents. Omar Miyares has recently (2008) published a study that focuses attention of "ethnic-cum-social stratification" in Hawaii. In this paper Miyares argues that asserting a "Local" identity can be advantageous in certain situations. He writes, "in a larger American sense, *local* culture can be seen as a form of downward assimilation. Yet, in Hawaii being *local* or becoming *local* is a rational identity choice, for it *makes one an insider in the majority culture* (italics added)."[20] Here Miyares recognizes the forms of social advantage that can be garnered from being accepted as "Local." However, for reasons that will become apparent throughout this thesis, Miyares' subsequent argument that local identity can be

---

[19] Such sentiment is frequently intimated by media or journalistic publications in or about Hawaii. It can also be found in older (roughly pre-1980) scholarly works, such as Harry Kitano's (1969) work on Japanese Americans (see pp.185-186), or Ogawa's 1978 work that attempts to characterize "Local" culture through "an open and friendly attitude with friends and strangers," among other things (see p. 195).

[20] Miyares, Ines M. "Expressing 'Local Culture' in Hawaii." *Geographical Review*, vol. 98 issue 4 (Oct 2008), 513-531.

appropriated through the "rational choice" of individuals falls woefully short of the truth. On the contrary, there are many ways in which access to a "Local" identity is restricted by "Locals" themselves. The methods and practices of such restrictions constitute the bulk of my analysis, and will not be further explained here.

The idea of social inequality existing in Hawaii is certainly not new. Anyone familiar with the politics of Hawaiian sovereignty can rightfully note the ways in which White men have abused, subordinated and deterritorialized the Native Hawaiians of Hawaii. Yet in terms of ethnic or racial inequality, there is little quality literature. One notable exception to this rule is Jonathan Okamura, who is the leading scholar of ethnic inequality in Hawaii. The bulk of his work deals with the ethnic experience in Hawaii, with special interest in second and third-generation immigrants to Hawaii. Through seminal articles such as "Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii" (1980), "Why There Are No Asian Americans in Hawai'i: the Continuing Significance of Local Identity" (1994) and most recently his book, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii* (2008), Okamura has convincingly approached a critical analysis of Local culture. In this study, I deploy Okamura's work in three primary ways: first, for descriptions and history of Local identity and culture; second, to understand the continued social importance of the concept of Local; and lastly, to note the ways in which ethnicity has been used to perpetuate inequality in Hawaii. Okamura writes that, "Local evolved to represent the collective efforts of local people to maintain control of the economic and political future of Hawaii from external forces."[21] Here he notes the active ways in which Local actors seek to secure social, political, and economic advantages for

---

[21] Okamura, Jonathan. "Why There Are No Asian Americans in Hawaii: The Continuing Significance of Local Identity." *Social Process in Hawaii*, vol. 35 (1994): 161-178.

"Locals" in Hawaii. As a result, I utilize Okamura's work during my discussions on how "Local" is used as a form of legitimate resistance to powerful foreign influences in Hawaii (such as Western cultural hegemony).

Okamura's most recent book, *Ethnicity and Inequality*, is compelling for my own study as well. In it he argues that, "ethnic inequality, rather than racial inequality, prevails in Hawaii as evidenced by the widely differing social status of ethnic groups that ostensibly belong to the same racial category, such as Japanese Americans and Filipino Americans."[22] Okamura says "differential racialization" has occurred in Hawaii, meaning that ethnicity has taken on increased significance, a process that in turn serves to reproduce unequal ethnic relations.[23] The result of this process is discernibly different class associations amongst ethnic groups, with Japanese, Chinese, and Haole on top and Hawaiians and Filipinos on the bottom. The fundamental social organization that Okamura argues is due to ethnic stratification will be discussed in this paper as well. However insofar as Okamura places ethnicity at the center of his analysis, he necessarily downplays the significance of *"Local"* identity as it is similarly used for stratification, exclusion, and community. To trivialize the influence of "Local" in Hawaii is to ignore a dynamic variable at work on Hawaii's social arrangement. As laid forth, this study both incorporates and distances itself from existing scholarship on "Local" culture in Hawaii. It draws on primarily on literature demonstrating that social processes do not reflect the kind of equality and multiculturalism that once dominated socio-cultural discourse in Hawaii.

---

[22] Okamura, J. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 7.
[23] Okamura, J. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 56.

There is, needless to say, a wealth of literature covering the ways in which social inequality in American society is maintained. The primary social theories that I utilize in this study relate to ways in which social, racial, and economic groups of people are both organized and stratified. These types of sociological frameworks are crucial to this study, in that they effectively "animate" the concept of "Local." That is, they help to show how "Local," as a discriminating form of identity and culture, works in dynamic ways on the people of Honolulu.

Two important ways in which social inequality is perpetuated are through differential access to *social* and *cultural* forms of capital, a theory attributed to French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. "Social capital" refers most directly to the social connections one has that can be utilized advantageously. For instance, if your fiancé's father own a bank, it is likely that through your connection to him you will find it easier to obtain a loan. Cultural capital, by contrast, is the attitudes and behaviors ("dispositions"), dress, and physical objects ("cultural goods"), valued by a given society.[24] On the latter, Pierre Bourdieu adds, "cultural capital can be acquired to a varying extent in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously. It always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as a pronunciations characteristic of a class or region), help to determine its distinctive value."[25]

---

[24] Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J. Richardson, 241-258.
[25] Bourdieu, Pierre. "Social Capital," p.87.

For Bourdieu, cultural capital can "secure material and symbolic profits for its possessors."[26] Yet, this "profit" is only as valuable as it is determined to be in a given society. Here, I argue that the significance of "Local" is derived from Max Weber's notion of "status order." According to Weber, the "phenomena of the distribution of power within a community" is related to the factors of class, status, and party.[27] Of "status," Weber says, "the way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups . . . we call the 'status order.'"[28] In mapping the "status order" hierarchy in the Honolulu city government onto what I refer to as the "Local" hierarchy, I demonstrate the ways in which "Locals" are allowed to profit from their group membership. Insofar as being able to deploy, assert or even "act out" a "Local" identity can yield tangible social advantages, having the right kind of capital in Honolulu is quite a significant factor in social stratification. The "right kind" of social and cultural capital to accord advantage in the "Local" status order, I call "Local" capital. To give a brief example of "Local" capital at work, political candidates seeking to appeal to a Local voting base will often play up their humble, "Local" roots growing up in Hawaii. As if to position themselves advantageously against non-"Local" candidates, someone running for a state office might play up the fact that he or she "grew up poor in Waimanalo," or "used to catch fish in the tide pools by Makapu'u." Local newspapers have also been known to describe certain candidates as "good-'ol Local boys," often implicitly contrasting them with a foreign, *Haole*, opposing candidate. Take for instance current

[26] Bourdieu, Pierre. "Social Capital," p.86.
[27] Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In *Social Class and Stratification*. edited by Rhonda Levine. England: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998; p.43-44.

[28] Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In *Social Class and Stratification,* 43-44.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann's comments about then President-elect Barack Obama (who grew up in Hawaii): "we are all so proud. A local boy does good!"[29] Put simply, someone with "Local" forms of cultural capital (speech, mannerisms, dress, etc) and/or social capital (social connections) is at an advantage in an environment where such attributes are valued. As we shall see next chapter, the Honolulu City Government where I spent my time researching was one such environment.

For Bourdieu, cultural capital is a broad concept; nearly anything can become valued as cultural capital. A middle-aged *Haole* woman spoke of raising her half-Black, half-White son in Hawaii:

My son is very much into the whole "Local" thing. You know, the way he dresses, talks, acts. He really tries hard too. (laughs) He tells me, "Mom, stop acting so *White*!" In his case, I think the way he turned out (darker skin) really contributes to his identification as a "Local". You know, he's got that "mixed" look about him. But I think he really wants to be accepted as Local. So when his friends come over, he always wants me to cook rice, spam . . . real Local foods.

In a great variety of social settings in Hawaii, having the right kind of social and cultural capital is important for its ability to bring about one's acceptance as a "Local." Being accepted as Local comes with the benefits of social acceptance, inclusion, and even opportunity. In addition Bourdieu adds, "the profits accrued from membership in a group are the very basis of the solidarity that makes them possible."[30] In chapter three and four I explore various ways in which this takes place within public-sector employment.

---

[29] Retrieved from http://www.mufihannemann.com/mayor-at-dnc-convention.html on 4/6/09.
[30] Bourdieu, Pierre. "Social Capital," p.89.

Cultural and social capital together help explain the forces that privilege certain social actors and disadvantage others. Yet what does a social environment featuring high-levels of one type of specific capital look like? How does it function? Here is where we must turn to theory of *ethnic niche*.

In his 1996 book titled, "Still the Promised City?" Roger Waldinger discusses how "ethnic niches" operate in New York City. First, he defines the term, *ethnic niche* as an industry sector in which one group of people represent at least 150 percent of its share of total employment. These "niche" assemblages, as Waldinger explains, can often result in informal immigrant networks that serve to funnel newcomers into certain jobs."[31] In other words, an "ethnic niche" can form in an industry if the tools of cultural and social capital have been leveraged to the employment advantage of one group. Using this framework, I use Waldinger's theory on ethnic niche to observe the ways in which "Local" peoples and culture are greatly over-represented in Honolulu City Government work. On this subject, Waldinger also has a section of his book that touches on the connection between immigrant groups and government employment. Although Waldinger's work is based on research conducted far from Hawaii, it contains important advantages for my own work. Yet, insofar as my work *also* explores how "Local" identity is *represented* (that is, how it is racialized, how it is expressed/transmitted, etc.) in the city, Waldinger's work stands at some distance from addressing the critical questions of this study.

Social inequality is inevitably a tricky calculus involving both subtle advantaging and excluding. Social and cultural forms of capital are best understood as tools for social

---

[31] Waldinger, Roger. *Still the Promised City?* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996; p.155.

advantage. That is, the possession of them can grant you benefits in certain settings. Yet perhaps equally powerful is the force of social *exclusion*. For this we turn to Max Weber's theory of *social closure*, which describes the ways in which a dominant group safeguards its position and privileges by simultaneously monopolizing resources for its own while denying outsiders access.[32] This process can actively contribute to the formation of ethnic niches in certain industries. Weber (1978, 43-46) refers to *social closure* as the specific process of subordination "that one privileged group uses to prevent any outside group of lower status from obtaining the advantages held by the former."[33] Importantly, any visible characteristic (such as race/ethnicity, social origin, language, etc) can be used to exclude someone on the basis of being an outsider. Murphy (1988) has expanded this argument in several important directions. He argues that social closure takes three different forms: *principal*, *derivate*, and *contingent*. *Principal* forms of exclusion are the primary ways in which a capitalist society excludes some people from wealth while allowing others to prosper. These methods of exclusion usually manifest as laws, and as such are incorporated into the very structure of society. A good example of this would be the exclusionary element inherent in private property. *Derivate* forms of closure (and exclusion) are not as elementary as that of primary exclusion, but result in the same dynamic: the formal exclusion of others based on race, religion, gender, or any other measure.[34] Derivative forms of exclusion have occasionally been written in to law, such as the Jim Crow Laws of the U.S., or Apartheid in South Africa. Lastly, *contingent*

---

[32] Murphy, Raymond. *Social Closure.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
[33] Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology.* Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California,1978. Cited in Murphy, Raymond. *Social Closure*, p.8.
[34] Murphy. *Social Closure*, p.70-71.

exclusion is far subtler than either principle or derivative forms of exclusion. It

constitutes the closure of a group using some criteria outside legal backing. For instance,

the need for credentials for a position is *derivative* exclusion, but the specific

configuration of qualities that constitute "acceptable" qualifications is a form of

contingent exclusion.[35] This refers back to the significance of cultural capital: positions

that are "restricted" through *contingent* forms of exclusion may privilege certain

"cultural" attributes possessed to a greater extent by one group over another. In my

thesis, this concept will be discussed in chapters four, five and six, all which focus on

ways in which Locals work to "close" certain desirable positions to non-Locals. Social

closure, especially of Murphy's *contingent* variety, influences many aspects of Honolulu

city work. It can, at times, both disadvantage non-Locals (i.e. those who do not possess

"Local" capital) and stratify "Locals" based on *other* traits (most commonly educational

degree).

The theories of social closure, social niche, and social/cultural capital supply this

study the necessary tools for understanding the unequal standing of "Local" and "non-

Local" actors in the Honolulu city government. All such social processes point to ways

in which desirable opportunities can be secured (or at least more easily accessed) for the

benefit of "Locals."

There are many ways in which this process is not immediately evident. This in

turn helps to legitimize the advantages gained by the in-group. As Murphy states,

---

[35] Murphy. *Social Closure*, 75-78.

"Groups see more readily the illegitimacy of the rules responsible for *their own exclusion* than the illegitimacy of rules responsible for the exclusion of others, especially if they benefit in some way from the other rules of exclusion."[36]

For the study of "Local," this process is most evident in the treatment of foreigners (especially *Haoles*) both in city government employment and throughout Hawaii. Broadly put, "Locals" often bemoan the ways in which they experience subordination by foreigners, a belief that causes the collective amnesia towards other methods of exclusion that benefit "Locals." This notion will be expanded on in more detail in chapter six. The concept of "Local" influences Honolulu's society through both its specific forms of culture (attitudes, behaviors, speech) and its role in the exclusion of outsiders from desirable resources.

In approaching the effects of "Local," we have thus far discussed many ways that social differentiation takes place in conscious, controllable fashion. For instance, social capital represents "networks" of social contacts that can be actively leveraged to one's advantage. Paul Willis and Jay Macleod both represent an alternative ways of understanding social process. Willis' 1977 study entitled *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* as well as Jay Macleod 1987 project, *Ain't No Makin' It* suggest that there are unconscious (read: uncontrollable) was in which those of different cultures are stratified. In reference to the group of working-class teenagers that he followed in his study, Willis concludes:

It is *their own culture* which most effectively prepares some working class lads[37] for the manual giving of their labor power . . . we may say that there is an element of self-damnation in

---

[36] Murphy. *Social Closure*, 79.
[37] "Lads" was the nickname for one social clique of boys Willis studied.

the taking on of subordinate roles in Western capitalism. However, this damnation is experienced, paradoxically, as true learning, affirmation, appropriation, and as a form of resistance.[38]

Willis argues that although certain values, behaviors and attitudes are perceived (by those who practice it) as resistance to a dominant culture – hence Willis' reference to affirmation and true learning – these traits may in fact reinforce their subordinate social "place." Willis also adds that insofar as aspects of working-class culture "mystify" and idealize working-class occupations such as manual labor, "cultural penetrations stop short of any concrete resistance or construction of political alternatives."[39] This process as described by Willis results in the stunted aspirations of working-class kids,[40] and the perpetuation of social hierarchy in a given society. In this way, the "shopfloor culture" is an idealized form of masculinity and job attainment.[41] How might this logic tell a different tale of social stratification in Honolulu?   Willis' theory allows for a needed deviation from the singular story of the social advantages of "Local" identity. Utilizing his work on "shopfloor culture," I explore different ways of reading complexity into the social hierarchy within the Honolulu city government. At bare minimum, Willis' study has aided me in understanding the conspicuous cleavage in city work, one that separates blue-collar and white-collar work. To engage this subject, I use chapter five as space to discuss the possible similarities between Willis' "shopfloor culture," and the blue-collar, manual-labor culture in the municipal government.

---

[38] Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labor*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977; p.3.
[39] Willis. *Learning to Labor*, 174.
[40] He studied only boys.
[41] Willis, Paul, *Learning to Labor*, 52.

Jay Macleod takes a similar approach to the reproduction of social inequality. Like Willis, he understands this process to be influenced by the process of acculturation to working-class attitudes and ideas about social "place." Macleod differs from Willis in that he focuses more on the effects that this has on one's *career aspirations*. According to Macleod, "the regulation of aspirations is perhaps the most significant of all the mechanisms contributing to social reproduction." Macleod found in his study that social membership to two different cliques, predicted the nature of their career aspirations: members of one group (the Hallway Hangers) seldom aspired higher than obtaining a wage-job, while members in the other group (the Brothers) believed much more in the rhetoric of upward mobility, "work hard, get a good job."[42] The differentiation of career aspirations is also evident amongst blue and white-collar workers. Although my study differs from Macleod in that it documents the attitudes of workers already fixed into their career (rather than in grade school), the striking differences in how these two groups of city workers conceptualize their positions and aspirations are worthy of discussion. I explore this in chapter five.

Willis and Macleod both pen useful paradigms demonstrating the intersection between culture, class, and attitudes. In this light, blue-collar "Local" culture appears to differ substantially with white-collar "Local" culture in the city government. This insight has inevitably fostered some complex and layered analyses of the extant social arrangement in the city government. Just as understanding the influence of "Local" culture in the city government (and Honolulu more broadly) is an undertaking without linear narrative, no one social theory can even begin to explain all that is present. Instead

---

[42] Macleod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995; 60-81.

I discuss the workings of social and cultural capital, ethnic niche, social closure, and class socialization where applicable, even during times when two or more of these forces stand in explicit contrast. This is, I believe, the most honest way to express the significance of "Local" culture in the Honolulu city government.

There are many other references used throughout this study that are not mentioned here. Mapping the terrain of "Local" has demanded the assistance of "Local" scholarship from John Rosa, Chris Leong, John McDermott, Lawrence Fuchs, and Andrew Lind. Similarly, additional social theory from Charles Tilly, Richard Jenkins, David Wilson and James Huff has also been used to various degrees. As will be increasingly evident throughout this thesis, "Local" often plays out in intricate and contradictory ways not captured by existing theoretical frameworks. Therefore this study seeks to draw from this vast pool of knowledge while venturing into uncharted academic waters. I have therefore laid forth this literary review with the intention of describing the conceptual framework I will be utilizing, though my own research and conclusions will inevitably lend their own color to the greater picture. Whatever the methodology, this thesis labors to provide answers to but one central question: what *role* does "Local" play as a source of identity, culture and capital for the people of Honolulu?

Chapter Two: A "Local" Government

Eli: Is it important to act or be "Local" as part of your job?

Dorothy: Yeah, especially if you are working for the city. You just can't be snotty and uptight. You have to be accepting of different cultures. You know, not just out for yourself. Its like everyone is ohana (family), that's how it is at work. We want to help each other. Which is different from being forced to help others. A fellow employee needs some help and you don't think, how come I gotta help him for? No. Its actually a feeling of wanting to help them.

E: So you contrast "Local"-style to "mainland"-style?

D: On the mainland, in the workplace it is all proper and serious. In Hawaii we keep it fun. Even if there is serious work to be done, we try to lighten it up. Over here, we can call anyone, even from different city departments, and just talk story, have fun.

Amongst the Honolulu city government employees I interviewed, many of them expressed that the city government workplace is very "Local," both socially and culturally. As a "Local," public sector employer, the city government is perceived to specifically contrast both "American" workplaces (in the continental U.S.) as well as

private-sector workplaces in Hawaii. The reason for this, as multiple city employees

indicated, is that in the city government things are done less formally, less aggressively,

and in a more relaxed manner. At least in the eyes of many city employees, these such

characteristics qualify the work environment of the Honolulu City Government as more

"Local" than many other settings. In the excerpt included at the start of the chapter,

between it is clear that Dorothy feels the "Localness" of city work is *cultural* above all

else. It informs acceptable behavior ("you just can't be snotty and uptight"), workplace

relations ("we want to help each other"), attitudes towards work ("if there is serious work

to be done, we try to lighten it up"), as well as other aspects such as proper dress and

acceptable ways of communicating. However, the markings of "Local" also present

themselves in other significant ways.

Besides the cultural aspects of "Localness" in the city government -- such as

emphasizing *aloha* (love) and *ohana (family)*, some of those I interviewed reasoned that

"the city," as it is called, is *truly* "Local" because of who is employed there. One

employee reasoned that, "almost all city employees were born and raised here," a fact

that had much to do with him deeming the "city government" "Local." Others echoes

this sentiment. As one "Local" employee stated, "there is less mainland Haole presence

here (than in the private sector). You know, less Haole influence here. So that makes it

more 'Local.'" Others reasoned that the "city's" "Localness" is derived from the fact that

"the city is where local public-school graduates work." Such sentiments all suggest that

the city government serves as a haven for Locals in ways that extend far beyond a

laundry list of cultural conducts. In many of the employees I interviewed there was an

element of *exclusivity* on the way they talked about the city government. As if to suggest

that "the city" is not only "Local" culturally, but also an important "Local" workplace *for*

"Local" people. It is thus without a doubt that city employees have come to understand

specific ways in which their city-work environment is unique, both culturally and

demographically. Unfortunately, because my study does not make similar inquiries of

non-city government workers in Honolulu, it remains to be seen whether the "Local"

traits ascribed to the Honolulu City Government by its employees are echoed by those

outside it. With this limitation in mind, although I spend much time demonstrating how

and why the Honolulu City Government operates as a "Local" space, I must restrain from

any conclusions stretching far beyond the Honolulu city government. There may in fact

be alternate expressions of "Local" culture outside the public-sector, which is why

understanding the specific culture that permeates in the city government as "*uniquely*

'Local," is more indicative of my findings. In this chapter, I paint a broad picture of

what employment in the Honolulu city government is like. This will include its various

physical settings, the characteristics of its workforce, its organizational structure, and last

but perhaps most importantly, its culture.

     "The city", as it is referred to by employees, consists of a dizzying bureaucratic

array of departments, divisions, branches, and supporting groups. The head of the city

government is the mayor. In addition to the mayor's many duties, he is given the

responsibility to appoint the head director of most of the twenty-six separate city

departments and agencies. Each of these departments oversees a different function, such

as Transportation, Environmental Services, Human Resources, and City Council. Each

division is comprised, with increasing specificity, of divisions, branches, units, and other

groupings depending on the division. During my tenure with the city government, I was

placed in a department that I will refer to as the Department of Public Services, or DPS.

From what I gathered from discussions with employees as well as observation, the

Department of Public Services is a fairly typical and representative department in terms

of its employees, administrative structure, resources, and workplace layout. In terms of

organizational structure, DPS maintains five integral divisions as well as an

administrative support group. Each of the five divisions houses a different dimension of

"public services," such as wastewater treatment and disposal, trash collection, and sewer

maintenance. All divisions except for one contain significantly more blue-collar, manual

labor positions than white-collar ones. Ben kindly informed me that the ratio of blue-

collar to white-collar workers in DPS is just about 8 to 1.

DPS is one of the larger city departments, with a total work force of just under

900. Unfortunately, I was not able to access city demographic so as to better understand

the nature of DPS' workforce, or even that of Honolulu's public sector contingent in

overall. I instead have been forced to rely on a combination of information derived from

both my own personal interviews and the Hawaii census. 75% of the twenty-four DPS

employees I interviewed were either born in Hawaii or had lived there for more than

twenty years. Racially, 40% were White[43], with the majority being Asian, Pacific

Islander (primarily Hawaiian), or mixed race. By comparison, the county of Honolulu is

---

[43] There is reason to believe this percentage should be lower. For logistical reasons, I
ended up interviewing more white-collar city workers than blue-collar workers. It is
entirely possible, given my imprecise estimation, that DPS' blue collar workforce
features a far greater percentage of non-whites than the white-collar setting. This notion
will be explored in greater detail in chapters four and five.

roughly 20% White, 56% Asian, and 7% Pacific Islander.[44] Amongst ethnicities,

Japanese (24%), Whites (20%), and Filipinos (12%) constitute the three largest groups.

For the purposes of this study, the prevalence of "Local" identity in Honolulu is

also of interest. Unfortunately, since this data is obviously not included (or asked) in

formal demographic surveys, I can only describe the findings of my personal interviews

with DPS employees. Amongst those interviewed, the majority (67%, or 16 out of 24)

consider themselves to be "Local." This number differs, however, based upon blue and

white-collar work. Although both types of city employees feature "Locals" in large

numbers, there remain significant differences between the two groups that merit separate

discussion.

DPS white-collar work is housed in an elegant, stucco-clad, administrative

building on the outskirts of Honolulu. Other than clerical positions, nearly all white-

collar positions require some degree of college education. As the "professionals" of the

workforce, white-collar city workers occupy positions that feature a high-degree of job

specificity. For instance, Civil Engineers may be stratified into Civil Engineer I, Civil

Engineer II, Civil Engineer III and so on based on experience and skill-level. Each

position has a corresponding increase in pay and authority, as well as a system of "step-

level" raises for added incentive.[45] The office place therefore includes a formidable array

of educated, intelligent civil engineers, chemists, accountants and communications

specialists, each with a unique set of duties. The dress code of white-collar is also

---

[44] Extracted from 2000 U.S. Census data, accessed via
http://www.hellohonolulu.com/Census.Cfm on 4/7/09.
[45] These are basically small pay-raises that are evaluated annually. A full promotion such
as Civil Engineer I to Civil Engineer II can take multiple years, and is often restricted by
availability.

distinct. Best described as a compromise between Western business-wear and "Local" propensities for warm-weather friendly, casual attire, the white-collar dress code is commonly referred to in Honolulu as "business casual." Roughly summarized, it commonly consists of Aloha Shirts and slacks for men, and dresses, blouses and business skirts for women. By casual observation, the most common fashion for men was a dark, tucked-in "aloha shirt," matched with crisp black or dark grey slacks and black shoes.

The physical and social organization of white-collar work is reflected in the layout of the office. The administrative office floor of DPS features pods of cubicles separated by fabric-covered office partitions. The height of these partitions roughly corresponds to the rank of the employee in that office. For instance, a low-level clerk might have small partitions surrounding his or her cubicle, allowing for easy communication over the top of it. A senior civil engineer may have stacked, head-high partitions to obscure any unscheduled (or unsolicited) contact with passerby outside of the office-cubicle. At the top level, division chiefs and department heads usually are provided with their own individual office rooms for full privacy and comfort. The DPS office is spatially separated by divisions, such that "Refuse" offices are down the hall from those of "Environmental Quality," "Wastewater" is on the floor below "Administrative Support," and so on. A common-area that features a sink, lunchroom, and an outdoor balcony exists on each floor for break periods.

Time is highly structured for white-collar DPS employees. In addition to having to sign in and out using a centralized computer program, many use the computerized schedulers provided on their company computers to plan their days down to fifteen-minute increments. This micromanagement of time encourages an occasionally frenetic

daily schedule that can include an exhausting array of team meetings (weekly), deadlines,

important conference calls, and/or attending professional-development workshops.[46] As

a result, the atmosphere around the office features a considerable amount of bustle, as

employees shuffle between various meeting rooms, the cells of colleagues, and printing

centers. In spite of this, employees manage a very warm and friendly atmosphere around

the office. It is not uncommon to overhear fellow employees engaged in playful chatter

or catching up on the newest office gossip. During my time at DPS there were many

occasions that an acquaintance of mine would go out of their way to find out how my

project was going, or stop me in the hall to inform me that so-and-so had brought

Manapua (a Chinese pork-filled bun) for snack. Other times, I enjoyed spending down-

time "talking story" with fellow employees. Perhaps one employee described the feeling

best when he explained to me, "work gotta be more than just work. It's like being in an

extended family." When I first arrived at DPS's white-collar office, I was taken aback at

how welcoming the employees were towards me. I was shown around by a Japanese-

American senior employee who over the course of two days introduced me to a

staggering number of co-workers in the two-stories of city office. Many of these

employees took time out of their schedule to explain to me their duties, often graciously

displaying understanding smiles at my slow comprehension with the technical duties of

their occupation. A week into my stay at DPS, it was evident to me that a unique (and

---

[46] During my three-month internship I personally attended about ten "professional development" sessions, with topics ranging from leadership and discipline to new employee orientation and computer skills. Although my specific circumstances as an intern given the freedom to attend any workshops offered at Public Services, it is my understanding that there is indeed ample opportunities for white-collar employees to attend similar workshops. In talking to the financial officer at Public Services, I learned that many of these events can be attended on paid time.

perhaps fragile?) balance of *aloha* and professionalism is struck by the employees in the office building.

Amongst the white-collar workforce in DPS there are also striking ethnic, gender, and age trends amongst employees. Many are of Japanese descent, most third or fourth generation *Nikkei*. Ben himself, who I spent substantial chunks of my time at DPS with, is third-generation Japanese-American. In the absence of demographic statistics, perhaps a brief glance at a phone listing of white-collar employees says it all: Watanabe, Morimoto, Tanaka, Nagamine, and Asato (all Japanese last names). Additionally, five out of the eight Department "leaders" – the department head, assistant head, as well as the division chiefs) are Japanese-American.[47] The over-representation of Japanese-Americans exists throughout much of white-collar work, such that in addition to their presence as department leaders, all but one of the white-collar clerks in DPS were also Japanese-American. Interestingly, native Hawaiians and Filipinos are most notably under-represented in white-collar work. Neither group has more than a handful in an office of around one hundred employees. In terms of gender, males have historically filled the higher positions within the department. Currently amongst the eight DPS head administrators, seven are male, are trend likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Women are in no way absent from the white-collar workplace, however. These women overwhelmingly reside in clerical and secretarial positions. As prominent exceptions to this rule, during my stay at DPS I counted four females in high-ranking DPS positions:

---

[47] This fact was brought to light one day by Ben, who showed me a organizational flow chart that listed the key members of the DPS administration.

two as civil engineers, one as a division chief, and another as a section leader. This does

not, however, negate the fact that DPS remains a male-dominated environment.

The correlation between seniority and age falls along a predictable patter, with

more senior workers in higher positions. As a good indicator of this, all administrative

heads appeared to be in their early fifties to early sixties.[48] Fittingly, lower-level

employees often range from their early-thirties to mid-forties in age.

As the pleasant environment around the workplace would suggest, white-collar

city employees experience high levels of satisfaction with their jobs. Though salary for

comparable skilled work is usually higher in the private-sector, many city employees

appear unconcerned with this fact. Instead, many will readily describe the positive

aspects of their work, referring to the office as "easy-going," "fun," and "like family."

However, this does not mean that white-collar employees do not have concerns or

criticisms of their department. The most common complaints amongst employees I

interviewed were an unresponsive upper-level management, inadequate communication

(especially between divisions), and problems with discipline. One other important issue

is effort and motivation on the job. Although I observed much variability in this area, as

one employee described, "here in the city, there is less drive for success. It's just too

laid-back. Whenever something needs to get done, its just, 'ah, do it tomorrow.'"[49] This

sentiment mirrors public stereotypes of city workers in Honolulu: *lazy, incompetent, and*

unmotivated. Many white-collar city employees in DPS are painfully aware of this

perception. Over lunch during my first week at Public Services, upon hearing that I was

impressed at all the complexities of keeping the city functioning properly a friendly co-

---

[48] Some city workers become eligible to retire with full benefits at age 55.
[49] James, intervewed 7/21/08.

worker remarked to me, "See! So it turns out city employees do actually work pretty hard, don't they?" However, despite the prevalence of this stereotype, it would be a stretch to claim that this has a strong negative impact for city employees. White-collar city employees are, for the most part, far more motivated, professional, and harder working than they are popularly perceived.

Blue-collar city work holds some similarities to white-collar work. In basic terms, both are city workers with comfortable retirement plans, overtime benefits, and few stringent work deadlines. Culturally, both types of employees readily identify "Local," endorsing common workplace principles emphasizing "fun, laughter, and lightening things up. Not too pushy or serious."[50] City workers can often find cultural kinship by rallying around a shared "Local" identity. This sentiment is most likely bolstered by the fact that blue-collar work in Honolulu, as is the case for white-collar work, is largely non-White. This "minority" solidarity, however, has its obvious limits: class and ethnic differences between the white-collar and blue-collar workforces do serve to distinguish the two. This idea will be explored further in Chapter four.

Blue-collar work contrasts white-collar work in significant ways. Blue-collar work consists primarily of manual labor, which in Public Services means tasks such as sewer cleaning, wastewater monitoring, and trash collection. Blue-collar work also differs in that it is firmly unionized, all employees members of the United Public Works (UPW) union. In contrast to the controlled and groomed white-collar office, the blue-collar domain rests largely in "yards," city facilities that serve as regional bases for workers and heavy equipment (such as buses, forklifts, garbage trucks, and sewer-pipe

---

[50] Dorothy, interviewed 7/18/08.

repair machines). For example, the Refuse division has a yard in Honolulu, Pearl City, Kailua, and many other heavily populated locations on Oahu. Just as the office place acts as a place of community for white-collar workers, *yards* act as both labor stations and social networks for blue-collar workers. Accordingly, many feature their own unique sub-culture, social cliques, norms and traditions that extend beyond the grasp of this study.

The organization of a blue-collar yard varies based on size, which can range from a dozen or so workers to well over one-hundred workers. Yards can also vary based on type of work; a trash collection yard will be different from a bus services yard. Typically, the hierarchy of positions in a given yard follows a bureaucratic arrangement similar to that of the city government as a whole: each yard is headed by a superintendent, followed in descending order by a small administrative team, supervisors, team foreman and regular workers. This, of course, is dependent on the size of the yard operation. For instance, the large trash collection yard that serves Honolulu proper features a much more substantial chain of command than the one operating in Waianae (a humble town an hour's drive away from central Honolulu).

Job requirements for blue-collar positions also differ from white-collar positions, namely in that the former requires substantially less educational attainment. In fact, the formal requirements for blue-collar positions seldom exceed a CDL (the certification necessary to drive a heavy truck in the state of Hawaii) and a clean criminal record. Job advancement also takes place differently in the blue-collar world. Unlike the white-collar job advancement paradigm where increases in skill and experience are grounds for more-or-less corresponding increases in pay and position, blue-collar work features a crippling

system of pay stagnation. That is, all blue-collar workers in the same division paid

equally regardless of merit or experience. Job advancement or pay increases can occur

only two different ways. First, one can be promoted to a supervisory role, though the

selection process is highly subjective and only available when a previous supervisor

leaves. Second, blue-collar workers can all realize pay gains collectively via union

negotiations. This process is slow, cumbersome, and rarely related to the merit of any

one individual. In sum, the concept of "promotion" in the blue-collar world is largely an

illusive concept. There is no concrete method to promote based on seniority, merit,

leadership or any other standard. Blue-collar employees do not even enjoy the rights to a

yearly analysis by a supervisor, a process utilized in the white-collar office connected to

the issuance of yearly raises. [51]. All of this points to the unequal opportunities for job

advancement amongst blue-collar and white-collar city employees. Here we see how the

structuring of blue-collar job positions effectively stunts (and perhaps even inhibits) their

opportunities for advancement within work in the city government.

Finally, the culture and environment at blue-collar yards also differ markedly

from white-collar settings. The white-collar city office exhibits a fair degree of gender

parity, though males do tend to occupy higher, more skilled positions on average. By

contrast, blue-collar yards tend to feature an extraordinarily disproportionate male

presence. For instance, one of the trash collection yards that I visited featured only one

female worker amongst the 15 or so employees. That female employee was the secretary

---

[51] By contrast, most white-collar city employees are eligible for what is called "step-movement" pay raises, evaluated annually by one's immediate supervisor. These "step" increases result in a small percentage raise in salary. Significantly, step-level raises serve as ways for white-collar employees to continue to realize raises when not eligible for actual promotions to higher positions. This information was obtained through conversations with Barry, Dorothy, and official DPS files.

for the (male) superintendent of the yard. In some ways, this should not be completely

surprising: many scholars agree that blue-collar work nationally is traditionally male-

dominated, with females being steered away from such positions (many of which involve

manual labor).[52] This inevitably contributes to the general atmosphere and culture of

blue-collar yards, by way of masculinizing the space. For one, workers notably interact

in more physical ways. For example, a typical greeting in the yard between fellow

employees might include a slap on the back or a hearty embrace. Workers also frequently

joke with one another in physical ways involving playful pushing and prodding. Blue-

collar workplaces often feature a slackened, more casual dress code. Blue-collar workers

frequently arrive at work dressed in t-shirts, faded jeans, workman's boots, and

depending on the job other accessories such as hard-hats, gloves, and protective gear.

The blue-collar dress "code", one could summarize, is geared towards comfort, safety,

and informality. This stands in poignant contrast to the rigid aesthetics of the white-

collar office-place, which all but necessitates ironed shirts, polished shoes, and a well-

groomed personal appearance. In this way, the physical and aesthetic differences

between the two types of city work serve as conspicuous references to the underlying

class and cultural differences that divide these two settings. Likewise, the relationship

between blue and white-collar workers is similar to that of two distant siblings that live in

the same household but have greatly divergent personalities. However, the

differentiation of blue and white-collar spaces (the "yard" versus the "office") only

accentuates their symbolic differences. Therefore, despite being linked by the joint title

of "city workers," physical interaction between blue and white-collar employees is

---

[52] Karsten, Margaret. *Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace*. Greenwood
Publishing Group, 2006.

relegated to those occupying "liason" positions such as the Labor Relations Specialist or Pay and Classifications Manager (who deals with paycheck issues).

As I have described it, "city work" is best understood when broken down into its two primary components: blue and white-collar work. However, despite discursive differences and stratifications, "city work" remains overwhelmingly perceived as a single, unified entity. I argue that the reason for this can be attributed in large part to the influence of "Local" identity and culture. Many city workers understand their workplace as indisputably "Local," a fact that is often uttered with a sense of pride. City employees – both blue and white collar – *perceive* there to be important commonalities in public-sector work environment that legitimate a sense of (cultural) homogeneity. As a first-hand example of this, over the course of my stay in DPS, I was frequently approached by city employees knowledgeable about my project. Each was eager to show or explain to me "proof" that *city work* has many distinctly "Local" elements to it. One blue-collar worker stated, "'Local' to me is feeling comfortable with your coworkers, and working together to get the job done. For "city" supervisors, I think 'Local'-style is giving workers friendly reminders instead of demanding things." A white-collar employee added that "Local" culture in the office place means, "no talk stink about others!" Another employee said, "Here in the city (government), we are not out for ourselves . . . we're like one big family." What these city employees all suggest is the way in which "Local" culture transcends the spheres of blue-collar and white-collar work, promoting a sense of "we." Employees frequently believe that "city work" is deeply "Local," a fact most often asserted through comparisons to "mainland" work cultures, or even that of

private-sector work in Hawaii.[53] Regardless of how it is used, assertions of the "Local" unity of the city workforce act to subvert the tangible differences and strata that exist within the city government.

"Local" as Socio-cultural boundary in the Honolulu city government:

Irene: *To me, it ("Local") is the culture of doing to others how you wish to be treated. It is derived mostly from Japanese and Hawaiian cultures. Its just . . . (pause), its caring for others. For instance, I have this neighbor, this old man who always comes over whenever he is through cleaning his yard, and does our yard. That is "Local" to me. To show our appreciation, because I know he always drinks beer, I buy him beer to give back.*

       A good example of "non-Local" would be my other neighbor (she laughs). *It is this Haole guy; I think he's part-military. When my Local neighbor had a Barbeque this one day, the Haole neighbor just came over and helped himself off of the grill. Then, he calls over his son to do the same!!*

Eli*: wow, how un-local!*

I: *I know, yeah! So its just, for people who are not "Local", its just take, take, take. Like my Haole neighbor, they are often not aware of others, and just take advantage of someone's kindness. And they think nothing of it!*

E: *Did the military neighbor ever host a BBQ and invite over the "Local" neighbor?*

---

[53] One of my interview questions was, "Do you think the way people interact is different in the private sector?" 15 out of the 21 people who responded to this question indicated that it was. There were 5 people who either did not answer the question or could not decide.

I: No, not at all. And he always does that kind of thing!

- excerpt from an interview with Irene, 7/3/08.

This exchange between Irene, a "Local" woman in her 40s, and me contains some important ways in which "Local" culture is commonly portrayed. Though Irene's comments are unique to some degree, her *underlying logic* inducing the arrangement of socio-cultural space into "Local" and "non-Local" domains is consistent with that of other "Locals" I interviewed. Irene's portrayal of both her Local and Non-Local neighbors mirror popular representations of group differences in Honolulu. Many "Locals" tend to discuss "Local" culture by doing three things in particular: portraying the cultural homogeneity of "Local" people; essentializing its traits, and lastly, locating the cultural boundaries of "Local" through the negative depictions of *non-Locals*. All three of these facets of "Local" discourse lend concreteness to the concept, allowing it to stand as a firm, definable, *socio-cultural boundary*. The result of this process is what Zelinsky (2001) and Miyares (2008) call, "ethnogenesis": the articulation of an "ethnic" identity often manifesting as a form of resistance to the presence of oppressive or "foreign" cultures.[54] In this way, as Irene herself implied during our conversation, people (or actions, places, foods, etc. for that matter) are either indisputably labeled "Local," or "un-Local,"[55] a sort of binary forced upon those in Hawaii that almost purposely ignores the subtleties of identity. In this section of this chapter, I spend time

---

[54] Miyares, Ines. "Expressing Local Culture in Hawaii." *Geographical Review*, pp. 513-531.

[55] The term "un-Local" is to be understood as synonymous with "non-Local." It is used in similar contexts as terms such as "Mainland," "Haole," or "Malihini." All suggests both a state of foreignness to Hawaii, as well as some degree of general condescension.

describing how the term "Local" is used and represented in both the city government as well as Honolulu more generally. I attempt to describe how "Local" discourse is arranged and expressed in ways that reinforce powerful sentiments of "Local" homogeneity, cultural superiority, and ethnocentricity. I ask, who or what is considered the "most" "Local," or similarly, who gets accepted as a "Local?" Addressing these questions will lead to a better understanding of how "Local" culture is situated by "Local" actors, a process that excludes at least as many as it advantages.

Perhaps a result of the slippery definition of "Local," many city employees do not define it the same way. Likewise, minority conceptions of "Local" are by no means irrelevant. Though I will continue to emphasize the way in which "Local" is most commonly used and defined, at times I will purposefully try to challenge these narratives by describing discrepant views. More often than not, the most exacting disagreements towards "Local" are between "Locals" and "non-Locals" themselves. In the following pages, I attempt to interrogate the process of establishing the boundaries of "Local" identity, especially as it relates to "city" spaces. A firm understanding of the *use* of the term "Local" – as it is laid forth through a process of cultural boundary-making by specific actors – is essential for subsequent discussions. The consequences of the deployment of such cultural boundaries lie at the heart of understanding the city government as *the* "'Local' workplace."

The opening excerpt between Irene and I was in part her response to my question, "what is Local culture?" I had left this question purposefully open-ended, interested to see how Irene and others would respond. Irene's reaction to the question was interesting: after struggling through a description of "Local" values, she quickly realized an example

would far more efficiently illustrate "Localness." She first descriptively introduces the contrasting traits of her "Local" and "non-Local" neighbors (the latter is "part-Military"). Here she has set up a superficial contrast between the cultural background of the two men. Yet Irene's descriptions begin to reveal far more than this halfway through her story. The traits she ascribes to her *"Local"* neighbor are all positive: he cares for others, is kind, humble and compassionate. She does not treat her "non-Local" neighbor the same. With him, she is quick to portray her "non-Local" neighbor negatively: he is greedy, self-serving, and intrusive (he even invites his son without invitation!). Not only does Irene associate her two neighbors on opposite sides of the fence of good and evil, in both cases she also actively associates those traits to generalizations about cultural differences. In the process Irene is placing the *boundary* of "Local" on the side of positive personal and social traits. By extension, the inverse has occurred with "non-Local": it is self-serving, greedy and intrusive, epitomized by Irene's neighbor. With striking clarity we can now observe how Irene's deployment of the terms "Local" and "non-Local" is not only a cultural marker, but a way of depicting that person's social worthiness. It is effectively a social judgment.

Irene's comments also homogenize the meaning of "Local." For an identity explicitly lacking a fixed set of traits, values, behaviors, etc., this is no insignificant feat! Irene fails to depict much of *any* variation or complexity that may exist within the umbrella of "Local." I found this to be a remarkably common trend amongst DPS employees. Dennis, a white-collar, self-identified "Local" employee, demonstrated this in similar fashion:

Eli: Describe what "local" means to you.

Dennis: hmmm, give me a minute to think about that. (pauses). Maybe like pidgin? On the mainland they are more articulate, and have a different vocabulary. Here, we might drop words, speak all funny-kine.[56]

 In terms of culture, I'd say "Local" culture has taken a lot from Japanese culture. You know, when I was growing up my mother always used to preach "*Kosai*".

E: What does that mean?

D: (laughs) I can't tell you exactly. But I can tell you what it meant to me. It meant that if a friend has a wedding or funeral in the family, you go. Even if it is a cost to you, because of your relationship [with them], you would attend. That to me is "Local."

E: Does this seem different from how things are done on the mainland?

D: There is definitely less of this on the mainland. You know, I guess locally it is just a feeling of community and respect for one another.

Dennis clearly conflates Japanese-American traditions with "Local" ones in Hawaii. His take on "Local" is thus fitted to his own ethnic background, indicated through comments like, "growing up, my mother always used to preach 'Kosai.'" Despite the blatant relativity of Dennis' description of "Local" culture, he still manages to generalize its meaning. By commenting that "Locals" speak English "funny-kine," and have a culture closely influenced by Japanese traditions, Dennis depicts cultural uniformity in Hawaii. Both Irene and Dennis use sweeping, definitive strokes to establish the boundaries of "Local" culture. In both cases cultural boundaries are further reinforced by collective (and frequent) references to that which is deemed foreign: "mainland" culture. Contradictorily, many "Locals" actually acknowledge the diversity in their community. Yet when it comes time to discuss "Local" culture, much of the resulting language suggests the fixidity of certain "Local" values, traits, and even ethnicities. This tendency ignores the underlying relativity and diversity within its

---

[56] The expression "all funny-kine" is a common Hawaii slang loosely translated as "jumbled," "re-arranged," or "off-kilter."

construct. It is because of this contradictory posture that the use of the term "Local" has remained so contentious and misunderstood in Honolulu.

"Locals" like Irene and Dennis tend to paint consistent and positive views of their "Local" identity. These tendencies serve to greatly disadvantage those labeled "non-Local." Insofar as certain negative perceptions of "non-Locals" are disseminated in Honolulu by "Locals" – such as the stereotype of "take, take, take" – being called "non-Local" has taken on a demeaning connotation. The implications of this I save for discussion next chapter. In similar ways, "non-Locals" often have an acute difficulty becoming accepted as "Local." One does not need to look far to come across stories suggesting this. When I asked Ellie, a middle-aged Caucasian employee, whether or not she considered herself "Local," she replied insightfully:

Ellie: *Yes and no*. I've lived here for twenty years, so I guess I am a "local" in that sense, but I am certainly not *accepted* as Local.

Eli: Why do you feel that way? How do you know you are not accepted as one?

Ellie: It's the things you're invited to, the comments made. The reaction to my actions. For instance, I might be poking fun at someone, calling them a dingbat or something. And the Locals might find that offensive. But did it ever occur to them that calling me a *Haole* might also be offensive to me? I mean, even Locals with good intentions not expecting it to be an insult say this to me. So I think there is kind of a double standard here [in Hawaii].

Richard Jenkin refers to the "internal-external dialectic of identification,[57]" which can efficiently summarize the identity dilemma facing "non-Locals" in Hawaii. Jenkins suggests that the perceptions of others are just as important to one's identity formation as our own self-perceptions. So long as "Locals" maintain such consistently

---

[57] Jenkins, Richard. Social Identity, 50.

undesirable views of non-Locals, the latter will continue to be marginalized in places of "Local"-dominated authority. Many "non-Locals" are aware of how they are perceived. One self-described "non-Local," white-collar employee described to me in frustration, "When I have a touchy situation to get across to the ('Local') workers, I don't even try to do it myself! They won't listen to me. Instead, I try and get a 'Local' person to do it for me." This employee's resignation towards the existence of social inequality in Honolulu is but one way that "non-Locals" have adapted to deal with the problems they face.

Identifying someone is usually a long, complex and often *subjective* process. It is, a process fraught with chances for mis-identification, especially if performed based on a glance or quick interaction. "Locals" tend to label people using a process that also reflects a differential treatment of "non-Locals." Irene described her "Local" neighbor not only in a positive light, but also one aided by her long-standing relationship with him. Irene comments about her "part-military" neighbor do not suggest the same depth of understanding about his personality. Instead, she is compelled to negatively characterize him based on his "non-Local," inappropriate actions in *one situation*. My interpretation of Irene's quick judgment would be to suggest her use of stereotypes of *Haoles* being "non-Local." Since her Caucasian neighbor already *appeared* "non-Local," his actions at the barbecue only *confirmed* her initial impression. Simply put, it is much more difficult for some people to be accepted as "Local" based on their appearance. As White DPS employees such as Ellie, Thomas (discussed in the introduction), and others can attest, one's ability to be accepted as "Local" is greatly influenced by their physical appearance. I find my own personal experience with this quite instructive. I am of half-Japanese and half-Caucasian decent, although through some strange genetic mishap, I appear

unquestionably White. Given that I was also born and raised in Hawaii, my unique personal background leads to some fascinating social interactions with non-White "Locals." Conveniently, such interactions with "Local" employees in DPS make for useful material for this study. As was often the case, if during a given conversation if I simply uttered a "Local" phrase such "howzit going?" (instead of "how are you?") or mentioned a craving for "Local" foods such as *lomi salmon*, or *shoyu chicken*, my colleagues invariably be surprised. Their responses would often be a mixture of curiousity and acceptance along the lines of, "Ah, so you really are Local, huh!" These employees genuinely appeared to be more accepting of me after a simple demonstration that I was indeed, at least in some ways, "Local." However, I remained skeptical about the simplicity of this process. If being accepted as "Local" can be to one's significant benefit, could a simple cue such as uttering a phrase or mentioning a food really be one's ticket in? If this is all that separates "Locals" from outsiders, then being accepted as "Local" would not be much more challenging than turning a door knob. This also would seemingly sap much of the exclusivity (and privileges) from the identity. As it turns out, being accepted as "Local" is a much more nuanced process, something that I myself, having grown up in Hawaii, had overlooked.

Being perceived as "Local" is partly determined by *which* personal traits the observer focuses on. This can result in one of two processes. One's "Localness" is occasionally evaluated based on the presence or absence of certain essentialized characteristics. That is, both "Local" and "non-Local" DPS employees indicated that being perceived as "Local" can at times be predicated on if one has the right kind of traits. The beginning of my interview with Dennis illustrates this:

Eli: Dennis, do you consider yourself "Local?"

Dennis: Yes, I do. I was born and raised here, and educated here as well, went to UH.[58]

E: Do you see it as important that you were educated here?

D: I think so. The fact that I went to UH means that I did not leave the islands to go to school. *I'd say going to school and living on the mainland is less "Local."*

For Dennis, "Local" is not something able to be learned or acquired. Rather, it has more to do with the presence of traits inborn, unchangeable, and/or experienced in the past. Dennis affirms this by saying that he knows he is "Local" because he "went to UH" and "did not leave the islands." "Non-local" employees suggest that "Local" is treated as an essentialized identity. The difference with them is that unlike Dennis, who uses an essentialized understanding of "Local" to *include* himself, "non-Locals" often refer to these essentialized characteristics as methods that exclude them from becoming "Local." Here the racial associations of "Local" must find its way back into the conversation. Observe a conversation I had with James, a Caucasian, white-collar city worker:

Eli: James, how would you describe "Locals?" What are "Local" people like?

James: Yeah . . . (pauses). "Locals" tend to be dark-skinned. Think of Hawaiians, Samoans, and Filipinos as opposed to Haoles. It is really about the way you look. No matter how you act, if you are White, you are going to be labeled and viewed as a *Haole*.

James points out that not only are certain "Local" traits essentialized by "Locals," they are also racialized. In this way, being "Local" is intimately linked to having darker skin pigmentation. Or said differently, "Locals" have *anything but* white skin. Being Caucasian himself, James feels that it is virtually impossible for him to be considered "Local." That being said, it is likely that James over-attributes his perception as a "non-Local" to the color of his skin. Just to confirm this notion, a brought up James in

---

[58] University of Hawaii at Manoa.

conversation to a few "Local" employees and learned that they consider James "non-Local" based primarily on his actions and "the way he holds himself." Nonetheless, the respective comments made by James and Dennis represent two different ways in which "Local" is essentialized. Since this process restricts access to a "Local" identity, it also serves to heighten the exclusivity of such an identity. This gives rise to such commonly held attitudes such as *"Locals" are just different from mainlanders*, *You gotta be born here to be truly "Local,"* or *Haoles can never be considered "Local."* The essentialization of "Local" traits ensures "Locals" of powerful, self-serving tool that can be used to make social judgments and place people into meaningful "ethnic" groups.

Not all people in Hawaii agree that being "Local" can be reduced to certain (essential) traits. On the contrary, many "Locals" do in fact believe that becoming "Local" is simply a matter of assimilating into the culture of Hawaii. Jeremy, a part-Hawaiian DPS employee said,

"I'd say after one year living here and experiencing the culture, I would consider [that person] "Local." But yeah, they would need to experience every ethnic background. And see how these groups coexist. So I guess that a "Newbie" to Hawaii would be a non-local. (laughs)."

For people like Jeremy, the boundary that distinguishes "Local" from other identities and cultures is one that is more predicated on *assimilation* than nativity. However, this does not alleviate the difficulties in determining *which* traits make one "Local." For some, being deemed "Local" is a matter of balancing one's "Local" traits against their "non-Local" traits and seeing which is more. This process is thus analogous to using a scale to determine which of two objects is heavier. During a rather insightful

interview, a Caucasian, female employee named Susan[59] offered, "there is a *correct* way of doing things "Locally" . . . you know, appreciating certain foods, certain ways of interacting, ways of dress. When you don't do it this way, you're not '*Local*.'" Susan herself is widely considered to be "non-Local" by her fellow DPS employees. Yet looking into Susan's background, despite being White, Susan's "non-Localness" is not necessarily apparent. That is, under a certain criteria, Susan *should be* considered "Local": she has lived in Hawaii for over thirty years, works in a "Local" workplace (i.e. the city government), and is knowledgeable of "Local" terms. Despite this, "Local" employees around the office are in striking agreement that Susan is distinctly "non-Local." In trying to understand why this is so, I began probing her colleagues for explanations. Dorothy, a Japanese-American "Local" employee explained, "She is just too brash. See, 'Local' people know how to get what they want without demanding or insisting on it. Susan, she does gets what she wants, but does so by *demanding* it." Other employees provided different explanations, such as "she acts *so* Haole," or, "when she wants something, she goes after it so aggressively," or even quite humorously, "*have you seen the way she dresses*?" [60] Given popular perceptions of Susan, it appears that Susan simply possesses more "non-Local" traits than she does "Local" ones. Susan's case thus illustrates the "equation" model for determining "Local" identity well.

There are, of course, many additional "strategies" for determining one's "Localness." Perhaps the most straightforward way of measuring "Localness" comes in the form of one's ability to speak "Pidgin." Multiple employees I interviewed explicitly

---

[59] Interestingly, Susan is considered by many "Local" employees in DPS to be a classic example of someone who is NOT "Local!"

[60] When I interviewed Susan, she was wearing a fitted tweed blazer with a pressed skirt and black high-heels. She also had on a sizable pearl necklace.

commented that being "Local" is tied to speaking – or at least understanding – "Pidgin."

Jonathan Okamura (1980) writes:

"Perhaps the most distinctive cultural feature to emerge from this common plantation experience is "pidgin" English, a Creole of standard American English that has incorporated many Hawaiian loan words and which continues to serve as the lingua franca among local people."[61]

"Pidgin" may have a distinctive heritage, but it has no *formal* linguistic rules. In different parts of Honolulu, "Pidgin" is spoken blended with standard English to produce a plethora of "dialects" and subtle variations. Nevertheless, the ability to speak some form of "Pidgin" fluently is viewed as a significance marker of one's "Localness." Likewise, it is also a source of identity pride for many "Locals" who live in the islands. For example, while interviewing employees for my research, on a handful of separate occasions did my interviewees break into "Pidgin" or use "Pidgin" phrases. Demonstrating the saliency of this marker of "Localness," I often found that my interviewee's use of "Pidgin" left me with little doubt about their "Localness." "Pidgin" is significant for other reasons as well. The use of "Pidgin" can be an effective catalyst for social relationships, solidarity, and communication. Insofar as it is a strong marker of one's identity, it can also be a formidable way to identify and exclude "non-Locals." On this, Ellie recalled:

There was this one time where I heard a Wastewater operator chatting with one of his coworkers at [the plant]. They were talking in "Pidgin," and I couldn't understand them too well. But when I came up to them, they just immediately shut up. And when one of them talked to me, he tried to speak in standard English, but I still could barely understand him.

---

[61] Okamura, Jonathan. *"Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii,"* 124.

Ellie's inability to *speak* or even properly comprehend "Pidgin" affected her ability to gain rapport with the two "Local" employees she described. Indeed, these two individuals switched "languages" in order to (stiffly) communicate with Ellie. Despite the social advantages that would come from learning the basics of "Pidgin" English, for "non-Locals" like Ellie, it is not easy to learn. Ellie herself has been living in Hawaii for over ten years and still has trouble with "Pidgin." Therefore, becoming a proficient speaker of "Pidgin" involves a mastery of its subtle inflections, unorthodox sentence arrangements, and pronunciations. The ability to speak Pidgin, therefore, is effectively used as criterion for identifying and classifying people into categories of "Local" and "non-Local."

Lastly, one's knowledge and familiarity with Honolulu's (or any other large region in Hawaii) geography can also factor in to one's acceptance as "Local." However unlike the speaking of "Pidgin," this local knowledge is not treated as a primary determinant of "Localness": Susan is as capable of navigating the city using "Local" landmarks, streets and even restaurants, yet she is still considered unquestionably "*non-Local*." However, to the extent that comprehending "Local" place references such as "heading windward on the Likelike Highway," or "take a left after McCully Zippy's," demonstrates a certain familiarity with Honolulu, it can be considered an important "Local" marker. About such phrases, an employee named Matt agreed, "'Locals' would know immediately what you are referring to." Knowledge of Hawaii's culture and history can also be significant. Amongst many "Local" DPS employees I talked with, many agreed about the importance of being able to understand the different cultures of Hawaii, and as Jeremy said, "embrace the diversity here." That being said, as I have demonstrated

prior, "Local" is primarily treated as a culture best revealed by one's action, appearance, speech and attitudes. That which can be learned from history books or a road map is naturally taken as a less salient marker of identity.

This section has explored how "Local" is conceived in terms of its defining traits, usages, and applications in Honolulu. I have shown how "Local" is used as a meaningful socio-cultural boundary. It used by primarily by "Locals" as a tool used to "type" people with. In this process of "typing," however, "Locals" effectively deploy discriminating and biased gazes of others that have real consequences for how they will be viewed in the future. In this way, Irene, Dennis and other "Locals" imbue the reflexive boundary between "Local" and "non-Local" with real meaning, not only as an ethnicity assessment, but also powerful social judgment; just as the actions of "Locals" tend to be looked upon favorably, "non-Locals" can often do no right.

Likewise, "Local" does not have any one definition or *way of defining*. Yet in order for any group to maintain its distinct group solidarity, it needs to have ways of policing its socio-cultural boundaries. Though many markers of "Local" fluctuate and change over time, they still provide tangible strategies for restricting who has access to "Local" identity. I have described in this section the complex and often arbitrary ways in which this process is performed. Some traits of "Local" are essentialized (such as speaking "Pidgin," or being born and raised in Hawaii), while others roughly weighed against "non-Local" traits until a conclusion is drawn. No matter which "method" is used, the cultural calculus of "Local" is fraught with complexities, inconsistencies and occasional contradictions. For these reasons being accepted as a "Local" in Honolulu is an extraordinarily problematic process that empowers the subjectivity of the "Locals"

that do the deciding. "Local" rarely shows on the surface of everyday social situations. Being "Local" is not so formal a qualification that it can be checked off in a box when applying for a job or seeking a raise. However, both "Local" and "non-Local" employees alike agree that being accepted as such is an important social distinction nonetheless. Those perceived as "Local" enjoy rapport, acceptance, and eased communication with other employees. By comparison, being considered "non-Local" can lay the groundwork for isolation, exclusion, and on rare occasion, even outward animosity in a "Local"-dominated setting. In the next chapter, I penetrate beyond a descriptive understanding of city work to further explore how the de-facto ethnicity of "Local" plays an important role in job distribution in the Honolulu city government. Broadly put, the forces that reinforce in-group opportunity and out-group exclusion will be explored. I attempt to show how the concepts of *ethnic niche, social capital, cultural capital,* and *social closure* jointly relate to this process. Having sketched the presence of "Local" as both an important socio-cultural boundary as well as a dominant cultural presence in "city work," we now have new footing with which to observe its implication.

Chapter Three: Capital, Closure, and Ethnic Niche in "the City"

I think being "Local" is really important in "the City." You kind of need to be "Local"

to be accepted there.

- Irene, 7/18/08

Working for the city government has substantial benefits that should appeal to everyone. In general, being employed by the government offers increased job security, competitive retirement benefits, 40-hour workweeks, and even a certain sense of job prestige and responsibility as a "public servant." As a desirable place to work, one would expect positions to be applied for by a variety of applicants and distributed based on merit alone. However what is encountered when one walks into many different Honolulu city government workplaces tells a different story. To varying extent, the city government is dominated both socially and culturally by "Local" people. This "Local" domination occurs neither evenly nor with the same intensity; it manifests differently based on blue or white-collar work. It is here where the effects of "Local" are at their most complex, cutting across both class and status. The two types of city work represent very different arenas of the "Local" government. Both featuring the dominance of "Locals," they are divided by ethnicity: white-collar, skilled-labor positions tend to be overwhelmingly held by "Local" Japanese Americans, while blue-collar labor tends to

feature "Local" Hawaiian, Filipino, Samoan, and Portuguese American employees. To be sure, employees in both types of positions tend to consider themselves "Local," but there are obviously others factors at play that sub-divide "Local" socio-economic space.

The next two chapters attempt to grapple with the forces that give way to the unequal distribution of city government jobs. For this chapter, I analyze the ways in which asserting "Localness" in the city government is socially and politically empowering, in the sense that there are tangible benefits that can be realized from it. Invoking Weber's concept of *social closure*, I show how certain city positions are restricted from access to "foreigners," or those who do not satisfy certain criterion. As will be described, the process of "closing" certain opportunities within the city government is achieved through the unequal distribution of "Local" forms of *social* and *cultural capital*. As a result, powerful "Local" actors have turned "the city" into what I call a *Local niche*, characterized by a high concentration of "Local" employees. With all but one of the top eight positions at DPS currently being occupied by "Locals,"[62] the city government can be ensured its reputation as a "Local" enclave for years to come. Lastly, I engage the various ways in which "Local" is simultaneously transformed into capital and used to reinforce social closure. In this process, "Local" strikes up contentious relationships with other powerful social variables such as ethnicity and class. As the first installation of a complicated and multidimensional exploration into the social organization of the city government, this chapter will provide new ways to understand both why and how the city government continues to perpetuate internal social inequality.

---

[62] This perception was arrived upon after asking various DPS employees whether or not each of these 8 individuals were "Local."

According to Max Weber, "social closure" is "the process of subordination whereby one group monopolizes advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it which it defines as inferior and ineligible."[63] The "group of outsiders," Weber refers to can be distinguished as such for any reason, such as religion, race, language, and education.[64] This type of subordination allows one group access to certain resources in ways that are unavailable to an "inferior" group. As a result, "social closure" is, at its core, a theory of power and domination.[65] Murphy (1988) argues that social closure operates in three different ways: principal, derivative, and contingent. Since he defines "principal" closure as the set of exclusionary rules that are backed by the legal apparatus of the state[66] – such as the exclusion of slaves from citizenship or women from voting – this does not best describe contemporary forms of social closure in the city government. "Derivative" and "contingent" forms of closure are far more interesting for these purposes. *Derivative* exclusion is the "rules for the monopolization of opportunities in society derived directly from the principal form of exclusion."[67] Examples of derivative exclusion may take place in the hiring process, an example of which is the use of credential requirements to restrict access to certain jobs. Lastly, "contingent" forms of exclusion are those not derived from primary forms of exclusion. They are often subtle, such as requiring a certain number of years "experience" in order to be hired. However unassuming, contingent forms of exclusion can also result in what Murphy calls, "the

---

[63] Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California, 1978; 43-46. Cited in Murphy, Raymond. *Social Closure*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988; p.8.
[64] Murphy, R. *Social Closure*, 6.
[65] Murphy, R. *Social Closure*, 7.
[66] Murphy, R. *Social Closure*, 70.
[67] Murphy, R. *Social Closure*, 70-71.

stratification of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups in contemporary capitalist society" *without explicit discrimination*. The use of the latter two forms of exclusion, especially contingent exclusion, in the city government represent ways in which "non-Locals" are subtly disadvantaged from obtaining positions, promotions, and general favor. Murphy argues that social closure is always accompanied by the discriminating (and often self-serving) logic of those perpetuating the closure. This occurs by establishing criteria based on "networks, alliances, and the imposition of the owners' language and cultural assumptions."[68] Murphy uses this argument to describe a primary mechanism with which White privilege is maintained in America. In Honolulu however, with "Locals" clustered at the top of the hierarchy of city power, it is "non-Locals" who in many ways are subjected to the various workings of social closure.

Social closure acts to restrict the access of non-Locals to city positions, creating a situation in which certain employment opportunities are de facto "*Local*s *only.*" As described earlier, this process is backed via the "Local" actors already powerfully positioned in the city hierarchy. Before launching into a discussion of some of the factors that are used for closure, I have included a telling excerpt from an interview I had with a high-ranking, "Local" employee named Ernest:

Eli: Ernest, do you have any thoughts on the influence of "Local" in the city [government][69]?

Ernest: "Local" prevents outsiders from getting promoted. It is like a clique. *If you are in, they will overlook your credentials and allow you to get somewhere*.

Eli: That's interesting. Why do you think that this type of "local" attitude developed here? Why is it still maintained today?

---

[68] Murphy, R. *Social Closure*, 72.
[69] Words in parenthesis are my own, and added only for clarification.

Ernest: (pauses) You know, there is this idea that private school people have their private firms. These are lucrative, and for private school graduates – Punahou, Iolani, Kamehameha kids – that is where they are expected to go. But what do "Locals" have? We have city and state work.

Ernest points out that city government positions – especially higher up – are filled based on more than just the criteria outlined by formal job requirements. Here his phrase "it's like a clique," referring to "Locals," is telling. This interview was quite compelling for me. A "Local" himself, I had asked Ernest to describe not only how being "Local" could be used to one's advantage (in "the city"), but also, implicitly, how it might have helped *him* (and other high-ranking employees) get where they are today. This was, of course, a question that I had little expectation Ernest would answer at all. It may also have been difficult for Ernest to even comprehend his specific cultural advantage. According to Murphy, "groups see more readily the illegitimacy of the rules responsible for *their own exclusion* than the illegitimacy of rules responsible for the exclusion of others, especially if they benefit in some way from other rules of exclusion."[70] That is, Ernest, as a "Local," would be more likely to articulate the ways in which "*Locals"* *themselves* are treated unjustly, rather than the other way around. Ernest's assertion that "Locals" can leverage their identity to help them advance is echoed by "non-Local" employees. James, a white-collar "non-Local," spoke of a situation that occurred ten years ago when he first got a job in DPS:

James: Well, ten years or so ago, Roger[71] and I came up together in the ranks [in DPS]. We both had a similar personality, and we got along. We both can be aggressive at times, very forward, no nonsense. But we both get a lot done.

---

[70] Murphy, 79.

[71] Roger is Japanese American, and unanimously considered "Local." Roger is currently one of the department heads of DPS.

Eli: But you are in very different positions today.

James: That's right. Even though we were real similar in a lot of ways, he did something better than me while we were both "in the trenches."

Eli: What was that?

James: He's "Local"! He was born and raised here, and he's got the roots here. So he was able to talk about stuff like, "Oh, my auntie this this this. . . . or, oh, my friend works with your buddy. That kind of stuff. And although it took him awhile, he eventually gets promoted.

Given the social and political power that "Locals" enjoy in the city government, according to James, Roger was able to exploit his "Localness" in order to advance up the DPS hierarchy. Given these advantages, it is perfectly logical that he, instead of James, would have been picked for promotion despite near-identical resumes. Repeated over and over, this dynamic of selection produces two distinct realities: first, "Locals" enjoy an increasing monopoly over key positions within "the city"; and second, perceptions that city government work "belongs" to a single group – perhaps even a single "ethnicity" – are enhanced.   Insofar as these tendencies also reinforce each other, the "closure" of desirable city positions to non-Locals is catalyzed. As Ernest said, "Private school people have their private firms. What do we have? We have city and state work." Regardless of if this is true or not, these sorts of mentalities reveal that city work is a space that is designated for *certain* people.

The result of "social closure" is the inclusion of people possessing valued attributes, and the exclusion of others. Viewed this way, in the Honolulu city government, that attribute is "Localness," and as such it works to produce a high concentration of "Locals" within government occupations. Another way to understand this involves using what Roger Waldinger calls the theory of *ethnic niche*. Originally studying the social phenomenon as it related to social groups and their concentration in

certain occupations in New York City[72], his definition of *ethnic niche* is fairly

straightforward: an "industry in which a group's representation is at least 150 percent of

its share of total employment."[73] Put simply, and ethnic niche describes the condition of

over-representation of one ethnic group in a certain industry or type of employment.

Within DPS, it is more than likely that this type of "over-representation" of "Locals"

exists. Unfortunately, official statistics demonstrating this point are unavailable.

Amongst the DPS employees I interviewed, all but 8 of the twenty-seven employees I

interviewed identified as "Local."[74] An *ethnic niche*, however, has implications far more

significant than its numerical definition would imply. Because an ethnic niche describes

an intense concentration of people of the same attributes (especially ethnicity), it is also

meaningful in terms of how it shapes group perceptions, expands informal social

networks, and discourages entrance into an industry by those outside the group.

The formation of an ethnic niche is at best an unclear process. Along with the

forces of social closure that restrict who is best able to attain certain positions, Waldinger

(1996) has suggested that informal immigrant networks work to funnel newcomers into

certain jobs.[75] This suggests the role of social capital (in the presence of social

"networks" that lead to opportunities for members of a group) in both creating and

---

[72] Waldinger, Roger. *Still the Promised City?* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,
1996.
[73] Waldinger, 1996; 95.
[74] With such an imbalance in the number of "Local" versus "non-Locals," it is tempting
to reject the notion of "Local" as an constructed ethnicity, instead opting for a more
literal definition such as, a *resident of a specific town, city, or region*. Yet as I continue to
demonstrate, "Local" implies much more than simply living in Hawaii: it has all the
fixings of an autonomou culture: unique forms of speech, dress, values, and hierarchies.
Distancing the concept "Local" further from "resident," not all of those who had lived the
longest in Hawaii considered themselves "Local," and two employees not originally from
Hawaii have been accepted as "Local."
[75] Waldinger, 155.

perpetuating ethnic niches. Similarly, Dadger (2005) has suggested that "hiring networks" within ethnic enclaves work to privilege members of the same ethnic group."[76] Other researchers have pointed to the racial (and/or ethnic) similarities between supervisors and employees. This last perspective invokes the concept of *cultural* capital, perhaps as an explanation for why ethnic/racial similarities have influence in the hiring process. Each of these theories is potentially significant in explaining the occurrence of what I call a "*Local* niche" in the city government. All appear potentially relevant, for the formation of an ethnic niche is a complex process that can seldom be reduced to one theory. The only thing that is certain is the physical and mental association of one ethnic group with a certain industry.

The presence of a "*Local* niche" in the city government has significant benefits for the "Locals" that work or intend to work there. In addition to the formal benefits of government work (desirable 401k benefits, "overtime" income, a straightforward work schedule, etc), its role as a "Local niche" virtually assures other advantages, such as a deep sense of workplace community. This notion is quite evident, for instance, in Dorothy's comment, "It's like everyone is *ohana* here." Waldinger argues that the culture of the group is made stronger by niche employment: "Once the niche is in place, frequent interaction in a highly concentrated niche promotes a sense of group identity. Greater attention is paid to the *boundaries that define* the niche, and the characteristics of those who can and cannot cross those boundaries. The niche, in other words, identifies

---

[76] Dadger, Anis. The Co-Ethnic Buddy System: Hiring Networks among Hispanics in the United States. 2005. Accessed via, http://www.tcnj.edu/~business/economics/documents/dadgar.thesis.tcnj.pdf on 1/28/09.

an 'us' and a 'them.'"[77] In this fashion, a niche accords a given "ethnic" group the tools

to perpetuate the niche: they are able to reinforce the identity and culture of the group

while simultaneously bringing about increased ethnic homogeneity.

It may be instructive to pause to ensure a discursive link between the "immigrant

groups" who are the primary subject of *ethnic niche* literature (Waldinger 1996, Dadger

2005, Morales 2008), and the "ethnic group" of "Locals" in Hawaii. It is true that

"Locals" do not share the same degree of racial/ethnic coherence, collective tradition, and

acute social marginalization that has characterized, say, the Latino or Chinese

immigration experience to parts of America.[78] By comparison, "Locals" do not even

have a primary language significantly different from English.   Yet at the same time,

"Locals" share importantly similarities with these ethnic groups. Like other ethnic

immigrant groups, many "Locals" are indeed non-Whites, often having come to America

via historical immigration movements from Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, etc.

Culturally, like many immigrant groups, "Locals" stand at significant distance (both real

or imagined) from White America. Therefore for both racial and cultural reasons, both

ethnic immigrant groups and "Locals" are at similar disadvantage: they do not possess

the social and/or cultural capital valued by White America, especially those contingent on

race or heritage. In sum, although I do not mean to equate the two, for the purposes of

understanding the dynamics "Local niche" in the city government we shall assume

certain parallels between "Locals" and other historic and contemporary immigrant

experiences in America.

---

[77] Waldinger, 1996, 304.
[78] See Waldinger (1996) and Morales (2006).

I have thus far provided a description of the *"Local niche"* in the city

government, as well as some of the forces acting to maintain it. I now return to flesh out

this topic through a discussion of the specific ways "Local" advantage is achieved. The

"Local" niche dynamic is transmitted through the forms of non-economic capital that

"Locals" command. Accumulation of these forms capital advantage "Locals" through

their value as coveted assets and traits. The "closing" of out-group access to occupations

characterized by ethnic niche employment is thus performed through the uneven

distribution of social and cultural capital in Honolulu. It is important to realize here that

this type of "closure" is rarely an *active* process. Unlike the process of limiting access to

skilled positions based on formal credentials – a process previously described as

derivative social exclusion – closure based on social and cultural capital is much more

subtle. However, the results of capital accumulation can be very real. Insofar as

economic, social, and capital forms of capital are said to be related, transmittable, and in

some sense, convertible,[79] all three can translate into *access* for "Locals," and

exclusion/closure for "non-Locals." I focus presently on "Local" forms of cultural

capital: forms of knowledge, skills, education, and conduct that are valued in a given

social environment. As Bourdieu states, "any given cultural competence derives a

scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital, and yields profits of

distinction for its owner."[80] He adds that, "the specifically symbolic logic of distinction

---

[79] However, "convertibility" must be treated with a disclaimer. According to Guillory (2000, 29), "Bourdieu is eager to rebut the charge of economism, which assumes that the point of all social action is simply to convert symbolic capital into material capital. His vehement rejection of rational choice theory reveals his intense theoretical investment in exploring the conditions of non-convertibility, constraints on convertibility, or resistance to convertibility."

[80] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Forms of Capital*, 86.

additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of . . . cultural capital." Let us observe how this process plays out for DPS employees.

Power, social-cultural capital, and status begin with the process of categorizing others. If we take DPS as a "Local" workplace, "Locals" hold sway over the process of who gets accepted or not. As such, identities that are considered incongruent with "Local" ones often become sources of social stigma. During her interview, Ellen said, "I think that 'Local' is often treated as a nationality by 'Locals' . . . but it is only important when useful." She criticizes the fact that "Local" is often used to *emphasize* perceived differences. "Does it ever occur to them ("Locals") that calling me Haole might also be offensive to me?" she said during the interview. "Even 'Locals' with good intentions, you know, not expecting [Haole] to be an insult say this to me. So I think there is kind of a double standard here. The "Locals" can call you a *Haole*, but if you turn around and call them any names, you're looking for trouble." As Ellie illustrates, the process of labeling someone either "Local" or "non-Local" is a process that reflects social power dynamics at work in DPS. Thomas is another "non-Local" that has at times struggled to achieve rapport and acceptance in DPS. His perspective on how being "Local" can be advantageous in the city government comes after years of working in DPS. Below is an excerpt of my interview with him:

Eli: Is being or acting "Local" important for your job?

Thomas: I'd say so . . . uhhh, you have to be able to understand and communicate "locally." You know, talk a little pidgin, and understand it. (laughs nervously). You know, there are parts of "Local" culture in the city that I have never fully understood.

E: (laughs) After this many years? Do you have any examples?

T: For instance, every now and then, there needs to be a party. I still have a hard time with this one. But I have found out that if you don't accept this, the whole workplace can get more negative. You know, there might be morale problems. But to me, this goes against work *rules*.

This excerpt is fascinating in that it shows Thomas – someone considered Haole, and "non-Local" – trying to reconcile with "Local" cultural capital. Not from Hawaii originally, Thomas realizes that even after over twenty years of work in the city government he still does not fully comprehend certain aspects of "Local" culture. Listening to him speak about the influence of "Local" culture in DPS, it was Thomas had "learned the hard way" on more than one occasion. Ironically, Thomas' comments also reveals that he still lacks true "Local" cultural capital.   His dispassionate admittance that, "every now and then there needs to be a [work] party," shows that although he now understands this fact, it is a superficial understanding. That is, unlike the "Locals" who quickly pointed to a feeling of family in the workplace, Thomas sees the role of workplace parties differently: although it boosts morale, *"it is against work rules."* Thomas largely fails to grasp that his misunderstanding about parties in DPS reveal a much deeper (and more potent) *cultural* difference with "Local" employees. It is in these types of subtle scenarios that one's accumulation of "Local" cultural capital is best expressed or denied in the city government.

Cultural capital is not always conspicuous, nor easy to verbalize. Even members of an in-group – that is, those who possess high levels of specific cultural capital – often are unable to describe its various manifestations. Bourdieu explains: "Cultural capital can be acquired to a varying extent in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore *quite unconsciously*. It always remains *marked by its earliest conditions* of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as

pronunciation's characteristic of a class or region), help to determine its distinctive value." [81] This has two major implications. For one, simply asking self-described Locals, *"what are some 'Local' traits that can be used to your advantage?"* is often met with a blank stare; many are incapable of describing and understanding the effects of "Local" cultural capital. For this reason, the most insightful responses all took the form of real-life examples that revealed specific traits and values that are considered to be keys of "Localness," of "Local" cultural capital. Here the cultural provision of food is especially prominent. Two Local employees suggested that "Localness" "is about bringing a big pot of stew to the office potluck." Kim added that this practice is especially "Local" if the stew is not only homemade, but your specialty dish. This practice is a physical representation of cultural capital insofar as it demonstrates, according to Kim, "time and care you have put into its preparation." In this way, food can be transmitted as cultural capital in both its preparation and *content*. Some foods are considered distinctly more "Local" than other foods, to the point that many "Locals" believe you can tell a "foreigner" by how he eats in Hawaii. For example, ordering Shoyu Chicken for lunch from a *plate lunch stand* holds very different connotations than buying a grilled cheese and tossed salad from Whole Foods Market. This effectively boils down to an equation of cultural capital: Shoyu chicken is perceived as a "Local" food and therefore the very *act* of ordering and eating it become a form of "Local" capital. Having a "non-Local" food, by contrast, only accentuates one's "non-Localness." Another way in which food marks cultural capital in Honolulu is through *quantity*. According to a "Local" named Kenny, "when you make food for a gathering, you always gotta bring *more than enough*.

---

[81] Bourdieu, 86.

You just can't be stingy! (laughs) Now *that's* Local." Equally important is Kenny's explanation of the opposite: "Someone not 'Local' would bring just enough for himself. You know, not take into account others." Similar to the paradigm of office parties discussed earlier, Kenny's comments reveal latent expressions of "Local" that are embedded in one's actions at a gathering or potluck. Taken together, these examples all convey the values of important "Local" values of sharing, abundance, and community. Additionally, Kenny's narrow and condescending view of "non-Local" practices accentuate this perceived cultural boundary, only to reinforce discourse on the superiority of "Local" and "Local" cultural capital.

"Locals" often struggle to pinpoint how their behaviors, attitudes, and traits can be construed as sources of advantage. In this case, it is perhaps "non-Locals" who see with increased clarity the ways in which social closure, cultural capital, and "niche" processes are stacked against them. Here, my interviews with "non-Local" city employees such as Thomas, James, Harry, and Ellie are particularly interesting. Harry, is a Caucasian white-collar city worker who moved to Honolulu ten years ago. Like many other "non-Local" employees, he has had to "adjust" to the work culture in the city government, often learning trial-by-fire:

Eli: Is it important to be or be able to act "Local" as part of your job?

Harry: Well it is certainly to your advantage. For example, [in "Local" culture] you need to have humility. In fact, I think humility is a central theme of what it means to be "Local." If you look at every political campaign here in the islands, each candidate emphasizes his "humble" beginnings. They really play that up, like they came from nothing and that is why they should be put into office. By contrast, a despised attribute is *self-flaunting* . . . If you do, in fact, assert yourself, whatever your agenda is goes to the bottom of the pile. It will be considered last. So, the local way is just "*no problem, no problem at all. Yes, I'll do*

that for you." But when you ask them, then its, "sorry, we haven't had time for that yet," which really means "fuck you!"

Certainly not one to shy away from contentious subjects, Harry focuses his response to my question on a personal trait that he feels strikes at the heart of culture in Hawaii: personal humility. The concept of "humility" or being "humble" is indeed a valued trait in Honolulu. As Harry infers, it can be a valuable asset that can help establish social network, bring about respect, *and* perhaps even help one win elections. The *absence* of humility, then, puts one at distinct disadvantage, increasing their vulnerability to social exclusion. As Harry describes this during his interview, "if you do in fact *assert* yourself, whatever your agenda is will go straight to the bottom of the pile." If acts of humility translate into valuable form of cultural capital in "Local" workplaces such as DPS, so too does *easy-goingness*. This general trait is a catch all category synonymous with being "relaxed," "low-key," and/or "unstressed," and is mentioned by "Locals" and "non-Locals" alike as a central "Local" trait. There are times when being *easy-going* is clearly to one's benefit – such is the case in embracing an in-office *party* or even stopping to *talk story*[82] (recall that Thomas as a "non-Local" was unaccustomed to this). Besides simply being a personal trait, *easy-goingness* also characterizes the *atmosphere* – the "work culture," if you will – of the city government. Thomas, who works in the "Labor Relations" wing of DPS, gave an example of the advantages of *easy-goingness* during his interview:

Eli: Could you please describe to me a successful city employee? What traits might he possess that lead to his or her success?

---

[82] In "Local" vernacular, to "talk story" means to simply chat with someone, often in a casual way.

Thomas: I'd say Daniel, one of the chiefs of Refuse, is an example of a successful employee here. The way he deals with everything is very, very low-key. He is always trying to get people to move in the same direction. Even as a supervisor, he has a reluctance to take action against people. When he deals with blue-collar workers, his way of doing things is, well, he sometimes [just] forgoes the needed [disciplinary] process.

By the accounts of Thomas as well as other employees, Daniel is a "Local," who is quite successful and well-liked in DPS. In other words, he manages quite skillfully the challenging tasks of handling disciplinary issues and remaining a popular employee. With a mixture of admiration and reproach, Thomas speaks of Daniel's way of "dealing with" problematic, "Local," employees: *he shies away from taking action against them*. Daniel essentially tip-toes around testy situations by invoking "Local" cultural capital: remaining "low-key," and avoiding any confrontations that come into conflict with the relaxed, "Local" atmosphere of DPS. Much to Thomas' distress, Daniel's method of supervising often comes at the expense of *formal* workplace rules and procedure. Yet I argue that it is *precisely* because of supervisory "method" that Daniel demonstrates a form of "Local" cultural capital valued in DPS. To state this differently, Daniel draws his very "success," popularity, and perhaps even his high *position* through prioritizing "Local" paradigm over workplace formalities.

As continues to be evidenced, maintaining "Local" cultural capital can positively influence any number of social (acceptance and respect), political (getting elected), and even economic (getting promoted) situations within the city government. These processes are in many ways self-reinforcing. As Bourdieu (1986) argues, "the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes

them possible."[83]   Given the powerful ways in which in-group solidarity is maintained, it is likely that the forms of "Local" capital that I have discussed will continue to remain very significant in the "Local" niche of city government.

Social Capital and the perpetuation of *Local Niche*

As mentioned earlier, *capital* of any kind is only as valuable as its exchange value. Although capital does not arise organically in an object, its benefits are often tangible. I have thus far explored the workings of "Local" cultural capital in Hawaii. Though significant, this alone cannot fully account for the striking over-representation of "Locals" in city work. In other words, the "Local" niche employment is further articulated through other advantages. Indeed, perhaps the most impacting asset that "Locals" have access to is characterized by *social capital*. According to Bourdieu, social capital is "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition . . . a 'credential' which entitles them to credit."[84] In simple terms, social capital describes the advantageous resource of being in the right social networks, and knowing the right people. With social capital, one has resources that can be gainfully leveraged in a given society.

Within the Honolulu city government, "Locals" hold tremendous advantages in terms of the accumulation of what is valued as social capital. This process, as I will describe it, is best represented through networking "Local-style". What sets this

---

[83] Bourdieu, P. *Forms of Capital*, 89.
[84] Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In *Knowledge Policy,* retrieved online from http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm on 4/10/09.

particular style of networking apart from widely understood notions of *networking* is the specific ways in which it incorporates "Local" values, "Local" pride, and even "Local" nativity. "Local-style" networking is also unique in the way it is so casually and ubiquitously utilized; "Locals" often achieved it while "talking story," or casually meeting someone for the first time. Regardless of the banality of the situation it occurs in, "Local" networking produces valuable social capital through the web of social connections it creates. For instance, mentioning your friendship with the head of transportation for the city government is likely to produce favorable "credit" on your application. A simple example of the dynamics of "Local" social capital as evidenced by "Local" networking goes as follows: when applying for a position in DPS -- assuming the interviewer is "Local" – you may asked about your background. Replying that you graduated from a certain High School, the interviewer may ask if you know so-and-so who is also a graduate from there. If you do in fact know that person, you have made a significant link to that interviewer that may catalyze a process of favorable review of your application. This process cannot be underestimated, nor can the specific advantages that "Locals" have in properly exploiting this source of capital. This is because relative to the small geography and population of Honolulu, someone born and raised there is likely to experience the "small world phenomenon": the tendency that everybody is connected to everybody *somehow*. Therefore when an interviewer asks some simple background questions, it is not hard to establish a personal connection with a "Local" born and raised in Honolulu. There are a myriad of different ways to accomplish this. A Hawaiian DPS employee named Lauren, provided me with an overview of how "Local" networking is accomplished: "first thing you do when you meet someone in Hawaii is

find out about their family. If you don't know them through this, you ask what High School they went to. If *still* no, you ask 'em where they live." On this comment, I had to chuckle in agreement from my own experience in DPS; my first day of work at DPS was *full* of conversation with "Local" employees varied around this theme. I found that often an introduction with an employee would not end until I knew about his brother's son who had graduated a year before me in High School. The point of all this? "It's all about finding a connection to that person," Lauren asserts. This greeting ritual therefore serves a serious purpose: *it effectively helps determines whether or not a newcomer is "Local."* Given what has already been discussed this chapter, it is clear to see how the symbolism behind this "informal" knowledge-retrieval actually contributes to the foundations of *social closure* and ethnic niche, both based on group-based inclusion and exclusion. Below is an excerpt from a conversation that I had with Ben, a "Local," on my first day of work:

Eli: Ben, very pleased to meet you! (we shake hands)

Ben: My pleasure, I am looking forward to working with you.

(We begin to walk down the hallway towards our cubicles).

Ben: (a few moments later) So . . . are you from here?

Eli: Yeah –

Ben: Oh, (laughs) couldn't tell by the way you look!

Eli: Well, yeah . . . born and raised. Oh, did I tell you I'm actually half-Japanese?

Ben: Oh yeah?? (astonished, but laughing) You look like one Haole, that's why.

Eli: uh-huh, but yeah, my mother's Japanese.

Ben: Wow, cannot tell at all! (laughs) Where'd you go high school?

Eli: Punahou.

Ben: (smiles) Hoa, you must be rich then.

Eli: (embarrassed) No no no!

Ben: You live in town then?

Eli: Yeah, Manoa side, near Manoa Market Place.

Ben: Let's see, you know Noah Sakamoto?

Eli: Oh, yeah. He was one year ahead of me.

Ben: That's my sister's kid. You remind me of him, he's *hapa* like you.[85] His father's Caucasian.

Establishing rapport with a "Local" acquaintance is a process that is buffered by both social and cultural capital. Arguably, both interact when making a connection with a "Local" in DPS. Ben and I began our first conversation stiffly, trading formalities between strangers. Both dressed in tucked-in Aloha shirts and dark slacks, we resembled two businessmen about to discuss terms of an emotionless, high-stakes business deal. Ben's inquiry about my background – the typical "Local" way of finding a connection – literally transforms our relationship. We both began to physically relax, both of us speaking with heightened confidence and joviality. Ostensibly satisfied with my "Local" pedigree, Ben visibly loosened up his posture, and began to joke around using popular stereotypes about both my high school and my deceiving physical appearance. By the end of our exchange, he had *raison d'etre* of "Local" networking: he probed a personal link to me by mentioning his nephew and my fellow Punahou High School graduate, Noah. This short exchange features an extraordinary amount of physical and symbolic

---

[85] "Hapa" is used loosely in Hawaii to refer to individuals of mixed ethnicity. In Hawaii, this most typically refers to people of half-White, half-Asian or Hawaiian background.

information exchanges. First, through the exchange of specific information, Ben was able to conclude that I indeed had "Local" roots, despite my contrasting physical appearance (as judged by the popular association of "Local" and *non-White*). His reaction to learning of my at least baseline "Localness" was evident in his eased speech, body language, and discussion topic. As I have suggested, Ben's acceptance of me as "Local" also prompted a transformation not only in our conversation, but also our very *relationship*: we had moved from acquaintances to friends, and Ben began introducing me to other employees while emphasizing my unassuming "Local" qualities! My example demonstrates the inter-relation of "Local" forms of social and cultural capital in achieving some level of in-group acceptance at DPS. Perhaps ominously, given the many ways in which Ben's attitude and behaviors changed after learning of my "Localness," this example also suggests the real exclusion of outsiders based on these same principles. Additionally, "Local" networking is made even more challenging to "non-Locals" because of its value placed on nativity. As indicated above, answering questions about where one was born, where one went to high school, and what "Local" people one is related to are virtually impossible for those not born and raised in the islands.[86] Perhaps in no other way are the characteristics that establish one as "Local" so firmly restricted from outsiders. Therefore, in terms of the analysis of subtle and indirect (in Murphy's words, *"contingent"*) forms of social closure that "Locals" invoke to keep outsiders from access to certain positions, the dynamics of "Local" networking must loom large. It is possible for a "non-Local" to exhibit "Localness" by having great affinity for "plate

---

[86] If no connection is made using these three criteria, perhaps a fourth would be *ethnicity*. To affirm my relationship with Ben – who is Japanese American --, I conveniently provided my racial/ethnic background. In the absence of someone offering up this information, it is conceivably that this could be used for further "assessment."

lunch," or spam musubis, but they will still be left empty-handed in a situation like the one I experienced with Ben.

Aside from my personal example, the social closure of the city government's "Local" niche is a process that I have qualified more on theoretical grounds than practical ones. It may be instructive here to revisit the scenario James describes in order to demonstrate "Local" exclusionary processes at work. In response to my question about why his own "credentials" where different from a "Local" named Ronald's, James said: *"*he (Ronald) was born and raised here, and he's got the roots here. So he was able to talk about stuff like, "Oh, my auntie this this this. . . . or, oh, my friend works with your buddy. That kind of stuff." When asked if he might be capable of this same dynamic, James vehemently disagreed, commenting, "and even if I wanted to, how am I going to do that? I don't have family here. I didn't go to school here. All of that. *I just don't have the connections*."

James described his inability to rise up past a certain point within the DPS hierarchy because of the comparable disadvantage he has when compared to a "Local." Although James has not been actively *excluded* from a job with the city – remember, he does occupy a white-collar post in DPS – his "foreign" identity continues to put limit his opportunities. In this way, Ellen analogy of "Local" being treated as a nationality rings true: citizens experience rights and privileges that non-citizens do not have access to. Whether this "gain" amounts to getting a key promotion (James continues to gripe that "Locals" are promoted over him) or simply making friends at the office (Daniel is one of the best-liked employees at DPS), the odds are always slanted towards those who have those with the *right kind* of social and cultural capital. Insofar as these two forms of

capital inter-relate and influence the dynamics of social closure as well as ethnic niche in the city government, "Locals" are more likely to smoothly negotiate their way both *into* and *up* the DPS ladder.

Whether or not one is "Local" is not, of course, the only factor that influences whom gets hired in DPS. Likewise, assessing one's levels of Local capital (both cultural and social) does not necessarily indicate where that person stands in the organizational hierarchy. What Local *does* do is provide is thinly veiled criteria that metaphorically doggy-ears certain resumes, sending some to the top of the pile and others to the bottom. Through accumulations, transmissions, and exchanges of cultural and social forms of "Local" capital, social space in the city government is colored in specific ways. The result, unmistakably, is the formation and maintenance of a "Local" niche.

For the reasons I have described this chapter, the Department of Public Services features an astounding demographic and cultural over-representation of "Locals," reinforced and perpetuated using specific sets of strategies. Although very significant, alas, this set of analyses reach too simple a conclusion. Aside from a few notes of exception, DPS has thus far been treated more or less as an undifferentiated socio-economic space, which I depict as a cohesive "ethnic" niche. What we must necessarily turn to now are the differences internal to the city government, namely blue and white-collar spheres of work. Though both assert "Local" forms of identity and culture, how might blue and white-collar city employees be different? How do we explain the class, ethnicity, and intra-cultural differences between them? In other words, how does the notion of "Local" operate differently on blue and white-collar work? By probing deeper into the workings of "Local" culture, it is complexity rather than simplicity that

characterizes this analytical endeavor. Viewing the dichotomous relationship between "Local" and "foreign" or "non-Local," as fixed and uniform does not fully capture the social stratification of the Honolulu city government. For one, it fails to account for the remarkable degree of socio-economic variance experienced by "Locals"; there are well-off "Locals" as well as working-class "Locals" within the government hierarchy. Therefore, the next chapter is devoted to fracturing the internal coherence of "Local," seeking instead to understand how different *types* of "Local" actors relate to each other.

Chapter 4: Class, Ethnicity, and the Stratification of "Local"

Eli: Ben, how do you yourself relate to "Local" culture?

Ben: I consider myself "Local," but some of the things I do aren't.

Eli: (puzzled) How can that be?

Ben: Well, on one hand, I was born and raised here. And I can speak "Pidgin." But I never did

quite fit in with the "Local" kids growing up. So . . . I can't really explain it, but I picked up

some mannerisms that were different from "Local." (some time later) Come to think of it, when I

look back, this is probably the reason I am able to do the kind of work I do at DPS[87]. You have to

be able to relate to "Locals," but also have the drive to speak up and push tasks through.

E: So it sounds like you need to understand two different cultures.

B: That's right. But some people would still say that makes me un-Local. (Ben laughs and

shrugs. We proceed to another topic).

- 6/25/08

About halfway through my three-month tenure at the Department of Public

Services, Ben and I had a casual conversation over lunch that changed my understanding

of "Local" identity. I had long been aware that any one "Local" person exhibited only a

small portion of the traits loosely linked with "Local" culture. For instance, one could be

---

[87] Ben is certainly in an unusual position, one that is unprecedented in the Honolulu City Government. Unfortunately, I must withhold his position title for privacy reasons. His primary tasks and projects include even coordination, facilitating meetings, and improving work groups/units dynamics in DPS.

considered "Local," even if they do not enjoy eating Opihi (a shellfish that is a Hawaiian delicacy); someone lacking *humility* could still accepted as "Local" for other reasons. However, during our conversation Ben characterizes himself *simultaneously* as Local and "un-Local." To "prove" the former, he pointed out that he was born and raised in Hawaii, and speaks pidgin. Yet he describes himself as "un-Local" by association because he did not get along with the "Local" crowd growing up. Nor does he act consistently "Local" for his job. By straddling two different cultures, Ben, as a third-generation Japanese American, eludes being any one cultural or ethnic definition. As a "Local," Japanese American of high-rank within DPS, I began to consider a relationship between his socio-economic repute and his "ambivalent" cultural identity. Without the intention of doing so, my inquiry into Ben's comments that day led me to write this chapter. It is a product of a search for diversity within "Local" as it relates inter-relates and inter-connects other forms of identity and social groupings. Namely, I focus on the two variables of class and ethnicity in this matter. In this chapter, what began with a queering of a unified "Local" culture will conclude with the formulation of two "Local" sub-groups that are both meaningful and present in the Honolulu City Government.

Before beginning, I must express my initial reservation about creating *new* categories. The placing of class, racial, ethnic, etc. social labels on any one group or practice is an understandably problematic practice, and one which causes me some apprehension. Many "Locals" do not fit squarely into the sub-groups of "Local" that I discuss. Others may disagree with some of my underlying assumptions about both

"Local" culture and Honolulu society more broadly.[88] I do acknowledge that this study is perhaps too narrow in scope to draw sweeping generalizations to all of Hawaii. I have, however, derived all my conclusions straight from first-hand data, and have liberally used quotes from DPS employees to give depth to concepts. Secondly, I believe that the differences I discuss have real consequences for the people of Honolulu as well as the study of social stratification in Honolulu.

Let us assume first that "Locals" do in fact possess any number of different racial, ethnic, and class identities. In this scenario there could potentially be any number of sub-identities within "Local," such as Local-Hawaiian, Local-Hapa, Local-middle-class and Local-poor, etc. Exhausting the individual possibilities here would be overwhelming, and academically useless. Instead, I offer a chapter that will attempt to capture the various intersections between "Local" culture, ethnicity, and class in Hawaii. Of the issue of ethnicity I ask: how does "Local" identity interplay with ethnic identity? Of social class: are there meaningful ways in which social class colors the interpretation or effects of "Local"? And finally, a question involving both ethnicity and class: are there different *kinds* of "Locals," and if so, what are some of the implications? Engaging and attempting to answer these questions will undoubtedly lead to a clearer understanding of the differential effects that "Local" has in the city government, and perhaps Honolulu more generally.

Given the extraordinary diversity of immigrant groups in Honolulu, it comes as no surprise that ethnicity deeply influences one's respective culture and identity. The

---

[88] For instance, some "Locals" I interviewed adamantly claimed that someone exhibiting some "non-Local" traits is inherently *less* "Local," perhaps not even at all.

considerable expression of ethnic diversity is everywhere in Honolulu, from annual

festivals and performances to culinary treats and linguistic phrases. Hawaii's first non-

White immigrant group was the Chinese, who arrived in the mid-1800s. These were

followed by the Portuguese[89] (late 1800s), Japanese (late 1800s), Puerto Ricans (early

1900s), and Filipinos (early 1900s). Later immigrant groups to the islands include the

Koreans and Vietnamese.[90] As a result, Hawaii features the highest "minority majority"

in the country, with a population that is 70% non-White.[91] This unique ethnic composite

has played a primary role in the historic and contemporary shaping of "Local" identity

and culture. It also engenders a fair degree of relativity into the definition, representation

and expression of "Local." It is through the lens of those who bring their own histories to

the islands as ethnic immigrants that "Local" is given its color. Take for example Lacy, a

middle-aged Filipino-American employee who emigrated from Manila 17 years ago.

During her interview she describes what "Local" culture meant to her:

Lacy: It is a feeling of being one. Being part of Hawaii. (pauses) You know, it is kind of like in

the Philippines. You feel welcome, because the people are friendly. You feel a sense of

belonging and understanding.

E: Do you have a sense of who "Locals" are in Hawaii?

L: Well, they can be all kinds! I'd say Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, and mixed people.

Contrast this to a comment made earlier by Dennis, a Japanese American:

Eli: Describe what "Local" means to you.

---

[89] Andrew Lind (1980) makes a distinction between Portuguese and other European-American immigrants because of the former's historic immigration as plantation laborers rather then owners. However, according to Lind, "by moving from the plantation to the city, and through intermarriage, it was possible for many of the Portuguese to lose their separate identity as a racial group." (Hawaii's People, p.33)

[90] Lind, Andrew. *Hawaii's People*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1955; 35-37.

[91] Data from The U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Dennis: In terms of *culture*, I'd say Japanese influenced. You know, when I was growing up my mother always used to preach "Kosai."

E: What does that mean?

D: Haha. I can't tell you exactly. But I can tell you what it meant to me. It meant that if someone else has a wedding, or a funeral in the family, you go. Even if it is a cost to you, because of your relationship with that other person, you would attend. That to me is "Local."

Or to Kenny, a "Local" employee of Samoan, Hawaiian, White background:

Kenny: "Local" to me means community . . . *trust* in one's community. We "Locals" have long believed in this, so its nothing new. To compare, on the mainland, you might hardly see your brother or sister. You might live five hours apart, or in another state where it is hard to see them. Here in Hawaii, you depend more on family. You are close with your family. . .

Eli: Describe what a "Local" family is like.

K: Well, in Hawaiian families, respect is key theme. When I was growing up, if you didn't do what your elders said, we would get disciplined. By my father, my mother, or any of the elders in the family. Back then, it was all about family stuff, and if you didn't show respect, boy, you got it! (laugh) So you know . . . I think for "Locals," they know – "Local" to "Local" -- how that kind of thing works. They understand.

Finally, a last comment on "Local" from a Portuguese-Hawaiian employee:

Eli: Robby, describe what "local" means to you.

Robby: To me it means respect one another, treat 'em with love. That is the *Hawaiian* culture to me.

The responses from each of these employees contains salient examples of how one's ethnicity – Filipino American, Japanese American, Portuguese, and Hawaiian – frames their relationship with "Local" identity and culture. Lacy used aspects of Filipino

culture to help define "Local" culture ("its kind of like the Philippines . . .." Dennis used

a Japanese value ("Kosai") to represent what he felt was a core value of "Local" culture.

Kenny described "Local" through an anecdote about his *Hawaiian* upbringing. Robby

and Kenny both used Hawaiian references to help explain "Local" culture, at times even

mixing the two up (Robby, asked to define "Local," ends his definition with "that is the

Hawaiian culture to me")! This process of projecting one's own ethnicity onto "Local" is

double-sided in implication: on one hand, it is obviously problematic to the process of

specifically defining "Local"; on the other, at least symbolically, it is fruit from the same

tree which gave birth to "Local" culture in the first place. Regardless of what judgment

one makes of the variations of "Local" dependent on ethnicity, what is certain is that

"Local" cannot be perfectly extracted from Hawaii's potpourri of ethnic backgrounds.

Instead, it sits in a unique and contradictory perch: "Local" culture provides a *unifying*

identity for the people in Hawaii that transcends class, ethnicity and race, yet it can also

simultaneously be a spotlight for these same differences, as revealed by the (culturally)

relativistic understandings of "Local."

Ethnic identity and "Localness," intersect in significant ways besides contributing

different perspectives to "Local." Unfortunately, this process is immensely difficult to

isolate and interpret, even for those intimately familiar with Hawaii's social setting. One

thing is clear about this relationship: asserting one form of identity does not preclude or

discount identifying with the other. On the contrary, there are many ways in which

"Local" actually encourages pride in one's ethnic identity. In Honolulu it is a common

practice to use terms such as "Local Japanese," "Local Chinese" or "Local Haole," that

describe hybrid-identities embracing rather than rejecting one's ethnic heritages. The

interconnection between "Local" culture and ethnicity is also revealed in popular

festivals such as "Japanese Cultural Festival," "Chinese New Year's Festival," and the

"Korean Cultural Festival." All are held on public grounds in Honolulu[92] and draw

attendance in the thousands. Each of these events is part of "Local" culture, and is

widely embraced as such. In many ways, Lacy's assertion that "Locals," "can be all

kinds!" rings most true through the diverse cultural celebrations that are held annually in

Honolulu. Similarly, a "Local" DPS employee named Jeremy offered this about "Local"

culture: "what you have to understand that everyone is an immigrant to these islands at

some point. So we have really developed a culture based on the *understanding* of

cultural difference." Jeremy's perspective is also consistent with popular readings (both

by media and residents) of Hawaii as an ethnic "melting pot" and "multicultural

paradise."[93] Insofar as scholarly approaches to studying race and ethnicity in Hawaii

tend to focus on the influence of "plantation-era"[94] race relations between white

supervisor and non-white field laborers, they tend to ignore or downplay inter-ethnic

difference. As an implicit sign of unity, such discourse suggest harmonious ethnic

relations characterized by "the use of pidgin English, the styles of dress, food, and

entertainment . . . modes of affiliative behaviors, [and] an open and friendly attitude with

friends and strangers."[95] Other examples of articles that point towards ethnic harmony in

---

[92] Although each of these festivals is arranged and funded through private institutions.
For example, Japanese Cultural Festival is sponsored by the Japanese Cultural Center of
Hawaii.
[93] Okamura, "No Asian Americans in Hawaii." And Leong (1997), p.33-42.
[94] Era spanning roughly from mid-1800s to early 1900s, a period that featured continuous
immigration of various ethnic groups to work in the plantations.
[95] Ogawa, Dennis. "Kodomo No Tame Ni" (1978), 195. Cited in Leong (1997), 34-35.

Hawaii are aptly titled, "Hawaii's Ethnic Rainbow" (J. Griffiths, 2004), and "Look to Hawaii for Answers to Race" (R. Takaki, 1998).

In part, "Local" culture does represent a pan-ethnic community, perhaps with the exception of *Haoles*. However, this is entirely different from suggesting the socioeconomic equality between them. Recently, a handful of scholars have begun to criticize the "multi-cultural paradise" discourse as obscuring or downplaying social inequality in Hawaii. Most recently, Jonathan Okamura (2008) has led this wave of critique. Okamura writes:

The idea of cultural blending, sharing and mixing in Hawaii is not a particularly precise or insightful way to approach understanding the *implications* of local culture. The tradition of tolerance allows for Hawaii's people to avoid acknowledging and confronting the institutionalized inequality among ethnic groups and the resultant tensions and hostilities that are generated.[96]

Okamura effectively argues that *ethnicity* is the "primary structural principle of social relations" in Hawaii, as well as the axis around which inequality is diffused throughout society.[97] Towards this end, Okamura acknowledges and embraces parallels to contemporary race theory in the U.S.[98] However, Okamura views ethnicity as more significant in Hawaii because, "the groups that comprise island society are socially constructed as *ethnic* rather than *racial* groups."[99] Correspondingly, he shows how socio-economic privilege in Hawaii falls along ethnic lines: the statistic of average family

---

[96] Okamura, "Why Are There No Asian Americans in Hawaii: the Continued Significance of Local Identity." Social Process in Hawaii, vol.35 (1994):164.
[97] Okamura, Jonathan. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*. Temple University, 2008. P.5.
[98] Okamura states his indebtedness to Omi and Winant (1986) especially, for their seminal work *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s.*
[99] Okamura, ibid, p.6.

income is easily led by Chinese Americans, Japanese American, and Whites, with Native

Hawaiians, Samoans, and Filipinos falling at the bottom.[100] The latter three groups also

maintain the lowest levels of educational attainment of any ethnic group in Hawaii.[101]

Given the apparent socio-economic hierarchy of ethnic groups, one may well wonder at

how the perception of a unified, "Local" culture can be maintained. As I found during

my research with "Local" subjects, the tension here is apparent. Most "Locals" are well-

aware of this ethnic inequality. Comparing the struggling Hawaiians to the prosperous

Japanese, "Local" employees like Jeremy could only feebly suggest that members of the

latter group "work harder," or "care more about education." Yet an unanswered question

remains: how has the striking socio-economic inequality between ethnic groups been

looked past by the rhetoric of a *unified*, "Local" culture? Given the unequal conditions in

Hawaii, one would guess that concern over social inequality would be a much more

relevant discussion than one of social unity. Yet overwhelmingly, "Locals" speak of

"Local" culture as pan-ethnic, communal, and *homogenous*, discourse that blatantly

ignores ethnic inequality within this group.[102] This points to a perverse relationship

between "Local" forms of identity and ethnic ones in Honolulu: in order to coherently

perceive a "Local" culture, one needs to downplay or even blatantly ignore the striking

ethnic inequalities that divide and hierarchize its members. Instead of looking inward,

many "Locals" only show resistance to one group, "*non-Locals*."

---

[100] Korean Americans are strikingly split along gender lines: Males average above the medium income in Hawaii, yet females are
[101] Okamura, ibid, p.52.
[102] Recall that in chapter three I explained that "Locals" tend to portray the homogeneity of "Local" culture. In my analysis I contest this notion.

Education, in terms of quality and highest level achieved, undoubtedly plays a large role in the perpetuation of inequality amongst ethnic groups. Okamura devotes an entire chapter of his newest book to this very subject. He explains, "public education contributes to the institutionalization of inequality among island ethnic groups and the role of the state government in maintaining educational inequality."[103] He argues that through the under-funding of public education (including levels of financial aid for needy University of Hawaii students) Hawaii's educational atmosphere has become class-divided: well-off families are able to send their children to superior private schools while working-class families are forced to choose amongst inferior, under-funded public schools. This in turn perpetuates social stratification based on socio-economic class. And since certain ethnic groups fall along the socio-economic hierarchy in different places, we must view ethnicity, class, and education as three variables all inextricably linked.

The reality of ethnic inequality is also striking in the Department of Public Services. According to Jeremy, "the hierarchy in the city is, Japanese on top, followed by Caucasians, then other Asians like the Chinese. Then down a few levels, you get Filipinos and Hawaiians. Even at the entry level, you are lucky to have one brown skin[104] person working an office job in the city!" Jeremy, himself in a respectable position within DPS, laments the plight of many fellow Native Hawaiians. It is not, however, as if Native Hawaiians are somehow excluded from obtaining public service work. Rather, it is that Native Hawaiians are not present in desirable, *white-collar positions* ("office jobs") in the city. In this way, despite being a workplace that maintains

---

[103] Okamura, ibid, 64.
[104] By "brown skin," Jeremy refers primarily to Hawaiians, Samoan/Tongans, and Filipinos.

the benefits of niche employment for "Locals," it is in their position within the city

hierarchy where ethnicity shows its influence. Here the demographics of DPS

employment are perhaps better understood broken down across blue and white-collar

constituencies.   In Honolulu, White-collar management and business work (both public

and private) is dominated by Japanese-Americans.[105] This is also the case in DPS with

few exceptions: top white-collar positions – those featuring higher pay and prestige -- are

disproportionately occupied by Japanese Americans.[106] Blue-collar work, by contrast,

features an over-representation of members of ethnic groups with lower socio-economic

status. According to information from the 2000 Census, Okamura (2008) points out that,

"in blue-collar, occupational categories, we find greater representation by Native

Hawaiians, Filipino Americans, and Samoans."[107] As an exception to this rule, a female,

part-Native Hawaiian employee named Lauren provided me with some perspective

during our conversation:

Eli: Let's talk about ethnic groups in Hawaii briefly. You know, when I look around the ENV

office place, it appears pretty dominated by Japanese. Do you have any thoughts on this?

Lauren: Yeah, oh I notice! (sarcasm evident, she laughs) I think it has to do with two things. For

one, you are seeing these Japanese in high positions because of education. You need a degree to

get certain jobs, and Japanese have the education to get that.

E: What of Hawaiians?

---

[105] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. Cited in Okamura, J. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 44-47.

[106] Of the same 8 top positions in DPS mentioned earlier, 5 are Japanese American as of December 2008.

[107] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. Cited in Okamura, J. Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii, 44-47.

L: Yeah, its pretty sad. Hawaiians are stuck at the bottom of the social ladder here. They don't have the education – take Kamehameha schools[108] for example. When you look at a yearbook, the kids look more Asian and Haole than Hawaiian now.

E: but isn't it a school for Hawaiians?

L: But just take a look at the last names. You'll see Nakata, Smith, Johnson, Leong, all these Japanese, Haole, and Chinese names. Hardly one Hawaiian name. These kids are still part-Hawaiian, but they are only the upper-class ones, because not all families can afford Kamehameha. It has turned into a school for Hawaiian *elite*.

E: Wow, that's really interesting, and sad. It reminds me of the ethnic makeup of Punahou (School), were I graduated from. Entire classes these days are dominated by Japanese, Haoles and Chinese.

L: Because that's who has money in Hawaii.

A graduate of Kamehameha Schools herself, Lauren grimly describes how even a school intended to explicitly benefit Native Hawaiians has been usurped by Hawaii's wealthy social groups. As Bourdieu asserts, the "educational and job opportunity structures are such that individuals of lower-class origin have a very reduced chance of securing professional or managerial jobs."[109] Lauren is well aware of the connection between education, degree attainment, and occupation, and is quick to point out how "Asians and Haoles" are reaping benefits while Hawaiians continue to be *stuck* at the bottom." Judging by her comments, Lauren would likely agree that rather than being incapable or uninterested in bettering their socio-economic condition, many Hawaiians

---

[108] Kamehameha Schools are a prominent group of privately-owned K-12 schools that require students to be of part-Hawaiian blood in order to gain entrance. Once accepted, students enjoy subsidized tuition provided by the Bishop Estate, a group with sizeable land interests throughout Oahu that date back to the Hawaiian monarchy.
[109] Bourdieu, P., cited in Macleod, p.15.

are simply unable (i.e. lack the resources) to obtain the same social and educational opportunities as those ethnic groups of higher-class. The fact that employees often occupy predictable positions in the white and blue-collar spheres of city work based on their ethnicity remains a cause of concern in Honolulu.

The associations between class, ethnicity, and job position in Honolulu can be quite striking, leading to the formation of many well-known stereotypes. Many times, these stereotypes involve two or more of these variables. Many social groups, places, foods, slogans, and behaviors are "typed" in ways that reveal just how naturalized phrases such as "the Filipino *yardman*," "the rich Haole," or "the lazy, *poor* Hawaiians," have become in Honolulu. Nowhere is this problematic association between class, ethnicity, and disposition clearer than in instances where these variables are treated as virtually synonymous. Take, for instance, my own "icebreaking" conversation with a "Local," part-Filipino, part-Japanese employee.

Doreen: (to me) So what high school you went?

Eli: I went to Punahou. Graduated in '05.

D: (jokingly) Ho, excuse me *Haole* boy. Your family must be rich!

Doreen meant no harm in her comments. Rather, it was just her way of playfully joking around with a new co-worker. But perhaps made even more significant because of the casualness of it all, her association between wealth, ethnicity, and place certainly suggests just how deeply embedded inequality in Honolulu is.[110] In my case, Doreen

---

[110] It might also be easy to read a social divide between these DPS employees and myself; perhaps even an assumption by the former about me being "non-Local" due to the high school I attended. This may hold some truth, but I still speculate that judging from the relative banality and brevity of the above excerpt, the DPS employees I talked with still (at least partially) accept my "Localness." By contrast, a non-Local is often denied the opportunity to "laugh-off" their undesirable qualities.

(and many others in the past!) "typed" my high school as both a sign of *Whiteness* and upper-class wealth. Interestingly, these connections convey the specter of inequality *without actually contesting them.* Social and ethnic inequality both in the city government as well as Honolulu is so naturalized that it is often reduced to banality through ethnic humor and naturalized stereotypes. Another personal experience of mine in Honolulu also demonstrates this. Last summer while working at a local-style fast-food chain called *Loco Moco Drive-In*, I was approached by one of my co-workers on an especially slow day. Her name was Leilani, and we quickly struck up conversation, in which I found out she was sixteen years old, of mixed-Polynesian descent, and in her junior year at the nearby public high school. We shared a laugh about the challenges of working the cash register (it was her first time as well as mine), as well as her dislike for "Local" high school boys ("they are too immature," she declared). Given our rapport, I was surprised by her straight-faced question well into our conversation: "So, why do you work here, anyway? Someone like you, ya' know, shouldn't you be working somewhere way nicer than this?" Humored, I asked her why she thought this. She responded, "Well, you're just not like us (pointing at the two other employees) you know . . ." Leilani was suggesting that I was somehow *too-qualified* to be working alongside her and my other co-workers! Immediately realizing the awkwardness of this conversation, I shrugged feebly and hastily changed the topic. In light of this current thesis project, looking back on this exchange strikes me as quite revealing. Although I did not realize at the time, Leilani had drawn several conclusion about me that to compelled her to ask the question she did. Although I can only guess which traits she found most salient, it was clear to her that a *Haole* (appearance-wise, that is) from Punahou School, who was dressed in a

collared shirts and slacks and spoke "grownup" English did not belong in a working-class job. Leilani's comments revealed her implicit conceptions about privilege in Hawaii, one which ostensibly differentiated her from me. She understood, albeit indescriptively, that working a cash register in Hawaii is *not* what "upper"-class people do; working a cash register is also not what *Haoles* have to do. To my amusement, this fact made it impossible to convince Leilani a few weeks later that this job was, in fact, the only one I could find that summer.

It is difficult to guess, retrospectively, whether or not Leilani accepted me as a "Local" or not. Since I never asked her (this would be viewed as conceited), it is impossible to be sure. But it is my contention that our earlier rapport (in which we chatted about growing up in Hawaii) was a product of her tacit conception of me as "Local." In light of this, the critical juncture between the friendliness of our early conversation and Leilani's later question is indicative of the striking *intra-Local* differences that are exacerbated by ethnic and class inequalities. Sadly, even at her relatively young age, Leilani would likely be able to describe the socio-economic hierarchy in Hawaii, one that has produced stereotypes suggestive of deep ethnic and class disparities *amongst* "Locals."

In Honolulu (perhaps even all of Hawaii), stereotypes of different social groups are omnipresent. As stereotypes go, each contains the seed of truth and ample embellishment. Although stereotypes are often conveyed as innocuous, playful, and superficial, they have real implications. In Foucauldian terminology, they are powerful forms of discourse that contribute to the process of ongoing social stratification. As *consistently* described by my DPS coworkers, a typical white-collar city employee is

Japanese, educated, and middle-aged.[111] By contrast, the image of a blue-collar city

worker is "brown skinned" (Jeremy's earlier reference to Hawaiians, Filipinos and other

Polynesians), dressed in t-shirts and tattered jeans, speaking in heavy pidgin, and

minimally educated. These stereotypes correspond to two distinct types of "Locals"

within DPS. As noted earlier, these stereotypes correspond to white-collar and blue-

collar workers, respectively. They also help to maintain the symbolic distinction between

them, each etched with classed and ethnic connotations. Just as someone exhibiting

"non-Local" characteristics (outspoken, self-serving, loud, *Haole*) experiences some

degree of discrimination in DPS, stereotypes of blue and white collar workers also serve

as powerful discourse suggesting the correct "place" of different "Locals" within "city"

employment. This intra-"Local," stereotyped group divide is the topic I wish to turn to

next.

In critiquing a generalized "Local" identity, I do not wish to undermine the prior

analysis of this thesis. "Local" remains a powerful cultural construct with boundaries

protected by social closure, forms of social and cultural capital, and the dynamics of

ethnic niche within the city government. Each of these processes relies on the important

divide between "Local" and "non-Local" group constructions. That said, the effects of

"Local" are substantially different for certain groups and situations. I argue that the

reason for this is the extraordinary class, wealth, and ethnic differences amongst "Locals"

in Honolulu. As a result, "Locals" do not have one uniform "look"[112] (skin color and/or

---

[111] Specifically stated as such by Ben, Harry, and Dorothy.

[112] However, many people in Hawaii – Local or non-Local alike – will immediately
provide you with popular cues for identifying Locals through appearance. Comments of
these types mentioned Locals to be "dark-skinned," "non-white," "dressed down," and
"wearing slippers and t-shirts, or simply casual clothes." My assertion that there is no

outer-wear), class conscious, or value-system. Discussing "Local" as it inter-relates with ethnicity and class bring the varying complexions of "Local" into better focus. Far from discarding "Local" versus "non-Local" differences, we need to *additionally* observe how socio-economic space *within Local* is differentiated. Given the tangible differences between "*Local"* sub-groups in "the city," how is the perception of unity preserved? More importantly, how do Locals *themselves* discuss their differences in ways that makes sense? The next discussion will tackle such question by providing a tentative framework to explain the meaningful differences between "Locals."

"Bilinguals versus Super-Locals"

Given its lack of fixidity as a term, concrete ways of sub-typing "Local" people or culture will never be a simple process. The way "Local" is used and defined is often relative to personal situation, background, ethnicity, and a whole host of other variables. Fortunately, I have the advantage of mapping "Local" onto fixed workspaces within the city government, allowing me a steadfast anchor around which to situate analysis. As described this chapter, "Local" DPS employees are split into two "camps" of work: blue-collar versus white-collar city employment. In this section, I take this distinction a step further: I go beyond mere descriptive differences to engage the ways "Local" discourse *operates* differently on "Locals" in each of the two types of work. For the purposes of

---

one Local "look" seems at ends with these comments. The point of this statement is instead to rightly depict diversity within the construct, noting that Locals come from many different backgrounds; over three months, I interviewed Locals that were both well-off and working class, educated and uneducated, and Asian American, Hawaiian and Caucasian.

analysis, I have labeled these two "Local" sub-groups: *Bilinguals* and *Super Locals*. I intend to illuminate the differences between them throughout the rest of this chapter.

The term "bilingual" literally refers to the ability to speak two different languages. Yet implicitly, it also holds other connotations: someone who is bilingual likely has intimate knowledge of two different cultures, places, and perhaps even values, parenting, expressing feelings, etc. Therefore, I have picked the term *Bilingual* for its reference to those unique individuals who are comfortably able to "code-switch" between two different forms of expression and language (in other words, *culture*). Applied to the social microcosm of Honolulu, a *Bilingual* "Local" literally defines to someone who can speak in both "Local" tongue – Pidgin English – as well as standard English. However, the term *Bilingual* has even deeper reference: someone who has the ability to effectively maintain both "Local" and "non-Local" identities. That is, someone who is able to "code-switch" advantageously depending on the needs of the situation or environment. Dorothy is an example of such an employee. When I asked her to describe how "Local" influences her (white-collar) job, she said, "you need to be able to tailor the way you talk to fit the situation. The way I see it, 'Local' is a *skill*, so it is to your disadvantage if you don't have that skill." The idea of viewing "Local" traits as social skills is an intriguing one. Not surprisingly, it is a mentality expressed primarily by *Bilingual* "Locals": over half the white-collar employees I interviewed described "Local" in this fashion. There is an unspoken understanding here that each of these white-collar employees subscribe: an "authentic" "Local" identity can still be realized despite one's assertions of alternate identities at different points in time. This kind of "situational identity" thus characterizes *Bilinguals* as a sub-group. Dorothy elaborates on this during her interview:

Eli: Dorothy, could you give an example of a successful DPS employee?

Dorothy: (pauses for a moment) I'll say Doreen. She gets the job done, she's very conscientious, and gets along with everyone. She is very appreciative too. She looks out for others, and is always giving back. So *she is very "Local"* . . . you know she can even talk pidgin!

E: (impressed) I didn't know that . . .

D: At the same time, she can be very *professional*, and do *things that are not really "Local"* when she needs to.

Dorothy's description of Doreen is fascinating, and a perfect example of the advantages of situational identity. Doreen essentially is capable of asserting different forms of cultural capital depending on the needs of the situation. According to Dorothy, Doreen knows how to be "very 'Local'" – she speaks pidgin, is appreciative and humble, gives back to the group – while simultaneously capable of being "*professional*." On the latter trait, I assume that Dorothy conflates Western business culture with workplace "professionalism." Insofar as these traits are considered opposite "Local" culture, Doreen does in fact exhibit cultural "bilingualism." As a complement to the advantages of asserting "Localness," the advantages of asserting command over "non-Local," professional skill sets are apparent in white-collar city work: the influence of "Local" culture in the workplace does not negate the importance of business professionalism in government work. As a white-collar employee described, "you talk to different people differently. Like when we speak with the Mayor's Office versus when we gotta communicate to the Blue Collar guys." With this in mind, "code-switching" can be seen as an incredible asset, especially in white-collar work. It is therefore the defining feature of *Bilinguals*.

"Local" *Bilinguals* have the capacity to effortlessly shift between forms and traits of identity that will be best received, depending on the environment. "Locals" who

exhibit bilingual skills are primarily *white-collar* employees. Because of this fact it is tempting to draw up a causal relationship between "bilingual" ability and more desirable white-collar work. This logic is hindered by other factors at work; it is difficult to unravel the independent influence of ethnicity (remember, white-collar work is heavily *Japanese American*) and social class (white-collar workers tend to be wealthier, hold college degree, and firmly middle-class) from that of Local "bilingualism." Thus, it is unclear whether being "bilingual" itself accords a unique form of *capital* to its owner. More likely, the intersection of ethnicity and class produces valued bilingual abilities. That is, assume for a moment that social class membership imparts forms of social and cultural capital valued in a white-collar business setting. Then for those who have grown up "Local," in a *middle-class* family, the skill of "bilingualism" is a likely by-product. This concept will be further discussed. For now it suffices to say that whatever direction the arrow of causality points, discussing "Local" *beyond* its role as a fixed identity and *towards* its role as a forms of cultural capital is a framework worth elaborating. If "Local" bilingualism is a distinct advantage, we need to push forth in understanding why white-collar city workers appear to exhibit this skill in much greater concentration than blue-collar workers.

Doreen is a middle-aged, female, and third-generation Japanese American. She grew up in a middle-class family in a suburb of Honolulu, and attended the University of Hawaii. Being *born and raised* in Honolulu by family with the financial means to secure education as well as other social and cultural opportunities for Doreen shows its effects today: Doreen is now fully *Bilingual*. The "opportunities" that she had growing up find their clearest expression as different forms of social and cultural capital in the white-

collar "Local" workplace. *Bilinguals* have learned how to "convert," in the Bourdieuan

sense, "Local" forms of capital to social, political and economic advantage. They appear

cognizant that "Local" is, as Ellen alluded to, "important when it is useful." Bilinguals

are therefore able to effectively network, advance, and empower themselves through their

joint command of both "Local" and "non-Local"[113] forms of capital. Take the skill of

being able to speak both "Pidgin" and standard forms of English proficiently. According

to Bernstein and Heath, "class membership generates distinctive forms of speech patterns

through family socialization." They add that middle-class individuals learn to use

"elaborate" linguistic codes, while those of working-class use "*restricted* codes." [114]

Middle-class "Locals" do in fact learn the elaborate linguistic codes of formal American

English. Yet many also master additional linguistic codes, namely "Pidgin," while

growing up in Honolulu. Here this bilingualism becomes a class symbol in and of itself.

The reason for this is social flexibility; being able to use "Local" as a skill. In certain

settings (e.g. "the Mayor's office), the use of formal English reveals one's middle-class

status. Yet in Local-dominated settings, one's acceptance is often buffered by the fluent

use of pidgin-English. "Bilinguals" have therefore arrived upon ideally advantageous

social flexibility, one indicative of a middle-class upbringing as well. As we shall see,

the condition of *Super-Locals* deviates in significant ways from the lofty perch of

Bilinguals in the city government.

     "Super-Local" is a distinction that in many ways is characterized by "restricted"

codes, rather than complex, dual, or bilingual ones. Unlike *Bilingual* "Locals," *Super-*

---

[113] "Non-Local" in this context is synonymous with western Business culture, a
connection Dorothy mentioned earlier.
[114] Bernstein and Heath, "Linguistic Cultural Capital." Cited in Macleod, Jay. "Aint No
Makin It", p.16.

Locals cannot code-switch proficiently. They are, in a sense, missing the socio-cultural *tool* that would allow for the leveraging of either "Local" or "non-Local" capital. Perhaps as a result, *Super-Locals* in DPS are primarily blue-collar, working-class "Locals."

The use of the term "super Local" to describe a sub-group of "Local" people demands explanation. Over my three months conducting research at the Department of Public Services, hardly a day passed that I didn't hear an employee – mostly white-collar ones – use the term "*super Local*." It was most frequently used to describe any person, action, mentality, and/or speech perceived to be at the extreme "Local" end of the "Local"/"non-Local" spectrum. For example, Ben used "super Local" to describe the "guys down at the blue-collar yard." He was referring to the blue-collar workers at a trash collections yard he had earlier described as, "rough and unruly, overrun by gang-like social cliques," and "with no sense of discipline." As in Ben's case, the term "super Local" is used primarily in the white-collar office at DPS. It most often refers to the "Local" traits perceived to be in the blue-collar world. Although not always used this way, "super Local" also provides middle-class "Locals" with a specific way to refer to undesirable or unsightly dimensions of "Local" culture. Viewed in this way, that which comprises "super-Local" is often stigmatized as the veritable "black sheep" of the righteous "Local" flock. It is the *extreme* (and thus negative) form of many heralded "Local" traits. For instance, as white-collar "Local" employees use the term, the "super-Local" take on "selflessness," is *lack of aspiration*; loyalty to one's friends transforms

into *corrupt favor*; "easy-goingness" becomes *laziness*; and casual, "Local" attire[115]"

becomes *dirty, tattered clothing*. For a "Local" to describe another person as "super-

Local," is therefore a double-edged sword: on one hand, it affirms their "Localness." On

the other, it implies that person's *uncultured* and perhaps *undesirable* traits.[116] The

characterization of someone as "super Local" is therefore a loaded, though *not* damning,

reference. The great irony of literal phrase "super Local" is that it effectively means one

is *too "Local"* to reap the benefits that come from asserting a "Local" identity. Unable to

actively profit from being "Local" yet still at odds with "non-Local" forms of identity and

capital, *super-Locals* are left with little social advantage and even less access to cultural

and social capital.

Given the nature of this discussion, it comes with little surprise that *super-Local* is

also wrought with subtexts of *class* and *ethnicity*. This is the case both in terms of who is

declared such, as well as *who does the determining*. Addressing the former, *super-Local*

almost always denotes those in the working-class, blue-collar world. On the latter,

"super-Local" is a term used by white-collar employees to describe the actions, speech

patterns, and bodies of many blue-collar "Locals." In this way, although the term is

literally an affirmation of "Localness," it also is a mechanism for social stratification.

Like *Bilingual*, it also takes on important ethnic distinctions. That is, insofar as the

dynamic of ethnic inequality is etched into the distribution of blue and white-collar jobs

---

[115] "Aloha attire" does not in itself mean "casual wear." However, relative to the social occasions for which "aloha attire" is considered standard dress code in Hawaii (funerals, weddings, business lunches), it represents a far more casual form of dress than its Western counterpart.

[116] However, it must be noted that the term "super Local," is rarely used as a conspicuous insult. Saying to someone "ho, that guy is super-Local," while implying certain traits that person possesses, is not the same as saying someone is blatantly stupid, lazy, or dirty.

in DPS, the categorization of *super-Locals* falls disproportionately on Filipinos, Samoans, and Hawaiians (the three groups with an overrepresentation in blue-collar Labor in Honolulu). In this way, the differential marking of DPS employees as *super-Local* or *Bilingual* is painted with ethnic and class perceptions. Again, what is fascinating about these significant differences within the umbrella of "Local" is that they are often downplayed in favor of the latter term. When one visits the city government (or perhaps Honolulu more generally), it is not the residue of social stratification that is on display. Instead, disseminating from signs, publications, and even many employees themselves is only the uncritical rhetoric of "Local," stressing notions of community, care for one another, and cordial social relations.

A brief summary of the two categories of "Locals" I have described is necessary before moving on. *Bilinguals* are those able to *situationally* deploy both "Local" and "non-Local" forms of identity (via language, dress, grooming, body language, etc). *Bilinguals* are overwhelmingly middle-class, educated white-collar employees from ethnic groups positioned high in the social hierarchy of Hawaii. By contrast, *super-Local* is a distinction reserved for the people, or characteristics thought to represent extreme and often undesirable aspects of "Local" culture and identity. *Super-Local* tends to be a distinction used most often by white-collar employees in reference to the stuffs of the blue-collar world.   Both terms are subsumed under the broad construct of "Local," yet are meaningful distinctions that further articulate the intersection of class, ethnicity, and social hierarchy in Honolulu. With the necessary framework established, I now turn to discussion on the different ways in which "Local" discourse actively shapes the life-chances of its members.

"Local" imprints: Masculinity, "Ceiling," and Working-Class Culture

Until now, "Local" has been described as a tangible form of culture and identity that can be *used* advantageously by those with the right kind of access. Although this process is nuanced in ways that suggest that "Locals" do not all profit evenly from "Local" capital, the construct of "Local" has nonetheless been described as a mechanism that can be consciously and strategically utilized. However, there is more to the workings of "Local" than meets the eye. As Foucault would readily agree, cultural discourse operates in many unconscious ways, beyond the control of specific actors. Drawing on this notion, in this section I describe how "Local" culture differently shapes and socializes its two sub-groups – *Bilinguals* and *super-Locals* -- in ways that perpetuate class inequality. Addressing this issue puts the ideas, conceptions, and opinions of "Locals" themselves back in center-frame, since much of the analysis draws connections between these "Local" discourse and the various forms of social inequality that exists in Honolulu. In continuing with the theme of this chapter, I will begin by discussing the similarities and differences in perceptions of "Local" between *Bilinguals* and *super-Locals*.

Super-Local and *Bilingual* share the fact that both consider themselves to be "Local." Importantly, they also mutually accept each other as such. Given their professed cultural commonalities, it is quite striking how different the two groups' life chances are: nearly all *Bilinguals* are of higher class, and enter into white-collar work; *super-Locals* are much more working-class. I assert that one of the primary explanations for this has to do with the differential ways in which "Local" culture frames the values,

aspirations, and ideas of social "place" for members of these two groups. *Bilinguals* view "Localness" as a valuable *aspect* of their identity but allow it to coexist *alongside* other cultural "identities." By assuming multiple identities, Bilinguals are able to invoke situational ethnicity that can yield them advantages in different settings. Put simply, Bilinguals capitalize on *profitable cultural deployment*. By comparison, *Super-Locals* for the most part do not either possess or utilize different forms of cultural capital. They tend to exhibit attitudes, appearances, and skill sets that are under-valued or completely ignored by the higher classes. I argue that their cultural *disassociation* from the physical and mental traits of the American middle-class inhibits their ability to advance into occupations that place value on those traits. As a result, the version of "Local" culture subscribed to by *super-Locals* reinforces and reproduces their working-class status in Honolulu.

Both *super-Locals* and *Bilinguals* agree on many aspects of "Local" culture. They both readily emphasize the importance of community, aloha, and easy-goingness amongst other values. Yet there is one value stressed by every *super-Local* I interviewed that not nearly as much by white-collar, Bilingual group: *respect*. At first, this difference did not strike me as at all unusual: having respect and being respectful is a universal theme shared by many if not all major cultures of this world; it was even mentioned this way by a few *Bilingual* interviewees. Yet it became apparent over multiple interviews that *super-Locals* spoke of the concept of "respect" with heightened emphasis, as well as specific meaning. For *super-Locals*, a central expression of "Local" culture is about gaining, earning, and maintaining the respect of your coworkers. As I continued my interviews with blue-collar super-Locals, it became clear to me that respect is indeed one

of the *central goals* of the workplace. Significantly, "gaining respect" surpassed even

that of getting promoted or advancing one's career. Kenny, a blue-collar sewer

repairman, illustrated this quite clearly when I asked him to give me an example of a

"successful" DPS employee. His response to the question – I had not *defined*

"successful," leaving it open for interpretation – is interesting:

Eli: Think of a successful city employee. What "local" factors do they possess?

Kenny: I'd say Joe Kealoha, even though he's not here anymore. He had the respect of the men.

Eli: How do you know?

K: People knew that they needed to stay in order when he was around. But at the same time, he

was definitely "Local" . . . he was like a dad to us.

Another *super-Local* named Roger also had a very interesting take on "respect" in

the blue-collar world. Roger is a city garbage collector who was promoted to a

supervisory position two years ago. When I interviewed him he had just been given a

rare opportunity to relocate to the white-collar DPS office-building – an exceedingly rare

circumstance for someone from the blue-collar world without a higher-education degree.

When talking about the blue-collar yard he used to work in, Roger said:

Roger: over there in the yard, "Local" is more "mokey"[117]. . and the principle of respect is upheld

very strongly. Maybe this is because of the lack of schooling or upward mobility, you know,

'cause its all about gaining respect over there. (pause) I think there are two sides to "Local." The

first is the group that has a hope for the future. The second, they have no hope for the future.

And a lot of blue-collar Hawaiians and Polynesians are like this.

---

[117] A "Moke" is a slang term for someone tough, physical, and generally of Hawaiian or mixed
ancestry. "Mokey" culture is thus a loose term that characterizes any activity or behavior
perceived to be "Moke" culture.

Roger, like Kenny, points to the salience of peer respect in the blue-collar world. In his explanation of why respect is so prominent, Roger also adds, "maybe this is because of the lack of schooling or upward mobility." Stuck in a job with scarce opportunity for financial gain or advancement (recall from chapter 3 that there are few opportunities for promotions in the blue-collar world), the accumulation of gaining respect, that is, social honor, garners newfound importance. Through respect, blue-collar laborers are able to re-inscribe meaning to their lowly occupation in ways that are not predicated on salary or political power. The result of this dynamic on the culture and worldview of *super-Locals* cannot be overlooked or underestimated. Through the privileging of "gaining respect," *Super-Locals* have created their own variation on "Local" culture. And insofar as "gaining respect" displaces other aspirations such as economic advancement or position attainment, it works insidiously to de-emphasize upward economic mobility. Lastly but perhaps most importantly, the unique arrangement of values that *super-Locals* profess stunts the abilities of those socialized into this sub-culture (especially offspring) into working-class mentalities as well. Here, it is not as if "gaining respect" is an inherently negative trait. Instead, the working-class socialization of *super-Locals* occurs in part through what is *de*-values in the process: middle-class aspirations that prioritize professionalism and self-advancement.

Jay Macleod and Paul Willis are two leading sociologists who have done similar ethnographic work on class reproduction. Both offer perspectives in interpreting the situations of Roger, Kenny, and *super-Locals* as a working-class group. Says Macleod, "people do not simply respond to the socioeconomic pressures bearing down on them with passivity and indifference. The cultural level is marked by contestation, resistance,

and compromise.[118]" He explains that subordinate groups can and do produce alternative cultural forms containing meanings endemic to the working class.[119] This is precisely what is found in the case of *super-Locals,* specifically in the meaning they attribute to "gaining respect." Because *super-Locals* are not in a position to succeed in Western, middle-class culture, they resist the latter by constructing new cultural logics. Unfortunately in the process of doing so, *super-Locals* self-inscribe additional barriers to their own economic advancement and upward mobility.

In Macleod's text, *'Aint No Makin' It*, the "Hallway Hangers" are revealed as a high-school social clique with grim life chances. As they swashbuckle their way through high school frustrating teachers and dismissing overachievers, Macleod observes that school is treated as "a realm in which to be bad and tough are the main criteria for respect," and conventional cultural norms are reversed.[120] In other words, this social group of young adults developed a new set of values, attitudes, and behaviors – a alternate culture, so to speak – that rejected upward mobility in favor of other status markers such as respect. Here again we see a link to *super-Locals*: members of the group begin to privilege non-economic markers of status that alter their socio-cultural aspirations. *Gaining respect*, as mentioned by Roger and Kenny, is one of the key components of this kind of cultural re-focusing. Recall that in Kenny's case, his "most successful employee" was someone who had ostensibly commanded the greatest amount of *respect* from others. However, one question is still unanswered by this logic: how

---

[118] Macleod, J. *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainments in a Low-Income Neighborhood*. Boulder: Westview Press,1995; p.20.
[119] Macleod, J. *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainments in a Low-Income Neighborhood*, 20.
[120] Macleod, J. *'Aint No Makin' It*, 117.

does one "gain respect?" This is an important question to address, since this trait should be on conspicuous display in many of the blue-collar yards. The key trait, as I will explain next, is masculinity.

Displays of masculinity are a primary way in which respect and social acceptance in the blue-collar yards is attained. Like the value or aspiration of "gaining respect," the importance of masculinity is found much more frequently in *super-Local* culture. From this perspective, seeing blue-collar yards as "mokey," the rough and rugged description that Roger utilized, becomes a characterization that describes the physical appearance of many blue-collar workers as well as their specific value-system. "Mokey" or "Moke-like is a term with direct connotations of masculine roughness, physical size, and a general disregard for intellectual pursuits. It is also a racialized reference, most often applied to people, places or situations that exhibit a high concentrations dark-skinned Hawaiians, Filipinos, and/or Samoans. Their language ("Pidgin"), dress (ragged t-shirts and faded jeans), and appearance (large, muscled bodies and dark tanned skin) all represent the confluence of "Local", "Moke" and masculine forms of identity. Here, resisting Western symbolic forms of social hierarchy (higher education, speech, clean appearance, etc) through the creation of alternate values is again a double-edged process. Namely, it provides meaningful new ways of achieving "status" in specific setting (such is the case with Joe Kealoha), yet in doing so, ironically ceases that group's contestation of their working-class status. Assertions of masculinity amongst *super-Locals* manifest as both appearances and attitudes in the yards. Insofar as, "institutions such as schools and businesses tend to reward practices and ways of thinking that are aligned to middle-upper

class culture,"[121] the "culture" of *super-Locals* effectively insulates its working-class

members from middle-class acceptance, or even upward class mobility in general.

Super-Local and *Bilingual* bodies are, for all intents and purposes, substantially

divergent. This in many ways is the residue of social and cultural difference between

them. In terms of physical appearance, *super-Locals* in the DPS yards often can be of

imposing physique. Additionally, in contrast to office-working *Bilinguals*, *super-Locals*

working in the DPS blue-collar yards are much more dark-skinned (either tanned or skin

pigment) and casually clothed. As according to both stereotype and my own observation,

the latter also walk with a more relaxed posture, often with their chests puffed out. In

terms of physical appearance, *super-Locals* are strikingly at odds with the meticulously

well-groomed white-collar workforce. The reproduction of this difference has much to do

with the discrepant set of values they maintain. Unfortunately, the aesthetics valued by

super-Locals contrasts with that of middle-class culture, while that of the *Bilingual*

"Locals" is affirmed, perhaps even construed a form of cultural capital.

The same is true of speech differences. According to Linguistic Cultural Capital

theory as advanced by Bernstein and Heath (1977), distinctive speech patterns are closely

related to class membership. *Super-Locals* are often easily identifiable by their exclusive

use of "Pidgin," or at least English spoken with substantial "Local" inflections.

Bilinguals, by contrast, maintain the ability to turn on and off the dual "switches" of

"Pidgin" and English. Although these two "languages" are at least *understood* by all

"Locals," it is the command and usage of these two language codes that differs by group:

---

[121] Bourdieu, Pierre. "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." In Karabel and
Halsey, eds., Power and Ideology in Education. New York: Oxford University Press,
1977; p.496.

super-Locals maintain extremely "restricted linguistic codes" in standard English, and often prefer to speak "Pidgin" exclusively; *Bilinguals* often enjoy ample command of both standard and "pidgin" forms of English. Besides the obvious benefits of being able to speak in two tongues, it is the implication of this language difference that I am concerned with. According to Bernstein and Heath, *elaborated linguistic codes* – complex word patterns and sentence constructions suggesting proficiency in a language – stand as a marker for *middle-class socialization*.[122] It is here that evidence of the real disadvantages of speaking "Pidgin" exclusively can be felt. In their inability to "code-switch," *super-Locals* do not possess the markers of middle-class socialization, an attribute that is often translated into cultural capital (in a Western, professional environment). *Bilinguals* therefore reap benefits from their command of linguistics valued in both the domains of Western (middle-class) culture and "Local" culture.

It is clear that the domain of the blue-collar "yard" itself reinforces certain behaviors and attitudes. By its physical isolation from the white-collar DPS office place, it nurtures attitudes and behaviors that are devalued and discouraged by professional, middle-class settings. The result is that when a new employee enters a blue-collar yard, he or she enters a process of socialization to "working-class" mentalities: those heralding masculinity, peer respect, and slang English over education, professionalism, and self-advancement. Equally damagin is that in their *attributions* of these values to "Local" culture, *super-Locals* subscribe to a cultural logic that is anathema to socio-economic advancement. Paul Willis says something very similar about the "Lads" he studied:

---

[122] Bernstein, Basil and Shirley Heath. "Social Class, Language, and Socialization." In Karabel and Halsey, editors, *Power and Ideology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977; p.422.

It is specific culture which most effectively prepares some working class lads for the manual giving of their labor power . . . an element of self-damnation in the taking on of subordinate roles in Western capitalism. This damnation is experienced, paradoxically, as true learning, affirmation, appropriation, and as a form of resistance.[123]

If "Local" culture produces working-class mentalities and aspirations when for *super-Locals*, it has a different effect on *Bilinguals*. *Bilinguals* do not, generally, experience "Local" as a working-class lifestyle and mentality. If for no other reason this is evident in the fact that *Bilinguals* – those who can code-switch between Western and "Local" cultures – occupy much higher city government positions despite maintaining a "Local" identity. Instead, the experience of "Localness" for Bilinguals is an advantageous one featuring connections, community, and other positive or neutral traits (speaking pidgin, exhibiting selflessness, celebrating cultural events, having Hawaiian blood, having a unique heritage, etc). Perhaps more than any one trait, *Bilinguals* benefit from the ability to draw on other *valued* identities and memberships outside of "Local." This may mean membership to an upper-class ethnic group such as Japanese Americans. These outside and valued ties can yield social capital (powerful connections) for that individual. For these reasons, I argue that many Bilinguals' access to other valuable forms of identity and group membership helps to shape their conception of "Local" culture in a way that *extracts the benefits* of "Localness" and discards *most* of the "negative" aspects. Of the last point, I use "negative" here to indicate the portions of "Local" culture that could depress one's position in the socioeconomic hierarchy of

---

[123] Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labor*, p.3.

Honolulu. Recall Dorothy's comment about Doreen, whom she nominated as the "most successful city employee" in DPS:

She is very local and can talk pidgin. At the same time, she can be very professional when she needs to be . . . at times she can be non-"Local", in a good way. She can be a go-getter.

Doreen exhibits positive traits from both "Local" and "non-Local" identities: she can talk pidgin, but also "can be very professional." Both, I argue, are equally important to her success as a white-collar employee. Given the access to middle-class social and cultural capital that many *Bilinguals* possess (especially through their middle-class upbringing), I argue that they are better equipped to hold multiple cultural identities, but also distill their "Local" identity to the most beneficial set of values, behaviors, and perspectives. The result is the continued bifurcation of the *effects* of "Local," adding value onto *Bilinguals* while for the large part depressing that of *super-Locals*.

Jay Macleod wrote, "people absorb from their social universe values and beliefs that guide their actions."[124] We have showed this to be true in the divergent cases of *Bilinguals* and *super-Locals*. To close this chapter, I would like to connect these sub-groups back up, showing some ways in which "Local" both. "Locals" do not, for instance, enjoy unquestionable social, economic or political superiority to non-Locals. Outside "the city," "Locals" do not control the powerful resources necessary to position themselves unquestionably atop of Honolulu's social hierarchy. According to the U.S. Census, Whites (who we shall assume most closely approximate "non-Locals" as a group) still occupy some of the highest rates of employment in both professional and

---

[124] Macleod, *'Aint No Makin' It*, 137.

managerial occupations.[125] As a result, attitudes and values have developed that reflect

the amorphous "place" of "Local" in Honolulu's social fabric. [126]

DPS employees, both *Bilingual* and *super-Local* alike are quick to note that

"Local" culture discourages a self-serving, self-advancing focus, instead favoring the

ideal of community, solidarity, and social harmony. In "Local" lingo, this value is often

described by the saying, "don't make waves." This phrase translates, *don't call attention

to yourself*, and is largely viewed by DPS employees as an important component of

"Local" culture.[127] Largely a result of this deep-set value, "Locals" expressed a limited

desire to achieve the highest possible position of power. Such phrases as "Don't make

waves" or "don't rock the boat" are meaningful value-mechanisms in that they treat self-

interest as egotistic, and group solidarity as paramount. Irene, a Japanese American

woman working as a civil engineer at DPS, illustrates this value-set well:

Eli: Irene, what is a "Local" trait that can help you at work?

Irene: Don't discipline people. (Laughs). No really, disciplining is very difficult for "Locals."

You might try to talk nicely, and share with them what the issues are. Try to treat them kindly.

As opposed to the *Haole way*, which is very impersonal about things. It is more no-nonsense, and

not caring about social harmony. For me, I like to hand off discipline issues to others, such as

---

[125] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census. Cited in Okamura, J. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 44.   Notably, White males have the second-highest percentile representation in "Management/Business," and White females have the highest representation in "professional" occupations on any group.

[126] A straightforward example of the lack of "Local" control in Honolulu's landscape has historically been the direction of tourism. "Locals" often gripe that they have feel helpless towards the haphazard, multi-national developments that have proliferated in Waikiki, Ko Olina, or other tourist centers. Each of these areas is now under the direction of large, foreign investors or investment groups.

[127] Eight employees, some "Local" and others "non-Local" separately mentioned this trait.

John (who is White). (we laugh) I try to avoid having to do it. For this reason, I don't want to become a supervisor.

Irene prizes being friendly and helpful to others, a mentality that translates into her distaste for disciplinary action. This mentality has resulted in her passivity towards obtaining further promotions (to positions where she believes she will be required to perform disciplinary measures). What values like, "don't rock the boat," suggest is, in objective terms, that "Local" acts as a "ceiling" on how high one can aspirations individually. According to Macleod, "the regulation of aspirations is perhaps the most significant of all the mechanisms contributing to social reproduction."[128] Although Irene's attitude is not exactly representative of all "Locals," she has internalized an aspect of "Local" discourse that causes her to avoid positions of higher authority in DPS. Like Irene, another "Local" named Ernest referred to a similar "Local" value of *not pushing your weight around."* This value is joined by humility, passivity, self-effacing behaviors. On this topic, Ernest commented,

A "Local" person can only rise up to the level of all . . . the level of the group. No real "Local" person can be truly successful, there is just too strong a notion of "just be friendly to everyone." "Locals" are just not focused on business efficiency, scale. They are not disciplined in these areas that allow you to be really successful.

An audacious statement, Ernest believed strongly that the highest levels of financial or business success is simply unavailable for "Locals" in part because of their specific values and attitudes. This points again to a distinct socio-economic "ceiling" effect of "Local" culture. Here there is a parallel between "Local" on a larger scale, and

---

[128] Macleod, p.112.

super-Local, on a smaller one: both having stunting effects on individuals' ability to unquestionably advance to the top of the social hierarchy. Albeit much more mild than the working-class socialization of *super-Locals*, insofar as "Locals" ridicule "non-Locals" for their egoist pursuits and self-serving behaviors, their subsequent aversion to such actions make it much more difficult to realize the highest levels of socio-economic prestige and success within Honolulu (or all of Hawaii for that matter). That is, they face a culturally-reinforced "ceiling" to their aspirations and goals, one not easily shattered lest one has the courage to face social stigmatization and perhaps even alienation.

I have shown previously that "city work" features a high concentration of "Locals" and "Local" values, the topic of chapters two and three. City work is, however, occasionally better understood in terms of difference: namely, the presence of blue and white-collar jobs, *super-Locals* and *Bilinguals*, and ethnic inequalities. By looking inward at the differences manifest within "Local," we have momentarily suspended our discussion of "non-Locals" – those perceived as foreigners to Honolulu – including those already working within the city government. As I have alluded to throughout this thesis, overwhelmingly these "non-Locals" working in the city are White. Though fewer in number, "non-Local" and *Haole* city workers must learn to interact, communicate, and negotiate their way in the "Local workplace" in ways that are nothing short of fascinating. The next chapter will address the issues facing those deemed "non-Local" in DPS. Much of this discussion will be appropriately focused on the complicated occurrence of Haoles in the "Local workplace."

Chapter 5: Perpetual Foreigners: The Haole Dilemma

Eli: Susan, do you consider yourself Local?

S: No! (laughs). Although I've lived here in Hawaii for ten years, and even got my

masters from UH (University of Hawaii). But to be honest, I don't think a Haole can ever

be considered "Local." I do, however, consider myself Kama-aina.[129]

E: So to you, "Local" has racial connotations. . .

S: Yes, definitely. Because on the flip side of the token, a Filipino person in Hawaii –

even if they have never been to Hawaii before -- would probably be perceived "Local." It

has to do with how you look.

-   7/16/09

"It is really about the way you look. No matter how you act, if you are White, you are

going to be labeled and viewed as a Haole."

-James, 7/21/09

---

[129] The term *Kama`aina* literally translates "child of the land," and is now commonly used to refer to anyone who lives in Hawaii.  Unlike the term "Local," which holds specific social, cultural and political connotations, Kama`aina is far more innocuous: in most cases it used synonymously with "resident."

Being perceived as "non-Local" in Hawaii is akin to being perceived a foreigner. The logic is simple, though problematic: if one is not part of one of Hawaii's endemic cultures, Native Hawaiian or "Local," they are considered "foreign" to Hawaii. But just "Local" is not an identity that is accessed the uniform ways, the net of "non-Local" is often cast unevenly: there are certain types of Honolulu residents that continue to be consistently categorized as "non-Local." As I continue to assert, being accepted or passing as "Local" is a distinction far from equally accessed by all members of Hawaii's society. To understand what accounts for this variation means to engage in a complex social calculus balancing ethnicity, race, class, indigeneity and more. All have imparted unique definitions, stereotypes, and boundaries on the concept of a "Local" identity in Honolulu.

Despite its diversity of influences, there are significant trends and methods that influence how "Local" identity is distributed in Honolulu's society. In past chapters the idea of "Local" solidarity in the city government has been described as well as the specific ways in which it is maintained. What remains to be analyzed, significantly, is a discussion on those excluded by "Local." In particular, this chapter focuses on the experience of the "non-Locals" who work day-in and day-out in a setting widely considered a *"Local" workplace*. In prefacing a discussion on this theme, it is hard to ignore the racial connotations of the term "Local": there were many occasions during my research where my interviewee would interchange the categories of "non-Local," "mainlander," and *Haole*. For reasons that I will elaborate in this chapter, Whites are often unconditionally referred to as "non-Local," almost to the point of being the sole recipient of this dubious distinction. In this way, the perpetuation of "Local" identity is

not without its casualties. Yet, as we will see, *Haoles* are not doomed by the stigma of being an outsider. Instead, their experience represents a social contradiction: Whites enjoy high socio-economic status but low social prestige. This unique situation that many Whites working in the city government find themselves in makes for lively analysis. It is also the sole focus of this final chapter.

In the opening two excerpts, Susan and James (both *Haole* white-collar employees in the Department of Public Services, both suggest that "Local" is underpinned with racial and ethnic connotations. As they explain, "Locals" can be Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Hawaiians, and more . . . except White. For these reasons, Susan and James, who have lived a combined half-century in the islands, claim they could never be considered "Local." Viewed as perennial foreigners by "Local" DPS employees, Susan and James are both examples of Whites employed in the city government. Given the dominance of "Locals" in "city work," this Caucasian sub-group of city employment represents a fascinating social niche. The social "place" of *Haoles* in Honolulu is determined by the intersection of two perpendicular measuring sticks of social power. The first is *socioeconomic* status, as gauged primarily through one's income, class, and education. I also refer to this measure as the *global* system of value, in that it is a measurement of worth that can be interpreted universally. The second value system is more specifically tied to Honolulu's social hierarchy: it is an assessment of one's social "honor," a concept derived from Max Weber's seminal essay entitled "Class, Status, and Party."[130] Of social honor Weber says, "The way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution we

---

[130] Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In *Social Class and Stratification*. edited by Rhonda Levine. England: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998.

call the 'status order.'"[131] In the Honolulu city government, social honor is intimately

tied to one's standing as a "Local." Of the difference between class and "honor" systems,

Weber offers, "'mere economic' power, and especially 'naked money power,' is by no

means a recognized basis of social power. The legal order is rather an additional factor

that enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them."

Consequently, the measure of "status honor" establishes an alternate social hierarchy to

that of *class*. I call the former, the "Local" status hierarchy. These two value systems do

not always stratify Hawaii's social groups in similar ways, hence the contradictory place

of Haoles in Honolulu.

After the parallel value systems of *class* and *status* with respect to

Honolulu society, some generalities can be made. In relation to the social environment of

the city government, a group (or person) that exhibits both high socio-economic class

(perhaps through high average income or hierarchical rank) and high "status" (as

measured through one's "Local" standing) would enjoy optimal access to social power.

By contrast, a group or person possessing low average income *and* exclusion from

"Local" identity[132] would be at severe disadvantages. The "fit" of *Haoles,* characterized

by inverted values on these two scales, therefore stands in contentious relation to social

power in "the city." It is my hope that through this discussion of Haoles in "the City," we

will begin to shed new light on group power dynamics in Honolulu.

Exploring the standing of Whites in DPS must start with a story of the historical

socioeconomic privilege of Whites in Honolulu. Dating back to the overthrow of the

---

[131] Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In Social Class and Stratification, 43-44.
[132] Another form of this would be one's identification with lesser forms of "Local"
identity, which do not carry the same social value. For example, consider last chapter's
discussion on *super-Locals*.

Hawaiian Monarchy in 1893, Caucasians have always occupied desirable positions throughout Hawaiian society. This perhaps came to greatest expression during Hawaii's plantation era around the turn of the twentieth century, an era featuring the rise of the "Big Five" corporations in Hawaii. Dominating the sugarcane export industry, five Caucasian-owned companies, Hackfield, Alexander & Baldwin, Castle & Cooke, C. Brewer, and Theo Davies, enjoyed extraordinary economic and political power in Hawaii through the middle of the twentieth century.[133] While other immigrant groups such as the Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos were brought to Hawaii as labor hands, Caucasians held virtual monopolies to the ownership and supervision of these plantations. As plantations and estates in Hawaii grew in powerful, influence, and capital throughout the early twentieth century, Whites stood to reap the largest benefits. However, starting in the second half of the twentieth century, Japanese and Chinese Americans entering skilled government, professional, and entrepreneurial occupations, joining Whites at the top of Hawaii's socioeconomic hierarchy. Although Hawaii's plantation days are long over, today Whites have maintained high economic status in Hawaii, continuing to rank at or near the top in median income and educational attainment for both males and females.[134] Today, while Caucasians have declined in *relative* wealth in Hawaii, they have maintained a privileged position in society. In the Department of Public Services, Whites, Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans enjoy over-representation in skilled, white-collar positions, in part a product of their ability to access higher education, obtain skilled degrees, and leverage their wealth to additional advantage. Though I was unable to attain statistics on their numbers, it is clearly evident through casual observation that

---

[133] Cooper, G. and Gavan Daws. *Land and Power in Hawaii*, 208-212.
[134] Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*, 57-63.

the majority of all DPS civil engineers (a valued degree in the public sector), department administrators, and skilled technicians come from members of these three groups.

In light of the relative wealth that these three groups enjoy, an evaluation of the social "honor" of Whites, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans in DPS tells a different story. Japanese and Chinese Americans enjoy significantly higher standing on the *"Local"* hierarchy – the status scale in "the City" – than that of Whites. While Japanese and Chinese Americans are readily accepted as "Locals," and thus able to enjoy the prestige and capital associated with this, *Haoles* are overwhelmingly excluded. The discrepant social experience of Whites makes an assessment of their true "power" within the city much more non-linear and inconsistent from that of the two other ethnic groups mentioned.

As Susan indicated at the beginning of the chapter, *Haoles* are often described as culturally and physically *opposite* of "Local." Rather than an overtly racialized form of exclusion however, the stereotype of *Haoles* as "non-Locals" often occurs subtly. "Non-Locals" are, by definition, those who are perceived to fall *outside* "Local" forms of identity and culture. This is often assessed based on one's specific set of traits and behaviors, some inborn and others learned. Notably, these traits are far from coherent. That is, the concept of "non-Locals" can hardly be called a social group due to their diversity. The reason for this is simple: just as a stone sculptor chips "unnecessary" stone from an unformed block of stone in order to shape the final product, the idea of "non-Local" is only articulated *through* the "waste" discarded from "Local" culture. Put simply, "Local" identity is in part dependent on the formulation an "other," something that it is *not*. This is also the source for the ill-will associated with "non-Local." For

example, insofar as "Local" means *not* being greedy*, not* being self-serving, *not* being

loud, etc, being cast as "non-Local" involves the assumption that one possesses many of

these undesirable traits. "Non-Locals" are set up to be criticized, literally.

In understanding the construction of "non-Local," we can see how it indeed

strengthens the positive, if not *ethnocentric*, perception of "Local." The ways in which

"non-Local" can be characterized are therefore reduced to a choice between bad and

worse. In addition, its definition is predicated on what the majority of "Local" people are

not: namely, tourists and/or Caucasian descent. I argue that the proximal association of

these two traits is one of the foundations behind popular stereotypes of Whites as

"foreign," or "non-Local." Clearly, this is a problematic notion: among many other

reasons, tourists do not all come from homogeneous White stock.[135] Nonetheless, the

"typing" of Whites as "non-Local" remains prevalent in the city. During my interviews, I

would ask interviewees, "who would you consider 'non-Local'?" The most common

response I received from non-White, "Local" employees was, "a *Haole* from the

mainland."[136] This statement reflects the deeply stereotyped notion of White people as

outsiders to Hawaii, whether or not they live there.[137] Susan and James both are very

aware of their social exclusion. Both of these White DPS employees are very cognizant

of the unfair stereotypes that they are up against while being employed at a "Local"-

dominated office. In a moment of exasperation, Susan even claimed that a Filipino

---

[135] Since the mid-1970s, Japanese tourists have continued to constitute a significant
portion of tourist traffic in Hawaii.
[136] "mainland" is Local speak for "the continental USA."
[137] As stated earlier, the 2000 Census indicates that around 30% of Hawaii's population is
indeed Caucasian or at least part-Caucasian.

presence, darker-skinned than she, would have a much easier time being accepted as "Local."

There are a host of different stereotypes that act to negatively portray Whites in Honolulu. Each of these stereotypes reflects only the most obvious of ways in which Whites are systematically de-valued in the "Local" hierarchy. For "Locals," stereotypes are often used in colloquial settings. There are three primary phrases by "Locals" that reflect their perceptions of Caucasian culture. These are *Haole from the Mainland*, *Typical Haole*, and *the Haole Mentality*. All reflect contrasts to "Local" culture as well as related criticisms. Before I describe their meaning, it is worth mentioning that not all "Locals" accept or approve of these stereotypes. Correspondingly, these "Locals" were also more likely to suggest that *Haoles* could indeed become accepted as "Local."[138] However, the majority of "Locals" I interviewed either displayed stereotyped conceptions of Haole, if not blatant dislike. Take for example an interview with a "Local" white-collar employee named Manny:

Eli: Manny how do you describe a "non-local?"

M: Well, I'd say a *Haole from the mainland*! To me, a "non-Local" is someone who does not understand the language and gestures of Hawaii.

E: I often hear people talking about, "typical Haole", can you describe that for me?

M: Loud, obnoxious, thinks he is a know it all.

---

[138] Jeremy is a Local who holds this belief. Below is an excerpt of our conversation:
Eli: Describe what "Local" means to you.
Jeremy: Born and raised in Hawaii.
E: Does that mean that others cannot become "Local?"
J: No, they can. I'd say after one year living here and experiencing the culture, I would consider them "Local." But yeah, they would need to experience every ethnic background. And see how these groups coexist. But I guess that a "newbie" to Hawaii would be "non-local!" (Laughs).
E: So even Haoles can become "Local?"
J: Oh yeah. You see, *Haole* is a real stigma that has been taken out of context.

Manny reveals much about common attitudes towards *Haoles* in Hawaii. Ordinarily introverted and polite, Manny's perception of Whites reflects an attitude that firmly held and generally negative. Not only are "Haoles from the mainland," depicted as the quintessential "non-Locals," they are also uniformly characterized as loud, obnoxious, and outspoken. George also exhibited the conflation of the *labeling* and *judgment* inherent in the use of the term "Haole" during an interview:

A few years ago, I worked at Ko'olina Golf Course as a supervisor. Had lotta young "Local" guys working under me. At that time, there was one Haole head pro from the mainland, and the "Local" boys didn't like him one bit. The head pro, he was one typical Haole . . . he was strict and pushy.

Interviewing George was a very insightful process. A Japanese American who had worked within the city government in different departments for over a decade, he articulated many other differences between "Locals" and "non-Locals" that would later be confirmed by other employees. Later in our discussion, he offered up another distinction:

Eli: "How does 'Local' culture influence the "city" workplace?":

G: For one, there is the "Canoe" idea that Glenn Furuya[139] talks about.

E: Could you describe that?

G: It has to do with Mr. Furuya's idea of "Local teamwork." Rather than one person at the front of the ship leading, everyone has an important role. In the canoe, everyone is rowing together in order to make it move the fastest. And the "leader" of the canoe is in the back, steering it.

E: That's a great analogy George!

---

[139] Glenn Furuya is a Local from Honolulu who has gained repute for his traveling lectures on "Teamwork, Local-Style."

G: Yeah, so that's the "Local way." So to me, this is the opposite of the Haole mentality, which is, in order to lead *you* need to be in front.

George weighs in on what he understands to be a central tenant of the "Haole mentality": the self-interest and greed stemming from needing "to be in front." The "canoe" analogy George refers to is also significant in that it positions "Local" and "non-Local" along the spectrum of collectivism and individualism. "Local," he notes, is about *everyone rowing together*, a collectivist-oriented social relationship. "Non-Local," according to George, is "one person at the front of the ship," a social paradigm distinctly individualist in origin. In the "Local" setting of DPS, the perceived differences that come from projecting "collectivism" on "Local" and "individualism" on "non-Local" only increases the stigmatization of Whites. In this way, "Locals" capitalize on notions of in-group "collectivism" by perceiving the city government as "*our* place*.*" This enhanced solidarity aids the dynamics of ethnic niche and "Local" networking that largely leave out Whites. The substantial over-representation of "Locals" in DPS is evidence of this process at work.

Just as the social place of Haoles is subject to contradiction, stereotypes of Haoles also represent some degree of variation. There is a small number of Caucasians in Hawaii who have gained *partial* acceptance as a more tolerable sub-group of *Haoles*. Members of this constituency are referred to by "Locals" as "Local Haoles." However, this categorization of *Haoles* is offered up on sparingly, as if to explain-away Whites that act "Local" or hold "Local" values. Most often, the term "Local Haoles" is used to describe Whites who either: are born and raised in Hawaii, lived for an extended period of time in a rural ("country") part of Hawaii, or frequently engage in "Local" activities such as fishing, crabbing, or surfing. The social position of *Local Haoles* is quite

challenging to describe, in part due to its minority representation both in the city government and throughout Honolulu. For instance, perhaps as a good indication of the infrequency of this sub-group, my research in DPS includes no *Local Haoles*. Given my extensive efforts to locate someone considered a "Local Haole," this is quite telling. For this reason, I will not attempt an analysis of this sub-group. Yet if only because the stereotype of this sub-group is not nearly as negative, "Local Haoles" remain an interesting group for future study. Yet even in the case of this group, there is reason to believe that Whites still experience the stigma of being perpetual foreigners quite noticeably. A Local employee's distinction between different "types" of Haoles reveals this mentality:

There are two different types of Haoles, although both get a bad rap. There's the "Local Haoles," who are still Haole, but not as bad because they are from here. Then there's the mainland Haoles. These are the worst. Their demeanor is just not "aloha." And it's the simple things – they are just not sensitive towards others. And they tend to think of themselves as above where they actually are, as well as those around them.[140]

In terms of social status, Caucasians working in the city government are holed-up between a rock and a hard place. They are demeaned by the stigma of *Haole*, yet denied access to a more socially profitable alternative identity. As I suggest, Whites are thus disadvantaged in the city workplace through their inability to leverage "*Local*" forms of capital (such as "Local" networking) that can then be translated, at least in part, into economic opportunity. However, the real effects that the low-positioning of Haoles on the "Local" status hierarchy is tempered by their *high* social class and levels of wealth.

[140] Lauren, interviewed 7/29/08.

Autonomous from the "Local" hierarchy (i.e. the effects of the status[141]), high socioeconomic wealth increases the ability of Whites to access to the formal requirements necessary for high-skilled white-collar jobs in the city government. In other words, Whites are very capable of achieving the "formal" requirements of the various positions within white-collar city work. Consequently, there are a significant number of Haole employees in white-collar city work, a reality that the advantages accorded to "Locals" through the "Local" status hierarchy would not suggest. Though far from a "formal" indication of the amount of Whites in city work, the fact that nine of my twenty-six DPS interviewees were White suggests that, as a group, Whites are still very capable of entering city government work. In some ways, this fact suggests a certain banality to the weapons that "Locals" have aimed at excluding Haoles. That is to say, in a space referred to as "the 'Local' workplace," should not perceived foreigners such as Haoles be completely excluded? This narrative suggests that "Local" is in fact what James Scott (1985) calls, a "weapon of the weak." If the relationship between "Locals" and wealthy Haoles is indeed akin to that of the poor peasants and the rich landowners of Scott's analysis, then the "weapons" that "Locals" possess (such as stereotypes) are only symbolic. Scott says:

"Only 'backstage,' where gossip, tales, slander, and anonymous sabotage mocks and negates the public ritual order, does elite control fall away . . . it is only here that the terrain is relatively favorable to the meager arsenal of the disadvantaged."[142]

---

[141] In terms of the discursive separation of these terms, this is true. Weber does however suggest that class and status tend to vary together, assuming that forms of capital can be transformed into each other.

[142] Scott, J. *Weapons of the Weak*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985; 27.

If we entertain Scott's theory, the social stigma of "Haole" is not sufficient a barrier to overwhelm the powerful effects of socio-economic wealth. There are important ways in which Scott's theory is only marginally applicable to social relations within Honolulu, all of which have been discussed prior in this thesis. The marginalization of Haoles in "the city" *does* in fact occur, but in more subtle ways. These strategies will be described presently.

In many ways, the situation of Whites demonstrates that class and status, as different forms of social values, both demand to be taken into account in any one society. One's access to social power is not necessarily the product of either system exclusively. Additionally, the social distance between "Locals" and *Haoles* renders the question of whether or not a Haole can be considered "Local," to some extent, rhetorical: Haoles cannot be considered "Local" *precisely* becaus*e* they are labeled *Haole*. Yet how does this form of social stigmatization negatively affect their position within DPS? I contend that this occurs most frequently through the distribution of promotions, level of departmental influence, and inclusion in employee events outside work.[143] These effects all are based on similar processes of exclusion: anchored by the "Locals" in positions of power throughout the city, all are anchored through "contingent" forms of exclusion. I now turn to evidence of this, as confirmed by multiple DPS employees.

James was born in the Midwest USA, and came to Hawaii to work for the city government ten years ago. A skilled engineer, he was promoted in just two years to a relatively high position (a feat that James proudly attributes to his productivity at that

---

[143] It also may occur through job hiring, as suggested by the city government's complexion of "Local niche." However, this study is incapable of assessing job acceptance/rejection rates based on ethnicity.

time). However, as James describes, "it took me two years to get to my current level.

Then I just hit the ceiling." When I asked him whether or not he has received another

promotion, he replied, "nope. I've been here for over ten years now, and when a higher

position opened and I applied, I was denied. So I guess you can say that I hit my ceiling

here at DPS." James claims that his rejection from receiving further promotion was

strongly influenced by "Local" politics. About the experience (I have changed the name

to ensure confidentiality), James offered,

X's promotion defies all logic. And it was really just me and X in the running for that position.

E: hmm, but weren't you of higher rank at the time?

J: Yes! I was a branch head [at the time], X was just a civil engineer. So X gets promoted right

over me! But here's the thing: X has more "Local" connections. You see, X is from a prominent

Hawaiian family. They – the "Local" heads of this department – they were well aware of this.

As for me, I am just a "Haole from the mainland" to them.

In his comments, James suggests that while he was able to enter city work using

the formal credentials he possessed, his lack of "Local" credentials caused his subsequent

stagnation within the department (what he calls, "the ceiling"). After his most recent

rejection for a higher position, he has come to accept his fate.

Another compelling example of the way in which Haoles are subtly marginalized

in DPS comes from the systematic reduction of their influence in the office place. The

best example of this is in the case of Thomas. During my stay in DPS, Thomas, a long-

time Haole employee with a formidable list of credentials, was experiencing a striking

constriction of his departmental authority and influence. It was a striking example of

physical and social marginalization. Piecing together the story from multiple employees,

both "Local" and "non-Local," I learned that Thomas had held one of the highest

positions in DPS five years ago, but now has been reduced to a side-line spectator. His

office space was moved from a spacious private office, to a deserted corner space (his

location when I first met him), and then to its current location . . . disconnected from the

primary office entirely! Perhaps the most striking aspect of Thomas' situation is that all

this has occurred *without explicit demotion or discipline*![144] In other words, Thomas'

annual salary and formal job-duties have remained on par with past years. Yet the

"power" of his influence has been substantially constricted: he is not invited to key

monthly meetings in his area of the department, many of which are of topics blatantly

within the confines of his job description. I asked "Local" co-workers their opinions

about Thomas' plight, hoping to gain more insight into his situation. One close associate

of his offered some explanation. The reason, said this employee, that Thomas has

endured this humiliating decline in authority has everything to do with the "Local"

department heads. This employee, himself "Local," offered, "Oh, they (the department

heads) hate him. What happened is that Thomas just rubs "Locals" the wrong way, so

when the new guys came in, this got back to them. And from day one, they have just

pushed him aside." A "Local" employee who considers herself friends with Thomas

offered only, "He's just so un-Local," to explain why Thomas has been treated the way

he has. In many ways Thomas is a perfect example of the social bipolarity of *Haoles* in

Honolulu. Thomas enjoys a very respectable income (nearly six-figures) and a high-

ranking position in the department. Yet for other reasons he is socially excluded and

largely unable to realize the influence and power that his authority should "formally"

grant him. In Thomas' case as in that of other Haole employees in DPS, their conflicting

---

[144] Thomas did experience a minor "demotion" upon the change in DPS administrative
appointees.

place on the two scales of *class* and *status* again impart conflicting pressures on their social position. Thomas and other middle-upper class Haoles often experience the "Local" workplace negatively, though these experiences are rarely as *explicit* as that experienced by the former.

I had the chance to speak with Thomas himself about his relationship with DPS, as well as Local culture. Considering that I approached him with a pen and paper, his responses were, in general, tentative and reserved. He did, however, convey a deep ambivalence towards his experience working amongst "Locals." He said, "You know, there are parts of "Local" culture in the city that I have never fully understood." Later when I asked him about "Local" traits he felt were important when working for the city government, Thomas said, "[you need to] realize that Hawaii is still a small place, in the sense that everybody knows everybody. So you have to have more sensitivity towards people saying bad things (about you)." James expresses this in more candid fashion: "If you are to have success [in DPS], you gotta be 'Local'. . . 'Local,' in the sense that you need to know how to *row with everyone else*." Both James and Thomas express different ways in which they have learned to adjust (or not adjust) in order to fit in. Even then, although they have managed to avoid explicit conflict with "Locals" in the workplace, neither is readily accepted as "Local." The situations of Thomas and James (described earlier this chapter) reveal the significant ways in which their experience of being a white-collar city employee are confounded by their stigmatized group identity. As a result, rather than gaining social prestige for occupational prowess, productivity, intelligence, etc., these two professionals continue to experience isolation, exclusion, and, on occasion, scape-goating. As was exhibited in both words and actions, James and

Thomas have both learned to "adjust" to their respective circumstances by essentially acquiescing to the cultural and social dominance of "Locals" in the city. In effect, all they can *hope* to do is, "row with everyone else," in the process, minimizing their overtly Haole traits and while approximating "Local" ones whenever feasible.

Popularly understood as culturally and racially opposite of "Local," White employees within the Honolulu city government experience deep social and economic ambivalence. Just as their high position on the "universal" scale of value (class, income, and education) advantages Whites with access to the credentials necessary to qualify for white-collar city positions, their low "status honor" along the "Local" value scale systematically marginalizes them. What results is perpetual social tension for Haoles: they command relatively desirable occupations and incomes, yet gain little social "prestige" for it. In this way, Haoles are not absent from "Local" workplaces. Yet insofar as "Local" identities are privileged within this terrain, Haoles are occasionally subjected to marginalization through denied promotions, diminished influence, and social exclusion. Through this process, "Local" discourse is infused with self-perpetuating forms of both symbolic and actual power in Honolulu.

Conclusion

For those new to Hawaii, it can at times seem that understanding "Local" culture is a straightforward process. For example, after exiting a plane in Honolulu International Airport, you can read your guidebook on "the people and culture of Hawaii." Finishing this one-page article, you are confident about your historical and cultural knowledge of Hawaii. *Things are simple here*, you think, *the culture in Hawaii is all about aloha. The people here are friendly, and have learned to accept different cultures, different people. I have arrived in the melting pot of the world!* Having experienced for the first time the sight of the bright Hawaiian sun beating down on happy beach-goers on Waikiki beach, Hawaii is still the idyllic place only confirmed by your guidebooks comments. So when you accidentally bump into a person in a moment of absent-mindedness and he says, "hmm, damn Haole!" with a glare, you are, needless to say, startled.

"Local" culture, "Local" people, and "Local" places are anything but simple. Behind a social and cultural façade that purports unity, acceptance and *aloha* are a unique peoples that are every bit as dynamic, stratified, complex, and opinionated as the next. In this thesis, I have analyzed the influence of "Local" culture in Honolulu as it manifests in the workplace of the Honolulu city government. Armed with the tools of first-hand interviews, participant-observations, and social theory, I have tried to make sense of the

many different factors that have contributed to inequality, stereotypes, and stratifications within this social space. As has been explained throughout this thesis, it is my contention that the working of "Local" culture has had its hand in each of these processes. I started this study by showing that the city & county government of Honolulu is widely perceived as a "Local" workplace, one defined by its the unusual concentration of "Local" people and culture. However, labeling the city government, *"Local"* is far more simple and banal than the reality: there are forces at work that actively maintain "Local" dominance in "the City." Specifically, I explain how *social closure* and the uneven distribution of *social* and *cultural capital* have jointly acted to transform "the City" into a veritable "Local" enclave. In the process, those who are accepted as "Local" are treated to advantages that "non-Locals" are subsequently excluded from. One way in which this is accorded is through increased "status honor" within the city government. A by-product of the "Local" dominance in "city" work, I show how the Weberian notion of "status" (as opposed to class) has been mapped onto the "Local" hierarchy. In this way, those who can assert "Local" forms of identity and culture also enjoy high social prestige ("status") in the city government. For these reasons it is argued that the city government workplace displays the characteristics of "ethnic niche" employment, in which "Locals" – treated as a de facto "ethnic" group" – are over-represented in "city" employment.

In chapters four and five, I also show how "Local" is in fact an identity that can be subdivided into different components. Within the city government, two different sub-categories of "Local" exist: *Bilinguals* and *super-Locals*. Utilizing two terms directly uttered by "Local" interviewees, these two categories describe sub-types of "Locals" based on the meaningful distinctions of ethnicity, class, and occupation. Using these

categories, I discuss ways in which *Bilinguals* ("Locals" who are by ethnicity, also higher-class) and *super-Locals* ("Locals" of lower class and ethnicity) understand and *negotiate* their "Local" identity in (classed) ways that actually perpetuate the inequalities between them. *Bilinguals* enter white-collar work with higher income and prestige, white *super-Locals* remain in working-class, manual labor positions. One such way in which *super-Locals* are disadvantaged is through their socialization into a working-class mentality, a process I discuss is ironically experienced as an assertion of *"Localness."*

With the lack of fixity to the term "Local," it is difficult to see how it could be used to any meaningful distinction. Yet in many ways, "Local" has in fact congealed into an identifiable culture and identity, in the process shaping social space in meaningful ways. Without exception, "Locals" are capable of describing aspects of their culture that can and *do*, in fact, work to identity true "Locals" from "non-Locals" or "foreigners." Rather than trying to qualify these traits as valid or invalid, I have instead opted to expose how the very *process* of arranging (and in some cases, constructing) "Local" is political, creator of winners and losers. Insofar as having a "Local" identity can be redeemed for forms of cultural and social capital, this discriminatory process of socio-cultural boundary-creation is extremely consequential for Honolulu society.

Even then, few people in Hawaii fit the bill of a *quintessential* "Local," by any definition of the term. As a result, "Local" is frequently articulated in problematic ways that are self-serving, and relative to the traits of that individual. The most prominent way this is performed in Honolulu is by essentializing "Local" identity to a few traits that are either innate, or un-learnable. Phrases such as "you have to be born and raised in Hawaii," are examples of essentialized barriers used to prevent "outsiders" from

146

assuming a "Local" identity. Since the exclusivity of "Local" can yield the tangible

benefits of "Local" networking, socio-economic favor (promotions, bonuses, etc), and

high "status," in the city workplace, it is thus vehemently protected (by existing

"Locals").

Lastly, perhaps the most problematic aspect of "Local" identity is its continued

racialization. Specifically, this process is to the benefit of those of Asian or Polynesian

descent, and to the marginalization of Whites. The racialization of "Local" is done by

conflating the perceived behaviors, mentalities, and appearances of "Haoles" (Whites)

with that of "non-Locals." Yet as I discuss, despite being disadvantaged by the social

stigma of being "non-Local" (thus unable to access "Local" capital or *status*), Whites

working in the city actually realize respectable white-collar positions. This is the product

of their high *class* standing as a group, one allowing them to access optimal education,

training, and formal credential necessary for white-collar positions.

I continue to see the need for more scholarly work done on the phenomena of

"Local" culture in Hawaii. My own study, alas, is limited in scope and generalizability

based on the logistics of my research. There are many more questions that arise that I

have been forced to push aside in favor of brevity. One such question – and extensive

research topic – is, how might the workings of "Local" be different in public and private

sector work in Hawaii? In talking with city employees, many suggest that there is indeed

significant difference between these two types of work.[145] Yet since my only experience

---

[145] One of the integral questions that I asked each interviewee was, "are there any
differences between public and private sector work in Hawaii?" I eventually scratched
the responses I received to this question because of the shortcomings in analysis present
in this study: since I had only interviewed city employees, I had no comparison group
with which to make sense of my findings.

and discussions have been with city government employees, it is hard to tell whether there is any validity to this distinction. Similarly, the implications of this thesis could be made more engaging if a comparable study was performed on "Local" on one or more "outer" islands. In many ways, Honolulu is not indicative of greater Hawaii in terms of population, foreign influence, and demographics. A subsequent study engaging "Local" in other locations in Hawaii could be quite instructive. If subsequently analyzed side-by-side, "Local" literature would gain a valuable new perspective on intra-"Local" difference based on place (for example, rural vs. urban), nativity (inter-"Local" difference based on islands), or even the meaning of "Local" itself.

Another important opportunity for future research comes directly from the implications of this study. Insofar as I have shown that "Locals" have managed to secure a social and political "foothold" of power within the Honolulu city government that includes the inversion of traditional logics of "status" and cultural capital, where else can we look for similar inversions of power? This study could be performed on locations both in America or globally. The impetus behind this particular flavor of future study would be centered on verifying the applicability and representativeness of the paradigm I have laid forth in my own thesis work. More generally, I warmly invite future investigations willing to engage complex and unpredictable social terrains in never-ending search for the similarly novel expressions of identity, culture, and power that have characterized the case of "Locals" in Honolulu city government work.

It should go without saying that the workings of "Local" identity are the product of both time and place. As such, the structural pillars "Local" in Hawaii, if we are to assume they exist, should never be interpreted as static. As was noted too briefly in this

thesis, "Local" (and other identities like it) will necessarily undergo metamorphosis based on global or local changes to Hawaii's class, ethnic, racial, or even cultural framework. Yet in the end, this study demonstrates one rather hopeful conclusion: the continued significance of "local" and *unique* microcosms of identity, culture and specific power, both in Hawaii and abroad.

List of Terms

DPS: An acronym for "The Department of Public Services," a branch of the Honolulu Government.

Haole: a term used to describe Whites. Although merely descriptive, it occasionally takes on slightly pejorative cultural connotations, such as in the phrase, "Typical Haole."

"Talk Story": To casually chat with a friend or group of friends, as in "I *talked story* with my cousins visiting from the mainland last night."

Ohana: the Hawaiian word for "family." Often used in Hawaii to refer to broadened notions of *family*, including figurative kins. An example of this would be the concept of a "workplace Ohana."

**Kama`aina**:  a Hawaiian word literally meaning "child of the land."  A loose interpretation of this word is used by people in Hawaii to mean someone who is a resident of Hawaii.  Historically, *kama`aina* was also used to refer to the upper-class Whites in Hawaii.

Spam Musubi: a "Local" snack consisting of a thin slice of spam atop a bed of rice. *Musubi* refers to a Japanese rice ball.

Opihi: A salt-water shellfish that lives on shoreline rocks in Hawaii. It is considered a "Local"—as well as Hawaiian – delicacy, and are served at many festive occasions.

Luau: a feast.

Shoyu Chicken: a "Local" dish involving simmering chicken in soy sauce and other spices. Usually served over rice.

"Talk Stink": Speaking about someone in a condescending manner. Talking stink about someone rarely involves the direct confrontation of that person, instead commonly refers to rumor, hearsay, and behind-one's-back talk.

Hapa: literally, "part" or "fraction." *Hapa* is most frequently used to describe those of multi-racial background. In this case, the term *Hapa-Haole* would describe someone of

part-White background. Colloquially, the term "hapa" alone is used to refer to the same thing.

Choke: Pidgin English for "lots."

Brah/Bra: "bro."

Punahou School: a wealthy, private educational institution serving grades K-12. It is located in the heart of Honolulu.

Loco Moco Drive-In: a "plate lunch" fast-food chain on Oahu. It serves an assortment of "Local" favorites such as Barbecue Chicken over rice, Grilled Kalbi, Lemon Chicken, and Beef Stew.

Moke: A slang term for someone tough, physical, and generally of Hawaiian or mixed ancestry. "Mokey" culture is thus a loose term that characterizes any activity or behavior perceived to be "Moke" culture.

"The City": A nickname for "The City & County of Honolulu," often used by the employees of DPS. In my thesis, references to "the City," "the city government," and "the Honolulu city government" are all the same place.

Interviewee List

*All names have been listed by initials only. Interviewees who have been directly quoted or referenced in this thesis are also listed by pseudonym.

7/1: M.O. ----- "Manny"

7/1: A.A.

7/2: R.A. ----- "Roger"

7/2: D.N. ----- "Daniel"

7/3: I.P. ----- "Irene"

7/7: J.L. ----- "Jeremy"

7/7: J.W.

7/8: T.H. ----- "Thomas".

7/9: B.M. ----- "Kim"

7/9: J.M. ----- "George"

7/14: M.I. ----- "Manny"

7/15: E.E. ----- "Ellie"

7/16: S.J. ----- "Susan"

7/17: D.S. ----- "Dennis"

7/17: J.P.

7/18: D.I. ----- "Dorothy"

7/21: J.B. ----- "James"

7/22: K.F. ----- "Kenny"

7/24: L.V. ----- "Lacy"

7/24: K.T.

7/25: H.O. ----- "Harrison"

7/29: L.K.M. ----- "Lauren"

8/4: R.S.

8/5: E.N. ----- "Ernest"

8/6: W.H.

8/11: M.K.

Others Quoted:

B.A. ------ "Ben"

Additional people, not interviewed:

D.F. ----- "Doreen"

Bibliography

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." In Karabel and Halsey, eds., *Power and Ideology in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J. Richardson, 1986: 241-258.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Brown, Nicholas and Imre Szeman, editors. *Pierre Bourdieu*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000.

Cooper, George and Gavan Daws. *Land and Power in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990.

Dadger, Anis. *The Co-Ethnic Buddy System: Hiring Networks among Hispanics in the United States*. 2005. Accessed via, http://www.tcnj.edu/~business/economics/documents/dadgar.thesis.tcnj.pdf on 1/28/09.

Guillory, John. "Bourdieu's Refusal." In *Pierre Bourdieu*, edited by Nicholas Brown and Imre Szeman. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000.

Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Levine, Rhonda F. editor. *Social Class and Stratification*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc, 1998.

Leong, Chris S. *"You Local or What?": An Exploration of Identity in Hawaii*. Doctoral Diss., Graduate School of the Union Institute, 1997.

Lind, Andrew. *Hawaii's People: Fourth Edition*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980.

Karabel, Jerome and A.H. Halsey, editors. *Power and Ideology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Karsten, Margaret. *Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006.

Kitano, Harry. *Japanese Americans: The evolution of a subculture*. Massachusetts: Ginn, 1969.

Macleod, Jay. *Ain't No Makin' It.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

Miyares, Ines, M. *Expressing "Local Culture" in Hawai'i*. Geographical Review, vol. 98 (October 2008): 513-531.

Murphy, Raymond. *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Ogawa, Dennis. *Kodomo No Tame Ni*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978.

Okamura, Jonathan. "Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii." *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 7 no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1980): 119-137.

Okamura, Jonathan. *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawaii*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

Okamura, Jonathan. "Why There Are No Asian Americans in Hawaii: The Continuing Significance of Local Identity." *Social Process in Hawaii*, vol. 35 (1994): 161-178.

Parkin, Frank, editor. *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1974.

Portes, Alejandro and Ruben G. Rumbaut, editors. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.

Tilly, Charles. *Durable Inequality*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.

Waldinger, Roger. *Still the Promised City?* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Waldinger, Roger, editor. *Strangers at the Gates*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.

Waters, Mary. *Ethnic Options: Identities in America*. Lost Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.

Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In *Social Class and Stratification*. edited by Rhonda Levine. England: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Whittaker, Elvi. *The Mainland Haole: The White Experience*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1986.

Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labor*. New York: Columbia University, 1977.

Wilson, David and James O. Huff, editors. *Marginalized Places and Populations*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994.

Wynter, Leon E. *American Skin: Pop Culture, Big Business, and the End of White America*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2002.