Middle Easterners is still up for grabs. The recent antagonism between the United States and Middle Eastern nations and the threat of terrorism produces a definite potential for the demotion of Middle Easterners into an alienated status. Although I discuss only African Americans as part of the perpetually alienated racial group, there are clearly circumstances that may lead other groups to join them in this status.

5. This position is supported by evidence that indicates that white/Hispanic children (Gallagher 2004b; Waters 1998), white/Indian (Harris 2002), and white/Asian children (Harris 2002; Moran 2001: 107; Waters 1998; Wu 2001) are relatively more likely to identify as white or multiracial than black/white children. Furthermore, research with census data has indicated that black/white couples who do not identify their children as multiracial tend to identify them as black, whereas Asian/white and Hispanic/white couples who do not identify their children as multiracial tend to identify them as white (Tafaya, Johnson, and Hill 2004). Thus, it is unlikely that the offspring of whites and nonblack minorities are more likely to accept a minority-based social perspective than one that is grounded in their potential majority position.

6. The use of attitudinal surveys has come under criticism of late (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2001), but, as I argued in my book (2003c), such quantitative work is necessary if we are going to make generalizable arguments about distinct racial groups.

7. Padilla (2000) argues that the recent arrival of Hispanics is important since it deprives this group of experiencing the civil rights struggle that resulted in the development of affirmative action. Thus, Cuban Americans may be more informed about the process that they did not have to fight for.

8. The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium filed a brief in support of affirmative action, whereas the Asian American Legal Foundation filed a brief to oppose it.

9. Personal communication with Michael Emerson.

10. It is insightful that Meskos and Butler compare the military to educational institutions because there have been many overt attempts to use educational organizations to enhance racial diversity and many scholars have envisioned that education is an important solution for racism (Jackman and Mahu 1994; Kline and Smith 1986; Selzwick and Steinberg 1969). To the degree that military institutions may be more successful in accomplishing these goals than educational organizations, it is valuable to examine why the military may be relatively successful.

11. For example, I recently finished a book (2003b) aimed at helping religious organizations to racially integrate. In this book I outline several principles used by successful racially integrated churches to maintain their multiracial nature. Although this book is targeted at religious congregations, these principles may be useful for nonreligious organizations supporting multiracial primary relationships.

Hawai‘i has long been linked to ideas and images about race and particularly about multiraciality. Those ideas and images have in turn been linked to a racial hierarchy that has sustained racial injustice in the islands. For several generations, the hierarchy has meant racial injustice, primarily for Native Hawaiians (Kanaka Maoli) and less for other peoples of color, masked by a tourist discourse celebrating happy, docile Polynesians and a genial multicultural society. Late in the twentieth century and early in the twenty-first, a new racial discourse championing Native Hawaiian sovereignty began to change some of the implications imputed to the local racial hierarchy. Those changes have the potential to affect racial justice in ways both positive and negative for Hawai‘i’s people. This new racial discourse incited our critique and inspired our further development of a conceptual cultural space, a middle space that we call the midaltern. We introduce the concept of the midaltern as a more precise and inclusive way to describe the identities of those ignored or erased by the current discourse.

Colonial Thinking in Hawai‘i
Captain James Cook and nineteenth-century Euro-American missionaries saw Hawaiians as a race apart from themselves, physically different and characterologically inferior (Green 2002). European-derived outsiders emphasized the strangeness and the strange attractiveness of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. They wrote about the natural wonders of the Hawaiian landscape—volcanoes, gleaming sands, teeming reefs, deep jungles, and tall waterfalls—and set those images alongside descriptions of Native Hawaiian people, portraying them as part of the landscape too, as childlike, primitive, violent, irresponsible,

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gloriously sexual, and in need of benevolent colonial rule by such people as themselves (Porteus 1945).

By the final third of the nineteenth century, European diseases had reduced the Kanaka Maoli population by 95 percent. Entrepreneurs, mainly Euro-Americans, brought in tens of thousands of Chinese and then Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, and others to work the islands’ growing sugar plantations (Beechert 1985; Osorio 2002b; Sannard 1989; Takaki 1983). Thus the population of the islands quickly came to include substantial numbers of people from many parts of the Pacific, from Asia, and from North America. In short order, the white (haole) minority seized control of most of Hawai‘i’s agricultural land, overthrew the Native Hawaiian monarchy, made Hawai‘i a formal US colony, and set about marketing the islands abroad (Allen 1982; Dougherty 1992; Kame‘eleihiwa 1992; Kent 1983; Lili‘uokalani 1898/1964; Osorio 2002b; for comic relief, Twigg-Smith 1998).

A central theme in the haole attempt to market Hawai‘i was to characterize it as “the melting pot of the Pacific” and “the meeting place of East and West.” The theme of multiracial harmony was a crucial support for the haole attempt to take over and make over the islands. Lori Pierce, a historian of territorial-era Hawai‘i, characterizes it this way:

Racial tensions lay just beneath the surface of daily life in Hawai‘i, but race as a source of conflict or distress was rarely if ever discussed publicly. Instead, the haole ruling class constantly depicted Hawai‘i as a racial paradise, a place where the Hawaiians, haole, Japanese, and Chinese lived cooperatively. Civic celebrations such as Balboa Day that featured all of the ethnic groups of Hawai‘i were typical. These parades, pageants, and public celebrations were a way of depicting life in Hawai‘i to tourists, residents, and mainland audiences, who read about them in Paradise of the Pacific and Mid-Pacific Magazine. The message being communicated was that ethnic diversity was not a threat to the haole ruling class. In fact, Euro-Americans were firmly in control and turning Hawai‘i into a thoroughly American territory. (2004: 127)

Pierce (2005) links this celebration of harmony to Americanization campaigns in the continental United States and to uses of social science to subjugate Asian and Pacific peoples.

The haole elite that created the story of intercultural harmony as a mask for its own racial privilege then sold that image abroad; in the United States and elsewhere, as a way to bring tourists and money into the islands. Hawai‘i was marketed, in the 1910s as in the 2000s, as a place of warm, conflict-free interaction among peoples where tourists would be welcome to come and spend their dollars and yen. Outrigger Hotels (2004), in marketing Hawai‘i, completely erases Kanaka Maoli from their literature, naturalizes Euro-Americans as if they were native to Hawai‘i, and assumes the inevitability and superiority of “modern” Euro-American culture in what they characterize as the “Melting Pot of the Pacific.”

### Multiraciality in Hawai‘i

Some of the most influential books about Hawai‘i stress multiraciality. Sidney Gulick, an American missionary to Japan born in the Marshall Islands to missionary parents, lived his later years in Hawai‘i and wrote Mixing the Races in Hawai‘i in 1937. The book’s first several pages, prior to even a title or paragraph of text, consist of pictures of twenty-eight high school and college students, most of them racially mixed. Each of them is labeled racially, and many are fractionated—“6/8 Hawaiian, 1/6 French, 1/6 Hindu, 1/6 Negro, 1/6 Arabian”—but none is given a name. What was important, apparently, was not their persons but the pseudoscientific racial categories that could be laid on them. Gulick began the written portion of his rhapsody to multiraciality and American triumphalism with this paean to harmonious blending:

> Here a poly-racial, poly-chrome, poly-linguistic, poly-religious and thoroughly heterogeneous population is being transformed into a homogeneous people, speaking a common language—English—holding common political, ethical, social and religious ideas and ideals, putting into practice with remarkable success the principles of racial equality, and maintaining a highly effective, democratic form of government. The races are actually growing together—fusing biologically. (1937: v)

The most widely read book about Hawai‘i in the territorial period was University of Hawaiian sociologist Romano Adams’s magnum opus, Interracial Marriage in Hawai‘i (1937). Although it was more scholarly than Gulick’s, it also had the racially labeled pictures, and it celebrated racial mixing and told a story of interracial harmony. So, it appears, what was important about Hawai‘i was race—specifically, racial harmony—and intermarriage and multiracial people were the emblems of that harmony.

As the territory slipped toward statehood, James Michener wrote the novel Hawaii, a thousand-page tribute to “those Golden Men who see both the West and the East, who cherish the glowing past and who apprehend the obscure future” (1959: 937) that would necessarily be framed by Euro-American cultural imperatives. This was a variation on the melting pot theme that stressed not racial blending so much as Hawai‘i’s location as the place where the peoples of Asia met the peoples of Europe and America in harmony and mutual understanding. The meeting place theme is the very raison d’être for the East-West Center, Hawai‘i’s most prominent intellectual factory. It is behind the location of a major Baha‘i temple nearby, along with the headquarters of innumerable East-West internationalist societies. The center’s mission statement (1999) praises East-West harmony, but Hawai‘i and Hawaiians are not mentioned. They are subsumed under Asia, and the United States is assumed to be the leader and the agenda setter of the dialogue with Asia the center is designed to foster.

Some parts of this picture are accurate. There are in fact a lot of people in Hawai‘i whose ancestors came, or who came themselves, from different
countries. Hawai‘i’s identity as a land of many different kinds of immigrants reflects demography as well as haole propaganda. Hawai‘i is in fact the only state where whites have never constituted a numerical majority of the population despite their disproportionate power, and the only one with an Asian and Pacific Islander majority (Gibson and Jung 2002). A higher percentage of people in Hawai‘i acknowledge multiple racial ancestries than in any other US state, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world. Hawai‘i is the only US state or territory that has long kept statistics that record racial multiplicity. For many years, people of mixed Kanaka Maoli and haole parentage constituted something of a distinct social group, and their numbers were recorded separately in state records (Schmitt 1968, 1977).

In 2000, 21.4 percent of Hawai‘i’s residents voluntarily checked more than one racial box on US Census forms, compared to a national rate of 2.4 percent. Far more than that could have qualified: many mixed people checked only one box, and others had mixed ancestry that fell within one of the census’s “racial” categories (“New Multiracial Classification” 2001). Hawaiians and other islanders are especially mixed. A survey in the mid-1990s found that 69 percent of Pacific Islanders who lived in Hawai‘i and 86 percent of Native Hawaiians recognized they possessed multiple ancestries. Despite substantial social pressure to identify with their island ancestry only, 53 percent of Pacific Islanders and 49 percent of Native Hawaiians identified with another ancestry as well (Spickard 1995). One accomplishment of all this actual mixing has been the rise and celebration of a mixed culture and identity called “local,” including local food, local styles of dress, local modes of human relationship (Grant and Ogawa 1993; Okamura 1994; Yamamoto 1979), and a local language, Pidgin (Pak 1992; Sakoda and Siegel 2003; Tonouchi 2001, 2002).

So the motif of racial mixture in Hawai‘i is not just a tourist marketer’s myth; it is also a social fact. Yet the multiracial characterization does run the risk of glamorizing multiplicity and ignoring the harder racial realities of colonial domination in the islands, not just in the past but currently. What Pierce (2004) calls “the discourse of aloha” makes the islands seem an attractive tourist paradise. At the same time, it obscures the racial domination by haoles over other island residents and the hierarchies among those peoples of color. Insofar as it treats non-native peoples of color in Hawai‘i, the discourse of aloha speaks of them in heroic terms of Asian immigrant uplift from plantation near-slavery to middle-class achievement by way of virtuous behavior, hard work, and not openly challenging haole domination. Eiko Kosasa (2000) describes

the immigrant ideological perspectives Nisei [second-generation Japanese] settlers wanted to pass on to the Sansei and Yonsei [their children and grandchildren], . . . the Japanese response to U.S. nationalism, representing the Japanese experience as willingly traveling on the American “immigrant”

Dorothy Hazama and Jane Komeiji cast their community’s history as the “story about the struggles and successes of the Japanese in Hawaii,” which was achieved by “belief in strong family ties, hard work, and perseverance, . . . education, and sensitivity and humility” (Hazama and Komeiji 1986: 255; see also Glick 1980; Kimura 1988; Lind 1946; Ogawa 1978).

The discourse of aloha ignores Native Hawaiians almost completely, treating them as museum curiosities, tourist entertainers, and a dying breed. This is true even in so fine a book as Ronald Takaki’s Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii (1983). After the first chapter, Kanaka Maoli are all but invisible; the plantation laborers are almost all Asians of one sort or another, and no questions are asked about the status of Hawaiians. The standard histories of Hawai‘i attend to the radical decline of the Hawaiian population, and then, after the 1898 annexation by the United States, they act as if Native Hawaiians all but ceased to exist and turn their attention almost exclusively to haoles and Asians (Daws 1968; Fuchs 1961). Ralph S. Kuykendall and A. Grove Day lament what they regard as the inevitable “national population . . . extinction” (1961: 127; but see Noyes 2003). In the “modern Hawai‘i” celebrated by Outrigger Hotels, Native Hawaiians have ceded the islands to entrepreneurial Asians and Euro-Americans. They contribute culture that others then get to perform and from which others take the profit, but they are no longer actors in their own land. The action has been taken over by other racial groups.

Kanaka Maoli Sovereignty

In recent years, Native Hawaiians have created a political movement to reestablish Kanaka Maoli political and cultural sovereignty. A cultural renaissance of Hawaiian music, dance, and language use in the 1970s and 1980s led to increasingly insistent demands for restoration to the Hawaiian people of the independence that was taken away in the nineteenth century (Kanahele 1986). There are as many strategies for sovereignty as there are groups of Hawaiians active in the strident public debate. Some organizations, like Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, advocate creation of a self-governing Hawaiian nation within the nation that is the United States, in a relationship roughly analogous to that of federally recognized Native American tribes on the North American continent. Such an arrangement would involve creation of a Hawaiian government from within the Kanaka Maoli population and the transfer to that government of substantial public lands. Others advocate a greater degree of autonomy in a compact of free association with the United States like that employed by the Federated State of Micronesia. Some call
for full independence (Dudley and Agard 1993; Laenui 1994; McGregor 2002; Osorio 2002a; Trask 1999, 2000).

The push for Native Hawaiian sovereignty is a movement with which both authors of this chapter are in sympathy. At its heart, the sovereignty movement is a quest for racial justice. Haunani-Kay Trask describes the situation in Hawai‘i and the Pacific this way:

We in the Pacific have been pawns in the power games of the “master” races since colonialism first brought Euro-Americans into our vast ocean home. After Western contact destroyed millions of us through introduced diseases, conversion to Christianity occurred in the chaos of physical and spiritual dismemberment. Economic and political incorporation into foreign countries (Britain, France, the Netherlands, the United States) followed upon mass death. Since the Second World War, we Pacific Islander survivors have been witnesses to nuclear nightmare.

She decrees “militarization and increasing nuclearization of the Pacific... toxic dumping... commodification of island cultures... economic penetration and land takeovers... and forced outmigration.” She concludes:

Hawaiians have been agitating for federal recognition of the following:
1. our unique status as Native people;
2. the injury done by the United States at the overthrow, including the loss of lands and sovereignty;
3. the necessity of reparations that injury through acknowledgment of our claim to sovereignty, recognition of some form of autonomous Native government, the return of traditional lands and waters, and a package of compensatory resources, including monies. (1999: 58, 27)

III Problems with the New Racialized Discourse

One unfortunate feature of the sovereignty movement, however, at least among certain of its advocates, has been a racial essentialism that fails to account for the dominant fact of multiplicity in the population of Hawai‘i and, by that failure, threatens at least rhetorically to create another kind of racial injustice (but see Laenui 1994; McGregor 2002). That is, the rhetoric of certain prominent sovereignty advocates ignores the multiraciality of nearly all Native Hawaiians, at the same time that it lumps together all non-ethnic Hawaiians as “settler colonials” (Kauanui 1998, 2000, 2002). The argument is advanced by Candace Fujikane, who ranks herself among the Asian settler colonials:

Our presence as local Asians in Hawai‘i was established through a colonial process, and Hawai‘i’s history, like that of Native Americans, is a violent one of genocide and land theft... In 1954, the Democratic Party “Revolution” ushered in a new era of local Asian political ascendancy. Although Asians in Hawai‘i and on the continent are settlers, Hawai‘i has become a white and Asian settler colony in which Asian settlers, particularly Japanese settlers, now dominate state institutions and apparatuses. (2000: xvi)

Fujikane repudiates the “master narrative of hard work and triumph that has been adopted by a new ‘democratically’ elected Asian ruling class.” She charges that “local Asians’ efforts to differentiate themselves from haole or whites in Hawai‘i mask Native struggles against Asian settler colonialism. In a colonial situation, haole and Asian settlers actively participate in the continued dispossession of Native Hawaiians” (xvii).

What, in such a schema, is the place of people who are native to the Hawaiian islands but who are not Native Hawaiians? Granted that Asians who came on labor contracts to work in sugar and pineapple fields were taking part in a colonial process, it is not the case that they came on the same terms as haole who seized the lands and government. One may criticize the self-glorification of their descendants and those descendants’ habit of erasing Native Hawaiians from their historical narrative (as we have criticized them in this chapter), without dismissing all non-Kanaka Maoli as foreign to the islands and illegitimate usurpers of places there. In particular, this extreme, essentialist version of sovereignty racializes all non-Kanaka Maoli together and blurs pertinent distinctions among some of the settler peoples who live in the islands. Any survey, scholarly or popular, of Hawai‘i’s current social structure would put three ethnic groups at the top in terms of wealth, education, status, and access to power: haole, Chinese, and Japanese (in that order). But such a survey would put these three groups at the bottom: Hawaiians, Samoans, and Filipinos (in that order). Samoans, by the definition of Fujikane and others, are settler colonials, and Filipinos are Asian settler colonials. But if they are settler colonials, then their colonialism is of another sort than that of Chinese, haoles, or Japanese.

Further, the advocates of this particular, racialized version of Kanaka Maoli sovereignty ignore the multiracial lineage of many people in Hawai‘i. Nearly all the advocates of Native Hawaiian sovereignty are themselves ancestrally mixed. That does not make them less Hawaiian or less able to represent the aspirations of the Hawaiian people. But the discourse of Hawaiian sovereignty, at least in the extreme racist form advocated by Fujikane and others, does tend to mask that multiraciality and to set up extreme oppositions between native people and others.

IV The Midaltern

As a way out of the current impasse of essentialism and opposition in Hawaiian racial politics, we propose the concept of the “midaltern.” We have coined “the midaltern” and its associated state of “midalternity” in reference
to subaltern studies as postcolonial criticism. They are useful notions for moving beyond a dominant-dominated dichotomy toward a deeper understanding of the complex and dynamic interplay of social identities in Hawai‘i. Although efforts to essentialize and dichotomize may seem useful for simplifying arguments aimed at critiquing colonial domination, thinking only in terms of a settler colonialist–Kanaka Maoli binary fails to acknowledge those who do not fit neatly into those categories. Three examples germane to the Hawai‘i context challenge the binary and necessitate the further conceptual understanding made available through the concepts of the midaltern and midalternity.

First, the settler colonialist–Kanaka Maoli binary fails to acknowledge the multiraciality that is so ubiquitous in Hawai‘i. According to the 2000 census, over 20 percent of Hawai‘i’s population chose to report being more than one race. Most of them include Kanaka Maoli in their ancestry. If the rule of hypodescent applies in cases of determining Kanaka Maoli ancestry, what becomes of the other, often unacknowledged, aspects of their identities? Midalternity readily permits one the possibility to claim membership in more than one social group.

Second, binary thinking obscures the status of those in Hawai‘i who are from groups who were also directly colonized by the United States. For example, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, Chamorros, and Samoans were colonized as part of the same US colonial expansion that occurred at the time of the Spanish American War (see Amerasia Journal 26(2) and Wei and Kamel 1998). Focusing on the plight of Kanaka Maoli as a colony people ignoring or discounting others whose homelands were also colonized only serves further to oppress members of these other groups who also live in Hawai‘i. The midaltern provides a more pertinent conceptual space for the colonized in Hawai‘i who are not Kanaka Maoli. Although they are not indigenous to the islands, they too are subjugated peoples who should not simply be branded as oppressors.

Third, binary thinking does not allow us to understand and conceptualize beyond the dominant-dominated, colonizer-colonized relationship, especially with regard to those whose personal cultural values are not consistent with those typically ascribed to their particular racial identities. What about Native Hawaiians who espouse Euro-American cultural values more than Kanaka Maoli values? Or consider a Native Hawaiian who acts haole in public but lives as a Kanaka Maoli at home? They are examples of people who do not fit neatly into the binary but who instead would be suited to a midaltern understanding of their identities.

The midaltern is a middle space that allows for the inclusion of and a richer understanding of these kinds of phenomena. Although the midaltern was named in relation to the subaltern and the superaltern, the concept is actually based on a kind of worldview common to Hawai‘i and much of the Pacific. In Hawai‘i, this kind of worldview clearly manifests itself in the culture, language, and identity known simply as “local.” Local identity, frequently characterized by the use of Pidgin and the celebration of mixedness, is a viable and often salient identity choice available to multiracial people in Hawai‘i. Although this midaltern identity provides for hybridity, it is also a conceptual space for fluidity, ambiguity, and contradiction. Local midaltern identities include those formed between and among particular, indigenous ways of being and dominant, Western, colonial, and even so-called global ways. Other terms that reflect this midalternity include duality, multiplicity, multiple identities, and strange compromises—language that commonly describes the social identities of many navigating race in Hawai‘i.

The Local as Midaltern: The Emergence of the Local from the Old Racial Discourse

Although the older racialized discourse of aloha is merely being replaced by a newer, racialized, settler–Kanaka Maoli discourse, it is important to take stock of the most significant contribution of the old discourse. The unexpected consequence of promoting aloha and celebrating diversity is the multiethnic identity commonly referred to in Hawai‘i as local. A clear dichotomy existed that divided the population during the plantation period in Hawaiian history. Haoles held most of the positions of power as plantation owners, managers, supervisors, financiers, and merchants. Non-haoles did the backbreaking work at meager wages as plantation laborers, service workers, and domestics. The roots of local identity developed out of this shared class experience, but the egalitarian attitudes toward other ethnic groups also grew out of familiarity facilitated by the passage of time and expedited by living and working in close proximity. Most importantly, non-native and non-haole residents took up the prevailing attitude of aloha, from both the authentic native source and the haole discourse. Non-haoles embraced the melting pot ideal promoted by the haole oligarchy and readily bought into the myth. The discourse of aloha that Pierce described was easy to buy into, simply because it was based on truth and because the social conditions of the islands were ripe for panethnic alliances among its working class. Indeed, aloha was the glue that facilitated the formation of alliances that crossed ethnic boundaries.

Non-haoles forged alliances that reflected their common subordinate status to the dominant haole group (Okamura 1980). An alliance evidently appeared during the sugar strike of 1920. Although it was not the first strike against plantation ownership and management, the 1920 strike was significant because it was the first interethnic strike in Hawai‘i (Okamura 1980; Takaki 1983). Workers, mainly Filipinos and Japanese, cooperated with each other, but as soon as Filipinos struck, large numbers of Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese joined in. Their solidarity prevented the planters from effectively pitting ethnic groups against each other as strikebreakers, which
had previously been the planters' prevailing strategy. Although the planters claimed victory after weathering the six-month strike, in hindsight strikers considered the strike of 1920 a success because three months later, the planters quietly met the strikers' demands. The time was marked by a sense of cooperation and unity that transcended ethnic boundaries (Takaki 1983).

More evidence of this interethnic unity exploded onto the public landscape through sentiment surrounding the Massie case of 1931–1932. The sensationalized case, which made national headlines, concerned a hāole woman, the wife of a naval officer, who was allegedly raped by a group of five young men. Two of the men were Native Hawaiian, two were Japanese, and one was Native Hawaiian–Chinese. The rape case ended in a mistrial. The husband and mother of Thalia Massie, the alleged victim, with the help of two naval midshipmen, took matters into their own hands and lynched Joseph Kahahawai, one of the accused five. The hāole vigilantes were found guilty of manslaughter. They were sentenced to ten years of hard labor, only to have their sentence commuted to one day served in the territorial governor's office. Hawai'i residents were outraged by the inequitable handling of the case by hāole leadership. The case was an insult to non-hāoles, who overwhelmingly identified with the "local boys." Discussions of the Massie case, whether in the print media or on the lips of gossips, are often cited as the first time that the term "local" was used with any salience (Rosa 2000; Yamamoto 1979).

This unity further solidified during World War II, when the distinction between non-hāoles and the hordes of hāole servicemen stationed in the islands became even more apparent. Solidarity manifested itself once again during the large-scale sugar strikes of 1946. Workers of all the various ethnic groups drew on their shared experiences of mistreatment by American hāoles and combined together in one labor organization—the Congress of Industrial Organizations—International Longshore and Warehouse Union (Rademaker 1947). This alliance, nurtured by harmonious race relations reinforced by the discourse of aloha, developed into a common identity.

This common identity coalesced over time as a result of social interactions among different ethnic groups at work, school, and church and in the community, leisure activities, and the home, most notably through intermarriage. Various character traits are associated with a local identity. They include being "easygoing, friendly, open, trusting, humble, generous, loyal to family and friends, and indifferent to achieved status distinctions" (Okamura 1998: 268). These attributes characterize the positive perceptions of Hawaiians and are in opposition to conventional hāole values that emphasize "directness, competition, individualism, achievement of status, and the necessity for impersonal, contractual relationships." Jonahān Okamura provided this description of local: "Local has come to represent the common identity of the people of Hawai'i and their appreciation of the inherent value of the land, peoples, and cultures of the islands" (Okamura 1980).

Local identity transcends ethnicity but does not assume that being local guarantees equal status between ethnic groups. Okamura pointed out that differences between groups tend to be ignored in certain situations, especially when nonlocals are involved. Locals often emphasize their links of class and racial solidarity (Chang 1996). Differences arise in situations in which disparate access to positions of status is at issue. For example, Okamura described the contention from Kanaka Maoli and Filipinos that the public school system, at the hands of mostly Japanese administrators and teachers, does not provide equal educational opportunities or attend to the special educational needs of Kanaka Maoli and Filipino students (Okamura 1980).

Jeff Chang addressed these differences within local identity when he wrote: "From the social, political and economic margins, Filipino and native Hawaiian activists often speak of how the privileged local elite (most often, Japanese and Chinese) have forgotten the memory of their oppression at the hands of hāoles" (1996: 22). Chang sees local consciousness as split, "sometimes mimicking and other times resisting colonial narratives" (Chang 1996). His notion of local consciousness accurately describes the fluid nature of local identity that depends so heavily on context. Sometimes Hawaiian locals reflect more Euro-American values, and sometimes they exhibit more Hawaiian values. Due to the range of fluidity between value systems that are often polar opposites, localness can be difficult to pin down—that is, unless multiplicity and fluidity are considered as key descriptors of local identity.

**Local Types**

There are many kinds of locals in Hawai'i. The scope of local diversity depends on one's definition of local. Providing concrete examples may help to define what counts as a local in Hawai'i. An important part of our argument is that midaterinity allows for fluidity—namely, the shifting of identities depending on context—and we argue against essentializing identities, but a typology can be a useful heuristic tool for beginning a closer examination of different kinds of locals. The typology presented in Table 5.1 represents a starting point for further understanding the complexity involved with constructing racialized identities in Hawai'i.

The table illustrates the interactions of two variables, racialized identity and worldview. The identity categories used here include those consistent with both the old and the new racialized discourses. For instance, the non-hāole and hapa (someone of partial Native Hawaiian ancestry, but see Table 5.1) categories from the old discourse are both subdivided to reflect the further distinction from the new discourse categories of Kanaka Maoli and settler. Four basic types of worldview categories represent the multitude of diverse ideologies held by those living in Hawai'i. Again, they correspond to categories drawn from the old and new racialized discourses. A
Table 5.1: Types of Midheithem Expressions in Hawai‘i (shaded). Racialized Identity by Worldview (including indications of local identity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haole</th>
<th>Non-Haole</th>
<th>Settler</th>
<th>Hawaiian, local</th>
<th>Hawaiian, non-local</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro-American worldview</td>
<td>Monocultural settler/immigrant/non-Hawaiian worldview</td>
<td>Indigenously Hawaiian worldview</td>
<td>Hawaiian, local</td>
<td>Hawaiian, non-local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haole</td>
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<td>Indigenously Hawaiian worldview</td>
<td>Hawaiian, local</td>
<td>Hawaiian, non-local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The shaded areas of the table indicate those who are typically more unidimensional in character. They ordain identity, or are identified, with the cultural worldview usually attached to their identity. Non-Haole, for instance, means they are not necessarily local.

Euro-American worldview is most associated with haole identity. Although a local worldview is associated with non-haole identities in general, a Kanaka Maoli worldview specifically represents indigenous perspectives mostly reserved for Native Hawaiians. And the monocultural settler/immigrant/non-haole/non-Hawaiian worldview category serves as a catchall for all other monolithically defined settler worldviews (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, etc.). The intersections of these identity and worldview categories begin to depict the kinds of diverse possibilities for identity that actually exist in Hawai‘i.

Each cell provides a description or example of a type of potential identity, based on the interaction of one’s racialized identity and one’s personal worldview. For example, note that the identity of a person racialized as haole and possessing a Euro-American worldview is not considered local. The identity represented in that particular cell is prototypically haole. In this example, the visual physical cues linked with the haole racialized identity are directly paired with the views and behaviors most associated with a Euro-American, or haole, worldview. In contrast, consider someone racialized as haole who actually possesses an indigenous Kanaka Maoli worldview. An example of this is someone who was adopted or married into a Kanaka Maoli family and who may have internalized a Kanaka Maoli worldview while being embraced by their Kanaka Maoli family. In this case, someone whose racialized appearance is haole may actually be considered local, possibly even as Kanaka Maoli. So this typology makes it possible to distinguish differences in identity that go beyond superficial classification based on physiognomy or ancestry. This typology also considers the ideological perspectives of an individual in the construction of her or his identity.

The typology presented here also includes an indication of the degree to which each particular interaction of racialized identity and worldview can be considered local. All but one of the cells in this table represent identities that can potentially be regarded as local. Some have more claim to local identity than others. For instance, a Kanaka Maoli who possesses an indigenous worldview may choose to identify as local. This choice would not be contested because Kanaka Maoli are usually considered the most authentically local identity associated with Hawai‘i. By contrast, a haole possessing a Kanaka Maoli or local worldview is not automatically granted local status, due to his or her appearance. In order to prove one’s localness, that person would have to perform localness or Hawaiian-ness by practicing language or cultural expressions associated with being local or Kanaka Maoli. This can often be accomplished through speaking Pidgin or Hawaiian or adopting Hawaiian cultural practices like surfing, performing hula, or any of a number of traditions associated with local culture in Hawai‘i.

Multiraciality, though not expressly mentioned in the local-haole and Kanaka Maoli-settler dichotomies, was an undeniable aspect of localness in
Local Identity Models

Imagine a blob that has the consistency of the lava in a lava lamp. The blob represents everyone living in Hawai‘i. The blob morphs into a form shaped like an hourglass and eventually pulls apart and separates in the middle. This image indicates the current direction that identity politics in Hawai‘i are heading. It describes the effect of the change in racialized discourse and the corresponding decrease in the salience of local identity. The dwindling salience of the local is due to a number of factors, including the diminution of Pidgin, the language of local culture, and the increasing influence of American popular culture, especially MTV and hip-hop. It is also an effect of the ever-increasing number of people of Kanaka Maoli ancestry who identify more strongly with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, focusing primarily on their identity as indigenous people instead of their local identity. This is, of course, consistent with the new shift in discourse.

In Figure 5.1, the local part of each model pictured, bounded by dashed lines, represents the middle space that includes both haole and Hawaiian portions. Local identity, which includes elements of haole and Hawaiian cultures in addition to major contributions from other settler cultures, is the space that allows for fluid movement between the poles, depending on context. Although
Native Hawaiian sovereignty and nationalism combine simultaneously to give Hawaiian and English currency and prestige at the expense of Hawaiian Pidgin. This analogue is significant because it considers the forces that are diminishing Hawai‘i Pidgin and the local identity it represents. While the once-dying language of Hawaiian is experiencing a resurgence, Pidgin is gradually losing its status as the primary language of most non-haoles. Codified into law as official languages of the state of Hawai‘i, English and Hawaiian continue to increase in prominence, but the use of Pidgin is frowned upon in schools and is mostly utilized in public discourse for comic relief and the telling of ethnic jokes. Even as the decline of Pidgin and local identity is becoming increasingly noticeable, so are efforts to maintain and preserve it. The recent publication of a Pidgin translation of the New Testament and a growing body of local literature written in Pidgin contribute to its legitimization as a language and help to perpetuate the cultures to which Pidgin is tied. Plays written and performed in Pidgin continue to gain in popularity, resulting in a strong enough following to support performing arts dedicated to local culture.

Just as these local identity models are useful for understanding phenomena at the societal level, they can also illuminate the fluidity that occurs at an individual level. The model represents the identity of a single individual, and the details depicted by the figure represent aspects of that individual. Consider the example of a Native Hawaiian who acts haole in public but lives as a Kanaka Maoli in the privacy of his own home. Imagine that both models pictured in Figure 5.2 represent this same person in two different contexts.

![Figure 5.2 Local Identity Model Illustrating the Fluidity of an Individual’s Identity](image)

The first one represents our subject’s apparent identity at work, and the second one represents him or her at home.

In the first model, on the left, note the large haole portion and the smaller Hawaiian portion. Imagine that our subject works in a business office in Honolulu, a context primarily governed by haole values. To act more haole would likely be advantageous in this situation. Once our subject leaves the workplace and retreats to the sanctuary of home, the model transforms into a different shape. In the version of the model pictured on the right, note the small haole portion and the larger Hawaiian portion. Away from the haole-dominated workplace, our subject is able more fully to assert the Kanaka Maoli portion of his or her identity. The presence of the local part of the model, the middle space that includes both haole and Hawaiian portions, represents a salient identity in which all this operates.

Multiplicity and fluidity are the hallmarks of local identity. Various kinds of identities in Hawai‘i fall under the local umbrella, making it a diverse and dynamic identity that defies strict categorization. Local identity is Hawai‘i’s organic manifestation of midalternity. It is akin to mestiza as discussed by Anzaldúa (1987) and borderland theoretical projects in how it constructs a sanctioned space devoted to conceptualizing identities for those left out or pushed out by dominant paradigms, especially dichotomies. The local cases described here were presented to help define midalternity and the midaltern. Although it would be impossible to describe the potentially limitless ways that local identities play out, it is apparent that local identity challenges dichotomous thinking, creates more possibilities, and allows for more precise identification.

## Midaltern Theory

In midaltern terms, the local midaltern identity represents the center between superaltern and subaltern identities. Theories of middle or third spaces may not be new, but the introduction of the midaltern to postcolonial discourse about the subaltern provides an additional dimension to the discussion. Just as asserting local identity as midaltern proposes a way out of the current impasse of essentialism and opposition in Hawai‘i’s racial politics—hence, a move in favor of racial justice—the concept of the midaltern can also be useful for understanding colonial and postcolonial situations in other places besides Hawai‘i. Applying the concept elsewhere, however, would involve rethinking the notion of the subaltern.

The concept of the subaltern comes from Antonio Gramsci’s writings about fascism in post–World War I Italy (Gramsci 1971; Hall 2000). Subaltern refers to subordination in the context of dominant-dominated relationships in history (Gramsci 1971; Prakash 2000). This subordination can be in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language, or culture. Although subaltern studies have witnessed differences and shifts in the use of the concept
of subalternity, the idea of subordination has remained central. The effort to rethink history from the perspective of the subordinated, or the subaltern, has also remained a consistent goal of subaltern studies (Prakash 2000). This “history from below” (Hadi 2000; Prakash 2000), focusing primarily on critiques of colonialism and Western domination, prompted the question, “What about a history from the middle approach?” Again, thinking only in terms of a dominant-dominated dichotomy fails to recognize those who reside, figuratively, somewhere in the middle. Subaltern scholars seem to relegate persons in the middle simply to the subaltern. Those meandering somewhere between and throughout dominant and dominated spaces are simply thought of as a kind of subaltern expression. In other words, the subaltern would subsume all those who, somewhere, in some way, reside in the middle. In our opinion, distinguishing the midaltern from the subaltern is an important distinction with valuable implications.

We propose the midaltern because it allows the conceptualization of a wider range of possibilities than does the subaltern. Rather than assigning people into static, essentialized, either/or categories, midalternity recognizes the existence and importance of multiplicity, thus creating the possibility for a more precise accounting of identities. The fluidity of the midaltern also allows us to take context and worldview into consideration. The performance of one’s identity can shift dramatically between contexts. Midalternity provides the conceptual space to consider shifts, depending on the situation. Midalternity’s recognition of the contextual nature of identity allows the potential for one’s identity to broaden beyond just one dimension.

This conceptualization provides the potential for more inclusive coalition building in the quest for racial justice. Although local identity is endemic to Hawai‘i and midaltern-type identities are not unique just to the islands, the United States, in general, needs a midaltern discourse. Hawai‘i’s midaltern identities may be neither applicable nor directly generalizable to all contexts in the United States, but that does not rule out the utility of midalternity for transforming the way that Americans consider identity. After all, the dichotomous terms of the current racial discourse in Hawai‘i, pitting Kanaka Maoli versus settlers, directly resemble the classic American binary of a color line separating whites and nonwhites. Many who are engaged in the struggle for social and racial equality, in their fervent quest for justice, tend to employ the same kind of limiting discourse that originally helped construct and maintain racial inequality. Even though this kind of rhetoric may seem effective in the short term for bringing matters of injustice to the fore, it in fact mimics or replicates the same kind of dominant discourse that their struggle seeks to contest (Spickard and Daniel 2004). For example, multiculturalists and multicultural educators, in their struggle against white male supremacist hegemony, often assert their diverse perspectives in essentialized, monolithic terms. Their radical discourses actually reinscribe the very kind of power relations that they seek to challenge. When multiculturalists assert their respective agendas as members of groups who define themselves in monolithic, essentialized, and categorical terms, they in turn actually ignore or marginalize those of mixed ancestry. Thus, they have replicated the same kind of inequitable power relations that they had sought to challenge. Midalternity offers the promise of ending this kind of divisiveness. It does so by providing a more comprehensive metaphor than the color line.

In Hawai‘i, this quest for racial justice would not be only for Native Hawaiians, but also for all local multicultural and settler people who have not shared fully in the blessings of settler colonialism. For example, non-Kanaka Maoli locals who feel threatened by the rhetoric of some sovereignty activists would not be as defensive if they did not also feel under attack. In fact, many of these locals may turn out to be the best allies for Kanaka Maoli and their quest for sovereignty. For those faced with the extermination of cultures, whether they be indigenous or midaltern cultures, employing all the available assistance instead of alienating potential allies would seem to better the chance of preserving those threatened cultures.

A shift toward a more inclusive and thoughtful discourse may assist locals who feel threatened by the sovereignty movement. They may finally realize that it is actually in the best interests of all locals to support wholeheartedly all efforts at achieving Kanaka Maoli sovereignty in Hawai‘i. As the original inhabitants of Hawai‘i, with a history of experience in the islands stretching back for many hundreds of years, Kanaka Maoli possess indigenous cultural values that are almost certainly the best suited for living in Hawai‘i. Local culture is heavily interconnected with Kanaka Maoli culture. If protection and active support are not given to Kanaka Maoli efforts at sovereignty, there will be a greater chance of both Kanaka Maoli and non-Hawaiian locals being engulfed and extinguished by those whose worldviews emphasize economic exploitation over the preservation of Hawai‘i’s limited and valuable resources—which include, most notably, its people.

### Notes

1. We use “Kanaka Maoli” and “Native Hawaiians” interchangeably to refer to those people who are descended from those who inhabited the islands before Europeans first arrived. For Indians’ modes of reckoning identity and inclusion, see Spickard (1995).

2. Throughout this chapter we use the term local identity as a unitary cover term for what are actually local identities (emphasizing plurality). In the same respect, local culture can arguably be viewed as a unitary panethnic culture within which are nested various local subcultures (e.g., local Japanese, local Filipino, Hawaiian, etc.).

3. Pidgin here refers to the vernacular associated with local identity and culture in Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i Pidgin is a Creole language based primarily on Hawaiian and English, with significant contributions from the languages of other ethnic groups that settled in Hawai‘i.
Mixed Messages
Multiracial Identities in the "Color-Blind" Era

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