

Decolonizing Frameworks: A Cultural Design Resource for Corrections

CATHI HO SCHAR

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

NICOLE BIEWENGA

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

MARK LOMBAWA

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Indigenous people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system throughout the world.¹ In Hawai'i, the 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i subjected Native Hawaiian people (kanaka maoli) to the sufferings of colonization, that has likewise contributed to the disproportionate over-representation of Native Hawaiians in every part of the criminal justice system.² In response, multiple task forces have called for a new vision for corrections that restores Native Hawaiian individuals to their families, communities, and the land (aina).³ In 2018, the State of Hawai'i Department of Public Safety (DPS) established a partnership with the University of Hawaii Community Design Center (UHCDC) to explore a new corrections model for Hawai'i, a restorative model that addresses and leverages the state's unique social, cultural, ecological, and economic context. The center assembled a multi-departmental team of faculty, staff, and students from the School of Architecture, College of Engineering, and Social Science Research Institute, to develop different studies to inform this new vision. The School of Architecture's scope evolved into the development of a Cultural Competency Framework aimed at "decolonizing" the state's correctional system, understanding facilities, programs, and agency operations as an inseparable whole. This discussion follows the development of a Cultural Competency Framework, that leveraged three tiers of university activity: teaching, research, and outreach to also produce a Cultural Design Process and Resource, and Aina-based Design Strategies that ultimately aim at restorative cultural landscapes for incarcerated individuals.

In Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, she notes that decolonizing efforts by indigenous communities have focused primarily on cultural revitalization and the reorganization of political relations with the state.⁴ With regard to international legislation, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was adopted in 2007. The declaration recognizes the individual and collective indigenous people's right to maintain their identity, culture, traditions, and aspirations.⁵ This provides a founding premise for the work described.

In 1898, Hawai'i was annexed by the U.S. government, ceding 1.8 million acres of land (ceded land) that were crown lands of the Hawaiian monarchy to the US federal government,

without compensation to the Hawaiian people. This colonization subjected the Native Hawaiian population to "massive depopulation, landlessness, christianization, economic and political marginalization, institutionalization in the military and prisons, poor health, and educational profiles, increasing diaspora",⁶ which continues to shape contemporary Hawai'i. Today, Native Hawaiians comprise 10% of the state's general population, yet they comprise nearly 40% of the correctional population. In response, the 2018 HCR 85 Task force report on prison reform states "our prison system should be based upon and reflect Hawai'i's core values" and should repatriate traditional Hawaiian cultural practices.⁷

This call for transformation and cultural equity framed a fourth year ARCH 415 undergraduate design studio which explored "New Models for Corrections" based on Hawai'i's unique attributes, resources, needs, and opportunities. Students developed an inventory of elements in plan and section that described their own cultural landscape. See Figure 1. Students then developed 11 hybrid models for corrections, each of which was required to address social, cultural, educational, ecological, and economic bottom lines. The models included a culinary institute, flower and tree farm, aquaculture center, aquaponics farm, coffee farm, masonry institute, recycling center, therapy community, arts & crafts academy, reforestation camp, and animal training center.

Following the ARCH 415 course, UHCDC co-organized the university's second annual Decolonizing Cities Symposium in collaboration with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, the Hawaiian School of Knowledge, and Interisland Terminal, a non-profit arts and culture organization. This effort was not tied to the project, but involved hosting a day long event with a keynote presenter, Maori architect and advocate Rau Hoskins, who presented the Maori Te Aranga Principles, which were adopted into the Auckland Design Manual. Continued exchange with Rau provided the team with rare expertise in implemented indigenous planning and design practices.

Both of these experience shaped the center's extramural work which includes parallel studies by three different university units: Architecture—Cultural Study, College of Engineering—Waste Study, Social Science Research Institute—Demographic

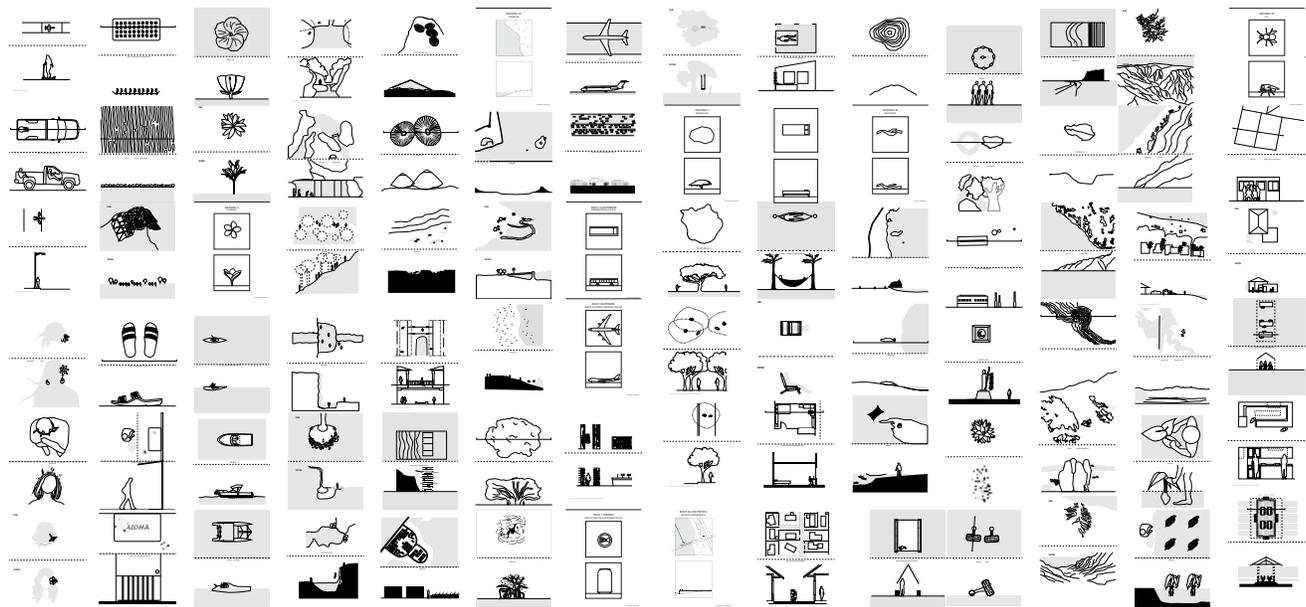


Figure1. Diagramming a cultural landscape, Fall 2017 ARCH 415 students

and Social enterprise study. The cultural study began with a series of one-hour interviews with cultural experts, educators, and community leaders to discuss and brainstorm a set of values, principles, processes, and resources to inform and support culturally competent processes. The analysis took cues from both grounded theory and thematic analysis. In a traditional implementation of grounded theory, the process began without a specific hypothesis, and used the process of analysis to “further the systematization of the collection, coding, and analysis of qualitative data for the generation of theory.”⁸ Transcriptions were analyzed using an adapted version of qualitative methodology derived from grounded theory. Starting with open coding, transcripts were coded for cultural concepts, specific suggestions or advice, ‘push-back’ or redefining of prompts, open ended questions raised by interviewees, and ‘talk story’ or when interviewees offered personal accounts or their own topics of discussion. Patterns and repetition emerged. Groups of predominant and interrelated ideas within these categories were then treated as concepts that shaped the development of a set of goals.

The framework describes these six goals: Align Agency, Partner with the Community, Create Equitable Representation and Exchange, Promote Holistic Health, and Orient to ‘Aina. Each goal is supported by a series of action items, recommended CIP budget requests, and a list of resources to support each goal. See Figure 2. The team also developed a Cultural Design Process, Cultural Design Resource, and Aina Based Strategies to support the actions items in the framework. See Figure 3, 4. It is important to note that these goals were derived from external sources. During this scope of work, the team was not given access to DPS agency administrators and employees beyond 3 project contacts, facility wardens and staff, or incarcerated

individuals. These recommendations reflect external perspectives rather than internal input. During the upcoming proof-of-concept phase of this project, the team will conduct site visits and workshops with staff and inmates to gather additional information to continue to iterate on these recommendations, with the aim of representing true agency objectives.

ENDNOTES

1. Rincon, Johanna, “Overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in Incarceration is a Global concern”, *Cultural Survival*, August 1, 2013 <https://www.cultural-survival.org/news/>.
2. “The Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force Report”, accessed October 16, 2019 https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/2012NHJTF_REPORT_FINAL_0.pdf.
3. Ibid.
4. Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago University Press, 2012), 115.
5. “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Resolution” adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007
6. Trask, Haunani, “The Struggle For Hawaiian Sovereignty - Introduction.” *Cultural Survival*, March 1, 2000, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/struggle-hawaiian-sovereignty-introduction>.
7. “Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai’i Legislature 2019 Regular Session”.
8. Barney G Glaser, *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, (Chicago: Routledge, 1999),18

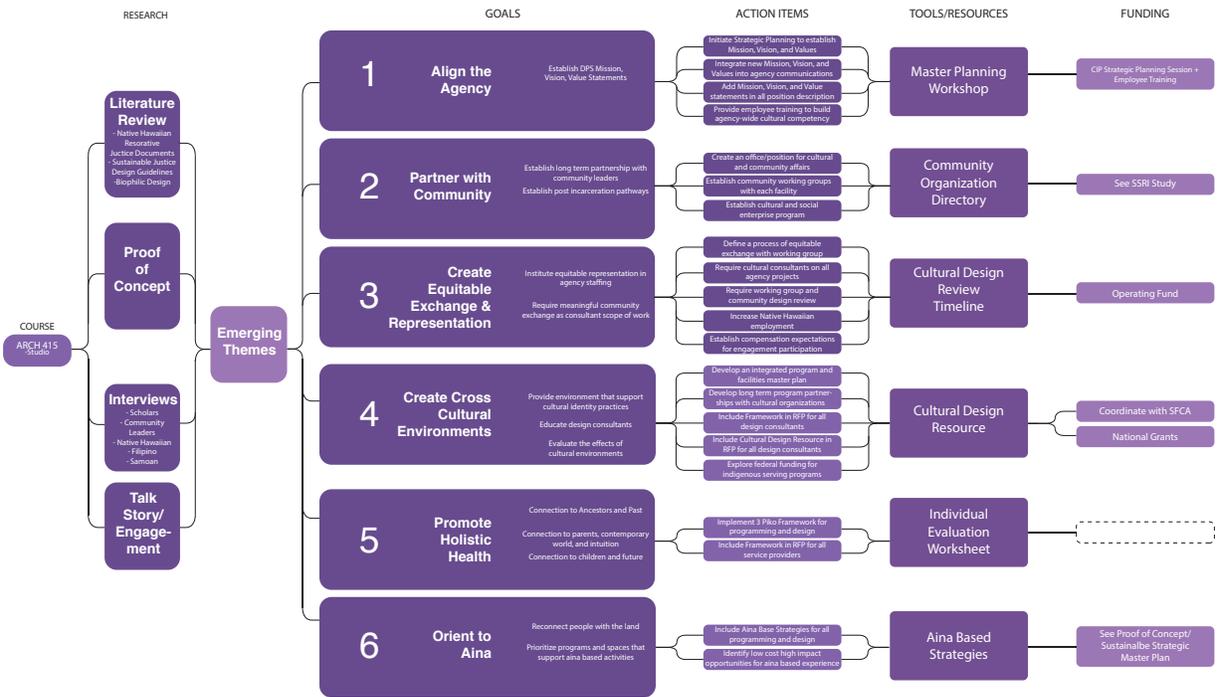


Figure 2. Framework development, UHDCDC

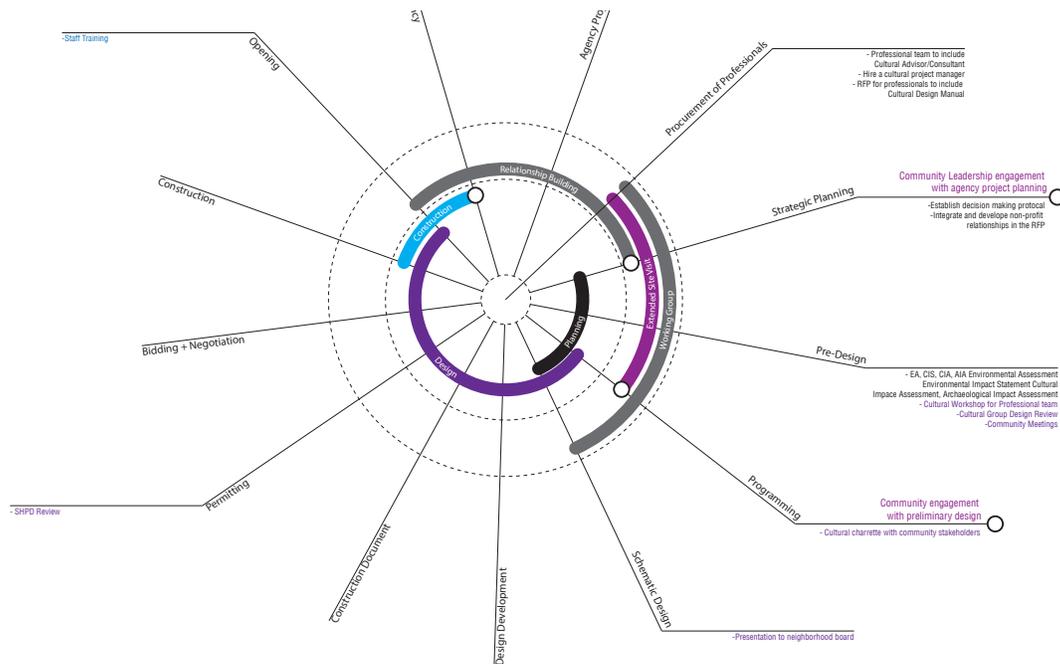


Figure 3. Cultural Design Process, UHDCDC

CROSS-CULTURAL BUILT ENVIRONMENT

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The design resource includes values - to provide foundational understanding, research methods - to facilitate further and deeper inquiry, practices - to provide examples of cultural practices related to the built environment, and finally, case studies - to provide examples of projects in which many of these values, research, practices have been successfully integrated into the design of a facility.

- 1 TOPICS ARRANGED BY SCALE
- 2 MULTI-CULTURAL DESIGN STRATEGIES
- 3 BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPT
- 4 TAKEAWAYS
- 5 POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATIONS

1 Land Planning and Development Resource management

2 Ahupua'a
Native Hawaiian

3 An ahupua'a is a Native Hawaiian method of land division that ensures each division has resources from the mountains to the sea. These land divisions varied in size and shape depending on the resources available. A typical division is a long strip of land, narrow at its mountain summit top and becomes wider toward the valley to the shoreline, to the outer edge of the reef. If there is no reef, the shoreline boundary will extend to approximately one and a half miles offshore. Ahupua'a each have their own name and carefully defined boundaries. Boundary markers were often natural landmarks such as a large rock, a line of trees or home of a certain bird. Residents of an ahupua'a are allowed to use the resources that thrived within its boundaries, but are not allowed to take resources from within another ahupua'a.

4 Division of land based on existing available
Community consensus for development
Share and conserve resources
Efficient use of land with nearby resources
Active land management as a community
Self-sustaining unit/area
Scarce resources are cultivated seasonally

5 Zero-waste systems
Self-sustaining housing/site
Use natural elements to separate spaces
Community-driven development

State of Hawaii's Department of Public Safety, Construction and Urban Design Resources: Cultural Values & Practices Related to the Built Environment | Page 109

PROJECT



Figure 4. Cultural Design Resource, sample pages, UHDC