

Political Periphery of American Empire: Hawai‘ian Statehood and the Push for Political Agency,
1941-1959

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the road to statehood for Hawai‘i in 1959 and the Native Hawai‘ian support for the movement following the colonial annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898. This research reveals that the overwhelming Native Hawai‘ian support for statehood was motivated by a collective desire to secure political agency, as well as growing internal concerns over the rapid expansion of the military and tourism industries and the explicit limitation of voting rights. This thesis scrutinizes the extensive historiography of Hawai‘ian statehood while contextualizing these events with primary sources such as newspaper articles, federal legislation, Congressional hearings, travel brochures, and student advocacy letters. By utilizing postcolonial and systemic race theory, I argue that Native Hawai‘ian support for statehood should be viewed as a political moment in time exclusive to the 1940s and 1950s, despite later attempts to expand the movement in future decades.

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Introduction

On Tuesday, 17th of January 1893, the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i¹ was jointly orchestrated by American entrepreneurs and the United States’ military.² In a short period, Hawai‘i and the Kānaka Maoli (prevalently known as Native Hawai‘ian)³ had lost their political self-determination, replaced by an electoral system that favored wealthy white settler islanders. Prior to the overthrow of the Hawai‘ian monarchy, the elite class had performed a successful coup, forming the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, which shifted the voting power balance within Hawai‘i; colonists for the first time held full political power over Native Hawai‘ian Islanders.⁴ With this, the question of Hawai‘i’s annexation to the U.S. had been debated and decisively answered by both white settler islanders and in Congress. Four years later, as a last-ditch effort to keep Hawai‘i independent, Native Hawai‘ian islanders had formed the K’uē Petitions, which collected more than 38,000 signatures (more than 90% of the Indigenous population at the time) that opposed U.S. annexation.⁵ However, the petitions had the opposite effect, which led to the question of annexation being decided in the Senate, rather than in a Hawai‘ian referendum.⁶

¹ The mark in the name Hawai‘i is called an “okina,” which is not an apostrophe. Rather, it is a mark that indicates a certain pronunciation in the Hawai‘ian language.

² Norman Meller and Anne Feder Lee, “Hawaiian Sovereignty,” *Publius* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 167–85, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/3330643>, 168.

³ In this thesis, the primary term that I go by to describe Indigenous Hawai‘ian islanders is “Native Hawai‘ian,” which is the defined English terminology to describe someone who has ancestry that originates from the islands. It is important to mention that “Native Hawai‘ians” and “Native Americans” are not the same; Hawai‘ian signals nationality, and Native signals Indigeneity. The other term used to describe Native Hawai‘ians is Kānaka Maoli, which means “native person” in the Hawai‘ian language. Lastly, the reason why I decided to use “Native Hawai‘ian” consistently through this thesis is mainly due to its legal use and presence within the primary source record, on top of its continued acceptance from the Kānaka Maoli community today. Noelani Goodyear-Ka’ōpua and Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada. “Making ‘Aha: Independent Hawaiian Pasts, Presents & Futures.” *Daedalus* 147, no. 2 (2018): 49–59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48563018>. 50. This is the primary paper that I referred to for my definitions.

⁴ Lydia Kualapai, “The Queen Writes Back: Lili’uokalani’s Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 17, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 32–62, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ail.2005.0053>, 33.

⁵ Kees van Dijk, *Pacific Strife* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), https://www.jstor.org/cbu.idm.oclc.org/content/oa_book_monograph/j.ctt15nmjw8, 385.

⁶ “The Annexation of Hawaii.” *The Advocate of Peace (1894-1920)* 60, no. 1 (1898): 8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25751119>.

Finally, on August 12th, 1898, Hawai‘i became an official territory of the United States; the denial of the referendum symbolizes the subsequent and continued denial of Native Hawai‘ian sovereignty within the islands.⁷

In the following century, statehood as a legislative push was an arduous, decade-long process. The end of the Second World War and the subsequent start of the Cold War sparked interest in the Pacific. Between 1947 and 1959, there were a total of 34 congressional hearings regarding the admission of Hawai‘i as a state. Not only did the United States see an economic benefit of statehood, but a strategic advantage as well. For Dwight D. Eisenhower and his administration, further securing Hawai‘i militarily and politically became a priority to push back against communist expansion within the Asian-Pacific.⁸

The case of Hawai‘ian statehood provides a fascinating case study for a better understanding of how movements of sovereignty shift over time and can challenge national historical narratives. In particular, the historiography of the statehood movement is torn between two pathways. On one hand, some historians suggest that the Hawai‘i statehood movement was a prime example of the working model of ‘liberal multiculturalism,’ in which Native Hawai‘ians, Asian Americans, and white islanders unified as one. On the other hand, some suggest the opposite, where Native Hawai‘ian islanders were initially against statehood, but adopted the movement out of a desire for cultural preservation.

It is clear that within the academic sphere, Hawai‘ian statehood has become a mouldable history in which historians could project their present objectives onto the past as it relates to the

⁷ J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization and the Politics of Gender,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 281–87, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.0.0000>, 283.

⁸ Gretchen Heefner, “‘A Symbol of the New Frontier,’” *Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 4 (November 1, 2005): 545–74, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2005.74.4.545>, 547.

future. I, however, suggest that a reevaluation of Hawai‘i’s statehood is required in order to better understand Native Hawai‘ian support for statehood during the 1940s and 1950s, especially when the Native Hawai‘ian Sovereignty Movement has become ever more present in recent decades. I then pose two questions: firstly, why did Native Hawai‘ian islanders support statehood following the illegal annexation of the islands? Secondly, what can the analysis Hawai‘ian statehood tell us about the overtly complex interracial relationships that were and still are present on the islands?

By looking at the historical context of statehood, this thesis sheds light on these questions, as well as outlining the dimensions of expansion of the American colonial empire, and the internal conflicts that arose from decades of both settler colonialism and military occupation. In my thesis, I argue that the overwhelming Native Hawai‘ian support for Hawai‘ian statehood arose from the internal concerns over both militaristic expansion as well as the explicit limitation on the rights of territorial islanders from a distant government. The Native Hawai‘ian push for statehood represented a desire to secure collective political autonomy in an already shifting hierarchical structure within the islands.

Some historians suggest that mainland Southern opposition to statehood was a reflection of the concern about interracial marriage in the islands. However, I argue that Southern Democratic congressmen were more concerned about the growing interracial population disparity than the racial relationships on the islands. This is clear through the analysis of census data, congressional reports, senate hearings, and newspaper articles at the time. Further, I employ Alaska as a point of comparison, since it was the first region in the United States to pass a Civil Rights Act in 1945. This shows that even though Alaska had achieved the first legislative steps to dismantle Jim Crow laws, Hawai‘i had still been the main point of contention in Congress.

We must then peer into the expansion of both the military and tourism industry in Hawai‘i prior to statehood. Simultaneously, there was a growing consciousness regarding the use and loss of land control on the islands to the territorial and federal governments. Through the analysis of newspapers and legislation during the period of martial law and the emergence of medical programs such as the mandatory vaccinations and blood donation program, it becomes clear that statehood in the following decade became a way to reclaim a form of political autonomy in a system that did not favour territorial citizens.

Finally, we peer into the final stages of statehood during the late 1950s and how it allowed Native Hawai‘ians to become agents in the nationalization of the push for the American democratic model in the Pacific. For this, I investigate the congressional hearing of Alice Kamokilaikawai Campbell (a prominent Native Hawai‘ian political advocate of Hawai‘ian music and culture), as well as the legislative response from the government during the final stages of statehood. Further, I probe deeper into the role of university students on the islands, and their advocacy for statehood to the federal government. From this, in conjunction with a deeper analysis of the historiography, I argue that the overwhelming support for statehood from Native Hawai‘ians was caused by an implicit desire to gain political autonomy in the short term, while simultaneously regaining control over their bodies, which the government had full jurisdiction over. In short, those who supported statehood wanted to open a two-way street, allowing them to vote in federal elections, rather than continuing to appeal to authority without proper political representation.

Literature Review

To better approach the statehood of Hawai‘i we will investigate the domestic political context occurring in the United States. Gretchen Heefner analyzes the geopolitical view of the U.S.—

within the framework of 1950s decolonization—in her article “A Symbol of the New Frontier.” She argues that during the late 1950s, Hawai‘i was at the forefront of the “battle between communist totalitarianism and democratic freedom,” and it became a “testing ground” for American ideals.⁹ Interestingly, instead of looking into the obstructions for statehood, the article focuses on the dual discourses on internationalism and race in Hawai‘i during discussions of statehood. Between 1947 and 1959, there were 34 congressional reports regarding the debate of Hawai‘i.¹⁰ Mainly, she advances the popular perspective on Hawai‘i as an example of a multicultural push for liberal democracy. As she conveys, “Assimilation and intermarriage thus became a way to rewrite the notion of multi-ethnic heritage by promoting polyethnic amalgamation. The people of Hawai‘i were not Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino, but a mixed and mouldable hybrid that could and should become American.”¹¹ This thesis builds on Heefner’s analysis of liberal multiculturalism, in conjunction with the anti-statehood perspective.

The first to cover the push for statehood in Hawai‘i was Roger Bell’s *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics*, which provides an early and notable review of Hawai‘i’s push for statehood. Its chapter “Fiftieth State,” covering the final stages of statehood, is particularly apparent how opinions of statehood had shifted over time. Here, he shows in 1958 opinion polls that about a quarter of Native Hawai‘ian and white islanders opposed statehood, which disappeared during the official plebiscite, and saw an overwhelming majority of support.¹² Lastly, Bell was one of the first to argue that the anti-statehood movement in the United States had emerged out of fear of the large population of Japanese islanders gaining

⁹ Gretchen Heefner, “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 547. Although it is clear that this perspective has a small bias towards the idea of American democratic freedom, it is still quite useful to analyze.

¹⁰ Heefner, “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 548.

¹¹ Heefner, “A Symbol of a New Frontier,” 570.

¹² Roger Bell, “Fiftieth State,” chapter, in *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1984), 285–327, 290.

political autonomy.¹³ Bell's work is foundational in the study of Hawai'ian statehood, and serves as a building block for this thesis.

Following annexation, Hawai'i—as a territory—saw a complete shift in the political power balance within the islands. John S. Whitehead examines the political, economic, and social context of the “Big Five” sugar planter companies and how they had control over the autonomy of Hawai'i. Whitehead argues that the post-war historiographical perspective of the “Big Five” has been oversimplified and imbued with a “West Coast” prejudice against the Hawai'ian labour force.¹⁴ He also mentions that Hawai'i has seen the “democratic saga” in its chronology, in which the “Big Five” had negative connotations as oligarchical oppressors, denouncing the positive reinvestments made by the companies back into the community.¹⁵

In a later period in Hawai'i's history, Whitehead examines the anti-statehood movement that occurred on the islands in the 1940s and 1950s. In his article, he argues against the view that Native Hawai'ian support for statehood was grounded in cultural preservation, a perspective that had become common among scholars in the early stages of the Hawai'ian sovereignty movement such as the Native Hawai'ian scholar Haunani-Kay Trask.¹⁶ In particular, Whitehead's argument builds on an interview with Trask in 1988, in which he argues that statehood was a temporary masking of fears that some Native Hawai'ian islanders held regarding the future, or was some

¹³ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 292.

¹⁴John S. Whitehead, “Western Progressives, Old South Planters, or Colonial Oppressors: The Enigma of Hawai'i's ‘Big Five,’ 1898-1940,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1999): 295–322, <https://doi.org/10.2307/971375>, 295.

¹⁵ Whitehead, “Western Progressives,” 304, 320. I do not necessarily agree with Whitehead here. While attempting to unpack the oversimplified historiography of the “Big Five,” he simultaneously oversimplified the political power dynamic that wealthy non-indigenous islanders had over Indigenous and Asian islanders. In short, he focuses too much on the economic over the political context of Hawai'i.

¹⁶ John S. Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement and the Legacy of Alice Kamokila Campbell,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 27 (1993): 43–63, <https://doi.org/https://files01.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/5014487.pdf>, 58.

form of cultural preservation.¹⁷ Instead, he shows evidence for the overwhelming support of statehood (except for a select few), arguing that people did not want to commit to the alternative of continued territorial status. As he argues, “It is thus more likely that even those Hawaiians who had doubts about statehood thought it was preferable to remaining a territory. They were willing to give statehood a try.”¹⁸ For this, he builds on his previous research on the “Big Five,” claiming that support for statehood could have stemmed from a desire to gain political autonomy over those who had toppled the monarchy several generations earlier. In his words, “Statehood seemed a way to gain political power at home and overthrow the dominance of the people whom many Hawaiians still held responsible for toppling the monarchy in 1893... composing the tightly knit oligarchy of the Republican party and the Big Five.”¹⁹ This thesis responds to Trask’s interpretations of the support for statehood. Overall, Whitehead’s work on the anti-statehood movement serves as one of the first reexaminations of statehood that investigates the complex racial structures involved with statehood. Although he does not convincingly answer why there was overwhelming support for statehood, he provides some of the earliest distinctions between Native Hawai‘ian and Asian American islanders rather than blurring the two together.

Despite Whitehead’s criticisms of the modern Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement, the emergence of the movement has shaped the reexamination of Hawai‘ian history. Haunani-Kay Trask, a professor and lifelong Native Hawai‘ian rights advocate, examines the emergence of the movement in her article “The Birth of the Modern Hawai‘ian Movement.” She argues that the Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the Kalama Valley, in O‘ahu, due to the continued rise of the tourism industry and the displacement of Native

¹⁷ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 58, 63.

¹⁸ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 59.

¹⁹ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

Hawai‘ians for large resorts.²⁰ She notes that the movement had started to emerge from university students as a critique of the class disparity of some islanders, which then formed into a movement for Native Hawai‘ians based on land claims.²¹ In her words, “The metaphor conjured up an image of a ‘sick’ society where growing numbers of the poor were cast aside for... profit-hungry landowners. ‘Progress’ became a process of eviction for low-income workers and their families, many of whom were Hawaiian.” As time passed, Hawai‘ian land was being occupied on two fronts, for the tourism industry as well as for military expansion, both of which profited while not reinvesting in the local economy.

Hawai‘ian sovereignty had long been denied by the white islanders who had been placed at the top of the racial hierarchy of the islands. Additionally, it was the federal government of the United States that dictated the definition of a “Native Hawai‘ian” through blood quantum and land claim rights. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui looks into the origins of the Hawai‘ian Homes Commission Act (HHCA), and how the formation of the blood quantum requirement continues to dispossess Indigenous Hawai‘ians today.²² Further, she argues that blood quantum had contested the land policy, which in turn disempowered Hawai‘ian sovereignty.²³ As a result, “The racial construction of Hawaiianess was formed in relation to the shift away from recognition of Hawaiian entitlement to the privileging of white property.”²⁴ The original creation of the HHCA was to rehabilitate both the land and indigenous Hawai‘ians, but it had caused the opposite effect. By creating a legally mandated definition of “Hawai‘ianess” it had stripped the peoples

²⁰ Haunani-Kay Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawaiian Movement: Kalama Valley, O‘ahu,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 21 (1987): 126–53, <https://doi.org/https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/hawaii.pdf>, 132.

²¹ Trask, “Modern Hawaiian Movement,” 132.

²² J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization and the Politics of Gender,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 281–87, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.0.0000>, 123.

²³ Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization,” 123.

²⁴ Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization,” 136.

of self-determination through hindering collective identification. Lastly, she notes that land entitlement was strategically forgotten by the government through the development of the HHCA.²⁵

The statehood of Hawai‘i and the processes that led up to it are multifaceted. In particular, the public’s reaction and perception towards Hawai‘ian statehood provides much-needed context. Dean I. Saranillio’s *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai‘i Statehood* reexamines the historical view of Hawai‘ian statehood and challenges the contemporary narrative surrounding statehood. In his chapter “Propaganda of Occupation: Statehood and the Cold War,” Saranillio shows how the intentional use of propaganda allowed for a brighter perception towards Hawai‘ian statehood, making “non-whites less foreign to the public.”²⁶ He also points out that the statehood of Alaska and Hawai‘i “had more to do with geopolitical value of a territory than with processes of self-determination,” during the height of the Cold War and anti-communist sentiments.²⁷ He also argues that resistance towards statehood and capitalist-centered economic development in Hawai‘i—more specifically related to tourism—was difficult, since movements in opposition would be linked with the Soviet Union and communism.²⁸ In his introductory chapter, Saranillio strongly argues that the colonialization of Hawai‘i was an example of the weakness and unsustainability of the American empire, and its need to constantly expand to sustain itself. As he states, “imperialist ventures in Hawai‘i were... a result of a weakening U.S. nation whose mode of production—capitalism—was increasingly unsustainable without enacting a more aggressive policy of imperialism.” Further, he argues that

²⁵ Kauanui, “Native Hawaiian Decolonization,” 124.

²⁶ Dean Itsuji Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire Alternative Histories of Hawai‘i Statehood* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 133.

²⁷ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 135.

²⁸ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 166.

in order to properly peer into Hawai‘i, the notions of “occupation” and “settler colonialism” are not mutually exclusive, as they remained intertwined with one another in the history of Hawai‘i. That said, he sets out to uncover the reason underlying support for statehood during the territorial stages of the islands; he argues that much of it had to do with propaganda commissions that pushed for statehood to both mainlanders and islanders. He, also highlights statehood could be seen as a “liberal moral allegory,” to show the inclusion of non-white groups in the world that was pushing for decolonization. Finally, he argues that the statehood of Hawai‘i was already dictated by elites, and that Native Hawai‘ian and non-white islanders were victims of the propaganda machine. In his words, “a deeper look into the propaganda commissions and the cultural politics of statehood reveals that business and state leaders had already determined statehood as their aim... proponents of statehood aimed to Americanize the nonwhite population.”²⁹ Saranillio’s perspective on the support for Hawai‘i’s statehood opposes Whitehead’s argument. This thesis juxtaposes these arguments and places itself within the gap that they both leave wide open while contextualizing statehood.

To get a better sense of the structure of Hawai‘i leading up to statehood, it is crucial that we better understand what the life of islanders was like during the height of the military expansion. To this end, Juliet Nebolon examines Hawai‘i during the height of the Second World War, and the public health programs that emerged after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.³⁰ In particular, she interrogates the forced vaccination and blood donation programs, drawing on Michel Foucault’s notion of biopolitics.³¹ Further, she argues that the government’s control over

²⁹ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 6.

³⁰ Juliet Nebolon, “‘Life given Straight from the Heart’: Settler Militarism, Biopolitics, and Public Health in Hawai‘i during World War II,” *American Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2017): 23–45, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0002>, 23.

³¹ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 24.

the bodily autonomy of Indigenous islanders simultaneously stripped them of their sovereignty. As Nebolon claims: “the ‘make live’ imperative of this biopolitical project existed in contradiction to Native sovereignty because it masked settler colonial histories of Native dispossession.”³² In a sense, this legitimized the military’s occupation while also masking the colonial legacies of mass death.³³ David Farber and Beth Bailey, in another angle on military expansionism, peer into the phenomenon they dub the “fighting-man-as-tourist,” in which the servicemen in Hawai‘i would consume the “otherness” of Hawai‘ian multiculturalism without confronting or rejecting the ‘other’.³⁴ They probe the fabrication of the paradise fantasy prior to the Second World War, which had been created to boost the tourism industry, which then had come under threat due to the strain between white servicemen and non-white islanders.³⁵ For example, servicemen were prohibited from taking leave on the island of O‘ahu (known for its high population of Japanese islanders), due to the common mistreatment of Japanese-American islanders.³⁶ Lastly, they argue that many in the white settler elite and in the government had to step up together to make Hawai‘i appear less “primitive” to ensure the future of statehood.³⁷

Although the notion of multiculturalism and racial harmony was pushed both within the national consciousness of Hawai‘i; this was not the case within Hawai‘i. Nakamura covers the Damon Tract protest that occurred in Hawai‘i in 1945.³⁸ Kelli Y. Nakamura argued that the protest was a result of the transformed hierarchical structure that was formed in a post-plantation,

³² Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 39.

³³ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 30.

³⁴ David Farber and Beth Bailey, “The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii during World War II,” *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (November 1, 1996): 641–60, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3640299>, 641.

³⁵ Farber and Bailey, 642, 654.

³⁶ Farber and Bailey, 651.

³⁷ Farber and Bailey, 657.

³⁸ Kelli Y. Nakamura, “A ‘Revenge Bound Orgy’: The Conflict between Hawai‘i’s Local and Military Cultures in the 1945 Damon Tract Riot,” *Pacific Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (2021): 475–507, <https://doi.org/10.1525/phr.2021.90.4.475>, 475.

and military-centred economy. Further, the Damon Tract protest itself was an example of the exacerbated negative relations between non-white and white islanders.³⁹ Nakamura also notes that both groups had sought to minimize the news of the riot, to avoid the alteration of Hawai‘i’s image in the national consciousness. As she states, “Although the riot was one of the largest postwar military uprisings, its absence in the historical record should be understood within the context of minimizing differences and tensions between locals and military personnel to promote tourism and statehood.”⁴⁰

Both the tourism and military industries are not mutually exclusive; they had become interlinked with one another during the 1940s and 1950s as more servicemen had been adopting the invented paradisaical culture of Hawai‘i. Christen Tsuyuko Sasaki looks into the rise of both industries within Hawai‘i during the 1940s and 1950s. In particular, she peers into the formation of a codependent relationship between the two industries, coining it ‘militourism.’⁴¹ She does this by analyzing the formation of the aloha garments (Hawai‘ian shirt), and their role within the formation of an invented tradition of the “Hawai‘ian fantasy.” As she put it, “As an article of embodiment, the aloha shirt enabled militarized bodies to remake the self through performing both local and touristic fantasy, incorporating militourism vis-à-vis the fashioned body into the social order of Hawai‘i.”⁴² As a result, indigenous islanders had to perform their “Hawai‘ianess” in order to smooth over the inherent racial tensions on the islands to move towards nation-statehood.⁴³ The tourism industry had become a way in which Native Hawai‘ians could push away from the military economy, yet it simultaneously commodified Kānaka Maoli culture for

³⁹ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy” 477.

⁴⁰ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 501.

⁴¹ Christen Tsuyuko Sasaki, “Threads of Empire: Militourism and the Aloha Wear Industry in Hawai‘i,” *American Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2016): 643–67, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0057>, 645.

⁴² Sasaki, “Threads of Empire” 655.

⁴³ Sasaki, “Threads of Empire” 654.

the touristic eye. Sarah Miller-Davenport considers the tourism industry in the 1950s through the 1970s and the intentional fabrication of the paradise stereotype of the islands, which led to the commodification of multiculturalism.⁴⁴ She challenges the classic primitive view of Indigenous islanders and argues that statehood had been the beginning of the massive tourism boom; the legacies of the colonial past of Hawai‘i still haunt tourism culture to this day.⁴⁵ She also argues that multiculturalism was intentionally placated and exaggerated in order to bolster the tourism industry. She notes that tourism was “a discursive and institutional tool for liberal policy-makers and business leaders, who saw the celebration of social difference as a means both to facilitate American expansionism abroad and to make money at home.”⁴⁶ Miller-Davenport also mentions that hula shows were quite popular, representing a “friendly and sexually available” hula girl and depicting “soft-primitiveiness.”⁴⁷ This article perfectly interlinks with Teaiwa’s article on the performative nature of Pacific culture through the Indigenous Hawai‘ian lens.

The statehood of both Hawai‘i and Alaska are intrinsically linked with one another; they had both been subject to political maneuvering regarding land claims during the height of the segregationist movement. Giles Scott-Smith argues that although the Organic Act had given Hawai‘i the opportunity to achieve statehood, the process was highly contested due to racist ideologies in Congress.⁴⁸ In particular, he examines the role that Southern Democrats played in the opposition to the statehood of Hawai‘i: “For them, granting statehood would be tantamount

⁴⁴ Sarah Miller-Davenport, “A ‘Montage of Minorities’: Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification of Racial Tolerance, 1959–1978,” *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 3 (February 13, 2017): 817–42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x16000364>, 818, 819.

⁴⁵ Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 819.

⁴⁶ Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 820.

⁴⁷ Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 822, 831.

⁴⁸ Giles Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset: Lyndon Johnson and the Achievement of Hawaiian Statehood in 1959,” *History* 89, no. 294 (March 30, 2004): 256–73, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-229x.2004.00300.x>, 257.

to accepting multi-racialism.”⁴⁹ This is something that pro-segregation Southern democrats had adamantly opposed. He also mentions that there was opposition to statehood in Hawai‘i itself, especially among many of the white islanders, who feared that statehood would affect the social and political hierarchy.⁵⁰ Scott-Smith’s work clearly shows the political complexity of Hawai‘ian statehood and the racial hierarchies that people were fighting to uphold. However, while analyzing the battle for statehood in Congress, Scott-Smith focuses so much on the mainland perspective of progressive multiculturalism that he fails to do justice to the complex hierarchical racial structures present in Hawai‘i. He concludes that Lyndon B. Johnson went “from a domestically oriented party politician to a national leader who recognised the need to embrace more progressive causes.”⁵¹ Rather than perceiving Hawai‘i as a multiplicity of layers, he focuses on the progressivism against the segregation movement on the mainland. Overall, both Scott-Smith and Heefner’s arguments regarding statehood will be used to better understand the pitfalls of analysing a complex racial history such as Hawai‘i’s.

Ann K. Ziker adds to Scott-Smith’s argument, providing a deeper analysis of the political context in Congress during the push for Hawai‘ian and Alaskan Statehood in 1947-59. In her article, “Segregationists Confront American Empire: The Conservative White South and the Question of Hawaiian Statehood, 1947–1959,” Ziker investigates the barriers to the achievement of statehood of Alaska and Hawai‘i. She argues that although a majority of Americans had supported the statehood of Hawai‘i and Alaska, Southern Democrats had formed an effective

⁴⁹ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset.” 260.

⁵⁰ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset.” 261. This is related to the “big 5” corporations that had economically dominated the islands since the late 19th century, with the rise of the sugar industry.

⁵¹ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol to Division,” 273.

coalition to prevent it due to its potential political reverberations.⁵² The high rates of interracial marriage in Hawai‘i had led to opposition from Southern Democrats: “Hawai‘i served as proof that an integrated society encouraged the lust of nonwhite men for white women and invariably resulted in race mixing.”⁵³ In a sense, white settler women were victimized by the Southern Democratic representatives, who saw themselves as protectors of white settler women in Hawai‘i.⁵⁴

Methodology

This thesis examines the Native Hawai‘ian response to statehood in 1959, as well as its legislative lead-up during the late 1940s and early 1950s. During the Cold War, the push for Hawai‘ian statehood was a form of strategic legislation. Southern Democrats in Congress had opposed the statehood of both Hawai‘i and Alaska. In particular, Hawai‘ian multiculturalism was at the forefront of America’s “anti-imperial” efforts in the geosphere.⁵⁵ Overall, popular histories presented statehood for both territories as beneficial to the nation. My project aims to reevaluate this history and to explore why Native Hawai‘ians supported statehood during the height of America’s imperial legislative expansion in the Pacific in the 1940s and 1950s.

My project dissects American imperial propaganda as it relates to statehood. Noam Chomsky’s essay “Visions of Righteousness” displays the hypocritical popular stance toward American imperial efforts overseas (i.e. Vietnam).⁵⁶ He points out how the U.S. frames itself as

⁵² Ann K. Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire: The Conservative White South and the Question of Hawaiian Statehood, 1947–1959,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (August 1, 2007): 439–66, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2007.76.3.439>, 443–444.

⁵³ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire.” 449.

⁵⁴ Interestingly, we still see this type of political justification today in which a certain political rhetoric is pushed in order to “protect women or children,” whether it does or not.

⁵⁵ Giles Scott-Smith. “From Symbol of Division,” 259.

⁵⁶ Noam Chomsky, “Visions of Righteousness,” *Cultural Critique*, no. 3 (1986): 10–43, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354163>, 10.

an “emancipator,” that is “responding to the hostile or brutal acts of other powers, but apart from that, seeking nothing but justice, human rights, and democracy.”⁵⁷ Overall, Chomsky concludes that propaganda surrounding U.S. imperialism is simplified and continually justified within the public view. I will apply “American Righteousness” to analyze a primary source video that depicts a celebration of Hawai‘ian statehood as a win against “the communists.”⁵⁸ This is particularly important since many of the motivations towards statehood of the territories were related to strategic legislation against the Soviet Union. Moreover, Chomsky’s theory regarding American righteousness reveals why there had been support in Congress for Hawai‘ian multicultural expansionism, especially during the height of the decolonial movement that was occurring globally.

Given the racial formation of Hawai‘i, critical race theory is central to better understand the makeup of the racial hierarchy present on the islands regarding white, Asian, and Native Hawai‘ian islanders. Joe Feagin and Sean Elias take a comparative approach with two major theories regarding race. In particular, they explore the issues with Omi and Winant’s race formation theory while highlighting the strength of systemic race theory.⁵⁹ They define systemic racism as a fundamental, large-scale hierarchical system continually maintained by white people and directed against “people of colour.”⁶⁰ Within their theory of systemic racism, the most apt aspect is the “maintenance of major material and other resource inequalities by white-controlled and well-institutionalized social reproduction mechanisms,” which had occurred with white settler islanders following annexation and the sugar plantation, and continued to occur with the

⁵⁷ Chomsky, “Visions of Righteousness,” 42.

⁵⁸ “Aloha Hawaii. Islanders Celebrate Long-Sought Statehood, 1959/03/16: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming,” Internet Archive, April 6, 2005, https://archive.org/details/1959-03-16_Aloha_Hawaii.

⁵⁹ Joe Feagin and Sean Elias, “Rethinking Racial Formation Theory: A Systemic Racism Critique,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 6 (June 2013): 931–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.669839>, 932.

⁶⁰ Feagin and Elias, “Rethinking Racial Formation Theory,” 936

hyper-militarization of the island during and following the Second World War. Lastly, they highlight the non-white experience as an uphill battle against anti-colonial resistance and racial pressures that continue to maintain systemic oppression within the United States.⁶¹ Feagin and Elias' systemic race theory will be crucial to creating a deeper analysis of the interracial tension that was occurring on the islands despite the incessant idealism of the multicultural model of Hawai'i.

Regarding postcolonial theory, Hawai'i is a crucial case study since Native Hawai'ians had a vastly different experience than Indigenous mainlanders. Laura Lyons and Cynthia Franklin both analyze and critique much of the post-colonial theory related to Hawai'i and the Pacific. In particular, they work to dismantle the notion of hybridity theory because it can undermine both indigenous cultural identity and political identity in Hawai'i.⁶² They argue that many post-colonial theorists of the region overcomplicate colonial histories by abstracting them; as they say, "it is precisely the ways... the indigenous insists on belonging—not simply in an abstract sense, but to specific lands—that renders globalization and hybridity theory so inadequate for dealing with cultural mixes that come out of an indigenous context."⁶³ Rather than abstracting the indigenous sovereignty movements, they bluntly state that the decolonization movement in Hawai'i is simply about reclamation of land rather than returning to a "temporal stasis of primitiveness," as other authors believe.⁶⁴ Lastly, they discuss how future postcolonial research should be conducted as well as what it should aim to achieve. As they argue, "Post-national ideas about subjectivity... delegitimize the political claims of those... working to assert

⁶¹ Feagin and Elias, "Rethinking Racial Formation Theory," 947.

⁶² Cynthia Franklin and Laura Lyons, "Remixing Hybridity: Globalization, Native Resistance, and Cultural Production in Hawai'i," *American Studies* 45, no. 3 (2004): 49–80, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/40644210>, 50.

⁶³ Franklin and Lyon, "Remixing Hybridity" 52.

⁶⁴ Franklin and Lyon, "Remixing Hybridity" 53.

their sovereignty. Native politics and culture cannot be subsumed into a globalized, heterogeneous domicile, nor equated with a naive desire to return to a pre-contact past.”⁶⁵ The push for sovereignty is a movement that is shaped by the ability to recognize the hauntings of the colonial legacies in Hawai‘i while moving toward a decolonized and self-determined structure of political autonomy. Franklin and Lyons’s reevaluation of hybridity theory reveals the commodification of Native Hawai‘ian culture at the peak of indigenous land-loss on the islands. It allows us to grasp the deeper-rooted colonial structure that was internalized in Hawai‘i and enabled the support for statehood instead of independence at the time.

Teresia K. Teaiwa brilliantly theorizes the representation of the bikini and its implications for both the female body and the colonized.⁶⁶ In particular, she notes that attention to the sexist dynamic of the “sexualized and supposedly depoliticized female body” distracts from the colonial origins of its name.⁶⁷ Therefore, in a sense, the bikini is a performance of colonized bodies; through the bikini, the white colonizer can become more exotic through tanning and nakedness (closer to “nature”).⁶⁸ This perhaps exacerbates “the romantic notion of a nude South Sea Islander and the militaristic notion of islands as expendable spaces for nuclear testing.”⁶⁹ Additionally, she argues that the bikini represents the fetishization of the female body, which is interlinked with the bikini-clad body.⁷⁰ Teaiwa’s theory of the fetishization of colonized women’s bodies within the Pacific dovetails with both the advertisements that sexualized Native Hawai‘ian women, as well as the statehood video that objectifies Native Hawai‘ian women.

⁶⁵ Franklin and Lyon, “Remixing Hybridity” 74

⁶⁶ Teresia K. Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 6 (1994): 87–109, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/23701591>, 87.

⁶⁷ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans,” 87.

⁶⁸ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans,” 93.

⁶⁹ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans,” 96.

⁷⁰ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans,” 95.

These research methods inform my analysis, enhancing the understanding of the achievement of statehood in Hawai‘i. They assist in uncovering why there had been support for statehood from Native Hawai‘ians, and the deeper-rooted colonial context that was present (and still is). My research will investigate the early view of sovereignty in Hawai‘i and its implications in the current political context. Simultaneously, it will show the continuing impacts of overlooking Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood within the Western patriarchal structures. Lastly, postcolonial theory and its intersection with gender theory centrally inform my thesis. This thesis is structured in three parts.

The first chapter focuses on the early stages of the statehood of Hawai‘i and the political contention in Congress between Southern democrats and Republicans, examining the greater backlash towards Hawai‘ian statehood compared to Alaska. I briefly investigate the growing interracial tensions that were building on the islands between white servicemen and Native Hawai‘ian islanders.⁷¹ To better analyze the origins of post-annexation tensions between Native Hawai‘ian and settler islanders, I analyze the Hawai‘ian Homes Commission Act of 1920,⁷² and how sentiments towards the legislation changed in the subsequent decades, which is evident in the protestation letters in the 1950 territorial constitutional convention.⁷³ Despite the complexity of interracial conflict in Hawai‘i, the mid 1950s had seen the political genesis of liberal multiculturalism in Hawai‘i. This emerges in the statehood report in the first session of the 82nd

⁷¹This is laid out clearly in an article in 1945 from *The Argus* titled, “US Navy Men In Riot in Honolulu,” which stemmed from the deteriorating relations between the aforementioned groups in Hawai‘i. “US Navy Men In Riot at Honolulu.” *The Argus* (Melbourne and Victoria), 15 November 1945.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12153080>.

⁷² United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Territories. (1921). *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920: Hearings before the Committee on Territories, United States Senate, Sixty-sixth Congress, third session, on H. R. 13500*. <https://dhh.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Hawaiian-Homes-Commission-Act-1921-As-Amended-Searchable.pdf>.

⁷³ Attorney General’s Office, 1 Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of Hawaii, 1950 (1960). <https://files.hawaii.gov/dags/archives/PDFs/1950%20CON%20CON%20JOURNAL%20VOL.%20I.pdf>.

Congress, which praises Hawai‘i for its progressiveness.⁷⁴ In this chapter, we also peer into the various sentiments toward Hawai‘i—from senators in both parties—in the *Evening Star* and *The Augusta Courier*, which are both central to my political analysis of statehood in the eyes of Congress. Finally, I employ census data from both Hawai‘i and Alaska to compare the racial makeup of both territories in conjunction with the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 in Alaska⁷⁵ to contextualize how Hawai‘i was the primary target of anti-statehood sentiments in Congress despite anti-segregation legislation in Alaska.⁷⁶

The second chapter will cover the expansion of the military and tourism industries leading up to statehood, and the growing consciousness regarding land control from both the territorial and federal governments, especially during martial law in the 1940s. There was an implicit form of colonization that was becoming evermore present; we can see this by examining travel advertisements and how they evolved by 1950 in their depiction of Native Hawai‘ians.⁷⁷ The internalized colonization in Hawai‘i is revealed in videos on the day of statehood in 1959, which highlights the commodification of Native Hawai‘ian culture.⁷⁸ That said, we must then look at the perspective of islanders towards statehood as these two industries have expanded. For

⁷⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Statehood For Hawaii: Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., May 2nd, 1951, report 314.

https://www.loc.gov/resource/lserialsetce.11487_00_00-128-0314-0000/?sp=1&r=-0.19,0.648,1.177,0.874,0.

⁷⁵ Anti-Discrimination Act, House Bill 14, from Session Laws of Alaska, 1945.

<https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg41/id/543/rec/1>. 35.

⁷⁶ George W. Rodgers “Alaska Native Population Trends and Vital Statistics, 1950-1985.” ISEGR Research Note, Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research. University of Alaska (Fairbanks, AK). November 1971. https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/1971-AKNativePopulationTrends.pdf. As well as

⁷⁶ Robert C. Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778–1965* (Honolulu, 1968); United States Bureau of the Census, *1970, 1980, 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics* (Washington, DC); United States Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4)* (April 29, 2003); United States Bureau of the Census, *Census 2010 Summary File 1 (SF 1)* (June 16, 2011). <https://www.ohadatabook.com/T01-03-11u.pdf>.

⁷⁷ *Hawaii By Flying Clipper*. 1938. Travel Advertisement. Pan American Airways Corporation, Library of Congress Online Database. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95503069/>. And. *Hawaii: Only Hours Away Via Mainliner*. Circa 1950. Travel Advertisement. United Air Lines, Library of Congress Online Database. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008679042/>.

⁷⁸ “Aloha Hawaii. Islanders Celebrate Long-Sought Statehood, 1959/03/16 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming,” Internet Archive, April 6, 2005, https://archive.org/details/1959-03-16_Aloha_Hawaii.

this, I employed the perspectives of students at the time: the first from a brochure, and later from the Association of Students from the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH) and their letter to Congress in support of statehood.⁷⁹ The other is a letter from an 8th-grade social studies class writing to Washington, D.C.⁸⁰ Lastly, I use an article from the *Waterbury Democrat*, which exposes the censorship and the forced vaccination and blood donation program that occurred under martial law in Hawai‘i.⁸¹

In the third and final chapter, I explore the final stages of statehood during the late 1950s and reveal how the support had continued to increase until the day of statehood itself. For this, I highlight the expansion of the multicultural model in the United States with the backdrop of the 1957 Civil Rights Act, and how it reverberated in Congress and their view of Hawai‘ian statehood.⁸² On the islands, we can see the continued support for statehood through the use of the county records, such as a letter to Eisenhower and Congress from the Board of Supervisors in Maui.⁸³ Additionally, I will complete a further analysis of university students during the final push for statehood, where the ASUH had signed a letter expressing their full support for statehood.⁸⁴ Lastly, I re-examine the anti-statehood movement via Alice Kamokilaikawai

⁷⁹ “Hawaii: 49th State” brochure c.1946; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, RG 233; National Archives, Washington, DC. <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hawaii/brochure.html>.

⁸⁰ Letter from Yoshio Nishimori to Senator Joseph O'Mahoney, Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, April 30, 1951; Records of the U.S. Senate, RG 46; National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁸¹ Drew Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round.” *The Waterbury Democrat* (Waterbury, CT) 26 December 1942. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn82014085/1942-12-26/ed-1/?sp=6&q=military+in+hawaii&r=0.443,0.476,0.469,0.348,0>.

⁸² *An Act To provide means of further securing and protecting the civil rights of persons within the jurisdiction of the United States*, Public Law 85-315 (H.R. 6127), Sec. 104. 85th Cong. 3 January 1957. https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Civil_Rights_Act_1957.pdf.

⁸³ Res. 84 of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Maui, November 21, 1958; Records of the U.S. Senate, RG 46; National Archives, Washington, DC. <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hawaii/maui-resolution.html>.

⁸⁴ S. Res. 13 of the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii, March 17, 1959; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, RG 233; National Archives, Washington, DC.

Campbell's congressional hearing minutes and her reasons for opposing Hawai'ian statehood.⁸⁵

These sources are set beside an analysis of the historiography of statehood to explain why Native Hawai'ians had come to overwhelmingly support statehood by 1959.

⁸⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, of the Committee on Public Lands: Bills that enable the people of Hawai'i to form a constitution and state government and to be admitted into the union on an equal footing with the original states: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. April 15th, 1948. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015073437751&seq=3>.

Chapter 1: The Early Battle in Congress for Statehood

On the 12th of September, 1931, Thalia Massie, a wealthy white settler, accused a group of men of raping her during the dead of night. More than two months later, the five people who were arrested were released due to a lack of sufficient evidence tying them to the crime.⁸⁶ Several months later, unsatisfied with this result, Massie's husband—a Lieutenant in the military—and several others banded together to kidnap two of the accused men; one was a Japanese islander, the other was Indigenous.⁸⁷ The night of vigilante justice ended in the “honour killing” of Joseph Kahahawai, an indigenous Hawai‘ian prizefighter.”⁸⁸ The Massie case gained massive traction within the national media, and it was used as an excuse to push legislation that would create barriers for non-white residents within the territorial legal system. Due to pressure from the media, Lt. Massie only served one hour in prison for the killing of Kahahawai; the media continued to negatively paint the Indigenous population as “degenerate natives.”⁸⁹ The Massie case represented the growing anxieties of the minority non-white population towards the indigenous population. For many white settlers newly stationed on the islands, living as a minority created a conscious discomfort within their minds. As years passed, the recent memory of the trial started to subside, but the racial tension continued to increase between non-white and white settler islanders.

Despite this background of interracial tension, meanwhile, Congress continued to espouse Hawai‘i as an exemplar of multiculturalism. In this chapter, we will examine the early stages of Hawai‘ian statehood movement in its context on the mainland, and how many of the early

⁸⁶ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire,” 450.

⁸⁷ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire” 450.

⁸⁸ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 478.

⁸⁹ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire” 451.

conversations on statehood revolved around the political rhetoric that elevated Hawai‘i as an exemplar of liberal multiculturalism. This ideal became a point of contention within Congress, in which pro-segregationists pushed back against Hawai‘ian statehood, fearing its multicultural influence on the mainland. In particular, this chapter argues that the harmonic idea of multiculturalism was primarily a mainland ideal projected on Hawai‘i. Moreover, the fear of multicultural and interracial influence (as some historians suggest) was less prevalent than the explicit worry over the non-white population gaining political control over settler islanders. For this, Alaska will be used as a point of comparison—alongside census data, newspaper articles, and congressional reports—showing that the ongoing concerns from pro-segregationist Southern Democrats regarding civil rights legislation in Alaska were displaced in favour of concerns over Hawai‘i’s non-white population expansion.

Racial Tensions in Post-War Hawai‘i

The rift between relations continued to grow throughout the 1930s and became exacerbated in the 1940s with the rapid growth of the non-native population due to the rising demand for military control in the Pacific. Between 1940 and 1945, the population on the islands spiked from 258,000 to 348,000; a majority of the new arrivals were a part of the American military.⁹⁰ Following the Second World War, Hawai‘i’s economy shifted to a military/defence-centred economy, changing from the long reliance on the sugar industry.⁹¹ As more people were stationed on the Hawai‘ian islands, negative sentiments between the non-white and the white settler population continued to increase. For example, right after the war, in November 1945, 1000 soldiers in a naval air station base rioted in the streets of the Damon Tract residential zone.⁹² The

⁹⁰ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 485.

⁹¹ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 477.

⁹² Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 475.

riots allegedly began as a response to local Hawai‘ians throwing stones and harassing military personnel while out on the town.⁹³ Upon further investigation, the harassment of military personnel started as a response to racist slurs against Native Hawai‘ian islanders by soldiers. An article in *The Argus* highlights this fact: “It is said that non-white civilians resent being called ‘gooks’ by servicemen.” So, young indigenous Hawai‘ians attempted to rebel against the racist definitions they were given, but in turn elicited a violent response from members of the American military.

Following the riot, the news of the event was practically silenced, and the overall report was buried to minimize the potential negative image of the military in the media. As Kelli Y. Nakamura argues, “Although the riot was one of the largest postwar military uprisings, its absence in the historical record should be understood within the context of minimizing differences and tensions between locals and military personnel to promote tourism and statehood.”⁹⁴ Both white settlers and Native Hawai‘ian islanders opted for forgetting about the conflict entirely, as both parties had reasons to move forward from the negative media coverage. For the white settlers, this black mark on Hawai‘i’s record of the military could be detrimental to the pursuit of statehood, which a majority of the white population wanted. On the other hand, Native Hawai‘ian islanders feared a negative impact on tourism, which was the path forward in order to move away from a military-centered economy. In the end, the event was forgotten in the national consciousness, but the deep-rooted racialized conflict between the two populations continued throughout the subsequent decades.

⁹³ “US Navy Men In Riot at Honolulu.” *The Argus* (Melbourne and Victoria), 15 November 1945. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12153080>

⁹⁴ Nakamura, “Revenge Orgy,” 501.

Prior to this, during the interwar period, debates over statehood and Hawai‘ian multiculturalism started in the 1920s and 1930s in academia. In particular, Hawai‘i was seen as a path forward for progressive racial relations within the United States. In 1942, William C. Smith, a prominent member of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, analyzed the racial makeup and relations within the Territory of Hawai‘i. Here, he concluded that “it may be said that the several races live together in relationships which are characterized by harmony and friendliness, and that the presence of service clubs open to all races symbolized an equality in social status.”⁹⁵ Of course, from an outside perspective, the less-observable racial hierarchy may have suggested that Hawai‘i was a more racially equitable society. However, this hierarchy was deeper-rooted and more systemically charged than on the mainland.

Alaskan Statehood and the Civil Rights Act of 1945

At this time, Hawai‘i was not the only territory attempting to join the union: Alaska was also in the conversation of statehood as well. Interestingly, Alaska was excluded from the anti-multicultural agreement, even though the territory was the first area—including in the recognized states—to pass Civil Rights legislation, which predated the 1957 Civil Rights Act (covered in Chapter Three) by twelve years.⁹⁶ In particular, during the 1940s, Alaska was under Jim Crow, in which Indigenous Alaskans were viewed as second-class citizens and forcefully segregated from the white settler population.⁹⁷ The recently appointed Governor of the territory, Ernest Gruening, believed that in order to progress both socially and economically, it was important to address the

⁹⁵ William C. Smith “Minority Groups in Hawaii.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 223 (1942): 36–44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1023782>. 36. This source is a great example of how the view of the liberal multicultural model had shifted in the world of academia during the 1940s, which then began to bleed out into the national consciousness a decade later.

⁹⁶ Interestingly, the 1957 Civil Rights Act had seen fierce opposition in the Senate. In particular, on August 28th 1957, Strom Thurmond had the longest filibuster in history (up until recently), lasting over 24 hours.

⁹⁷ Terrence M. Cole, “Jim Crow in Alaska: The Passage of the Alaska Equal Rights Act of 1945,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (November 31, 1992): 429–49, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/970301>, 439.

ongoing segregation within towns such as Nome and Fairbanks, with the overall goal of eliminating the practice. As a result, on February 16th, the Alaska Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 was passed, which legally removed segregation and criminalized racial discrimination; it was the first Civil Rights bill passed within the United States.⁹⁸

The bill itself granted all Alaskan citizens the “full and equal enjoyment” to enter bars, theatres, resthouses, inns, and other establishments regardless of race or ethnic background. Further, business owners who violated these new rights by displaying signs “indicating discrimination on racial grounds,” would receive a punishment “by imprisonment in jail for not more than thirty days or fined not more than two hundred and fifty dollars.”⁹⁹ This would ensure that all Alaskan citizens were equal on a legal basis within the territory. Alaska was the first region with racialized conflict to tear down segregation practices, ensuring the Indigenous population could enter businesses without facing racial discrimination. Naturally, Alaska serves as a crucial point of comparison to Hawai‘i: both had similar experiences regarding racial tension and hierarchy, yet both experienced vastly different pathways to statehood. So one might ask, how were these experiences different between the two territories? And more importantly, why?

Hawai‘i’s political climate with respect to the growing racial conflict was more complicated than Alaska’s; in particular, there was a growing internal political disagreement among white settlers regarding perceptions of Native Hawai‘ian islanders. In 1950, the state of Hawai‘i held a constitutional convention to create a new, updated constitution that would push Hawai‘i into the modern age. In the convention, many of the white settlers voiced their concern regarding the Hawai‘ian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) of 1920. This act allowed for

⁹⁸ Cole, “Jim Crow in Alaska.” 449.

⁹⁹ Anti-Discrimination Act, House Bill 14, from Session Laws of Alaska, 1945. <https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg41/id/543/rec/1>. 35.

Indigenous Hawai‘ians to lease properties on crown lands (illegally taken during annexation) for a low price to promote “self-determination” and “self-sufficiency,” while preserving “the values, traditions, and culture of native Hawaiians.”¹⁰⁰ Overall, the territory set aside about 200,000 acres of crown land that was eligible for the HHCA.¹⁰¹ Although the HHCA sounded good in theory, in practice, it had issues. Firstly, the act did not guarantee that Indigenous Hawai‘ians had access to the limited number of eligible properties on the islands; secondly, to gain access, an individual had to prove that they were at least 50% Native Hawai‘ian.¹⁰² The use of the blood quantum was an intentional barrier put in place to define Indigeneity for Hawai‘ians in white settler terms. As Meller and Lee emphasize, “By so classifying all Hawaiians based on blood quantum into two groups... this is seen as another manifestation of the divide and conquer tactics of American colonialism.”¹⁰³ Blood became a modern definitional tool, rather than a connection to ancestors. This Western fetishization of blood, in turn, colonizes the very bodies of those who are forcefully subjected to a particular definition or category.

A majority of the settler islanders had supported the push for statehood, which required the economic expansion of the territory. Consequently, many settler islanders looked negatively upon the HHCA, feeling that it was causing economic stagnation within the territory; some non-Indigenous islanders had decided to submit petitions to get the HHCA removed entirely.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Territories. (1921). *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920: Hearings before the Committee on Territories, United States Senate, Sixty-sixth Congress, third session, on H. R. 13500*. <https://doh.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Hawaiian-Homes-Commission-Act-1921-As-Amended-Searchable.pdf>. 8.

¹⁰¹ Norman Meller and Anne F. Lee, *Hawaiian Sovereignty* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 167–85, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/3330643>, 172.

¹⁰² Meller and Lee, “Hawaiian Sovereignty,” 172.

¹⁰³ Meller and Lee, “Hawaiian Sovereignty,” 172.

¹⁰⁴ Attorney General’s Office, 1 Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of Hawaii, 1950 (1960). <https://files.hawaii.gov/dags/archives/PDFs/1950%20CON%20CON%20JOURNAL%20VOL.%20I.pdf>. 394. Of course, the handful of protestation letters that were present in the constitutional convention does not necessarily indicate that white/settler islanders all had a negative view of the HHCA, just a handful did. Unfortunately, it is impossible to fully know the actual number of those opposed to the act during the 1950s.

Groups of settler islanders came together to form petitions to oppose the HHCA and its presence in the future constitution:

The people of Kohala particularly the ranchers and farmers have signed this petition which we are sending you. We request that you present this to the delegation for their consideration. We believe that the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act is a detriment to the Territory of Hawaii. It has tied up large tracts of valuable land for a small group of citizens who do not have the facilities to utilize it to its best advantage. Because we do not believe in class legislation, we urge the delegation to omit the Hawaiian Homes Commission from the Constitution of Hawaii.¹⁰⁵

This valuation of land is a common rhetorical tactic among colonizers. Land occupied by the Indigenous peoples is deemed underused or wasted due to a lack of economic productivity. During the process of the constitutional convention, a total of nine petitions were formed to oppose the HHCA.¹⁰⁶ These political contentions led many non-Indigenous Islanders to be in favour of statehood, since it could change the constitutional makeup of the territory.

The Debate in Congress Over Hawai‘ian Multiculturalism

Back on the mainland, with post-war anti-communist sentiments steadily rising, Hawai‘i became the unofficial mascot for American democracy within the West. As Heefner states, “In the Cold War battle between communist totalitarianism and democratic freedom, Hawai‘i was promoted as the front line of U.S. leadership, a symbolic testing ground for American ideals around the world.”¹⁰⁷ In the first session of the 82nd Congress, Democratic Congressman Joseph C. O’Mahoney—chair of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs—presented a statehood bill that “would enable the progressive and prosperous American community of Hawai‘i, a bastion of

¹⁰⁵ Attorney General’s Office, 1 Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of Hawaii, 1950 (1960), 395.

¹⁰⁶ Attorney General’s Office, 1 Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of Hawaii, 1950 (1960), 398.

¹⁰⁷ Heefner, “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 547.

Americanism in the critical Pacific area, to become a State of the United States.”¹⁰⁸ Although O’Mahoney was adamant on the admission of Hawai‘i as a state, it was a minority view within the Democratic Party. Leading up to the 1954 election, Democrats believed that Hawai‘i’s statehood could shift the polls, increasing the likelihood of a Republican re-election.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the Democrats feared that statehood would lead to further exploration into federal civil rights legislation. To combat this, the party argued that Hawai‘i was “communist dominated.”¹¹⁰ An article in the *Minneapolis Spokesman* puts it perfectly: “While most of the country considers Hawaii not only a healthy state, but social and economically strong... southern senators last week hinted that they would fight all proposals and bills.”¹¹¹ The largest concern for the Southern Democrats was that they believed that there should be no state in which white people were considered the minority. This was especially the case since it would give Hawai‘i two votes in the Senate, which could assist the ongoing Civil Rights Movement on the mainland.¹¹² Democratic Congressman Paul Brown of Georgia was given a similar argument. It was seen as unfair that Hawai‘i would get two senators while only presenting a population of 462,000 as of 1951 (Georgia had eight times this population).¹¹³ Brown also feared that

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Statehood For Hawaii: Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., May 2nd, 1951, report 314.

https://www.loc.gov/resource/llserialsetce.11487_00_00-128-0314-0000/?sp=1&r=-0.19,0.648,1.177,0.874,0.1.

¹⁰⁹ Gould Lincoln, “Statehood for Hawai‘i Still Pending in Senate: Democrats Fear Islands Will Elect Republicans.” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 6 March 1954. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83045462/1954-03-06/ed-1/?sp=4&q=hawaii+statehood&r=0.691,0.287,0.324,0.241,0.4>. Newspaper articles are one of the major source bases that I use for this thesis. However, one of the major problems with use newspaper articles when it comes to any form of political narrative or history is that there are not outside the realm of political bias (similar to today), so they must not be entirely used at face value. That is not to say that they are not a reliable source, because they can be quite informationally valuable, but a grain of salt should always be used when looking into these types of sources.

¹¹⁰ Lincoln, “Statehood for Hawai‘i Still Pending in Senate: Democrats Fear Islands Will Elect Republicans.” 4.

¹¹¹ “Statehood For Hawaii Will Boost Civil Rights; Southerners Unfavorable.” *Minneapolis Spokesman* (Minneapolis, MN), 27 March 1953. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83025247/1953-03-27/ed-1/?sp=1&st=image&r=0.001,0.283,0.385,0.16,0.1>.

¹¹² “Statehood For Hawaii Will Boost Civil Rights; Southerners Unfavorable.” 1.

¹¹³ “Left Wing Element Is Influential In Pacific Possession, Georgian Declares.” *The Augusta Courier* (Augusta, GA), 23 March 1953. <https://doi.org/DOI Number or Name of>

America's territorial expansion would be a "dangerous precedent" and would not "improve or strengthen the security of the United States."¹¹⁴ It is clear that Brown's concern was not about continued imperial expansion—Hawai'i was still a territory after all—but about the increased political power of the Left within the Pacific. The Democrats opted for supporting Alaskan statehood instead, believing that it would garner more support in the upcoming election.¹¹⁵

The Republican Party, on the other hand, was in favor of Hawai'ian statehood for the same reason that the Democrats opposed it; it could gain the Republicans more support in the polls. However, the Republicans faced one major problem: Hawai'i was one of the most racially diverse territories, with the highest rates of interracial marriage.¹¹⁶ So, for the Republican Party, the pursuit of Hawai'i's statehood would be the same as publicly accepting multi-racialism, still a topic of contention during elections.¹¹⁷ This was a problem during the height of pre-Civil Rights America. Even though segregation itself was not supported by most Americans, this complex issue proved contentious within Congress and the Senate. As Saranillio explains, "Tracing the ideological role of Hawai'i's admission as a U.S. state within this 'global imaginary of integration' is to simultaneously trace the genealogy of Hawai'i's liberal multiculturalism within global imperial politics."¹¹⁸ During the height of the political discourse over Hawai'i's statehood, it was—and still is—impossible to separate political and racial implications. On the surface, the public supported the idea of Hawai'ian and Alaskan statehood; however, the battle for their statehood became intertwined with their multiculturalism.¹¹⁹ As a result, the Democratic

Database.<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn88071001/1953-03-23/ed-1/?sp=3&st=image&r=-0.038,0.33,0.553,0.23,0.3>.

¹¹⁴ "Left Wing Element Is Influential In Pacific Possession, Georgian Declares." 3.

¹¹⁵ Lincoln, "Statehood for Hawai'i Still Pending in Senate: Democrats Fear Islands Will Elect Republicans." 4.

¹¹⁶ Ziker, "Segregationists Confront American Empire," 449.

¹¹⁷ Scott-Smith, "From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset." 260.

¹¹⁸ Saranillio, "Unsustainable Empire," 134.

¹¹⁹ Ziker, "Segregationists Confront American Empire," 444.

Party continued to reuse the same rhetorical maneuver deployed several years earlier during the Truman administration. Fresh from the Second World War, the Democratic party was less concerned with equal rights; there was a larger concern for the growing Japanese population within Hawai‘i.¹²⁰ This anti-Japanese campaign slowed in the subsequent decade, and Hawai‘i’s racial diversity was seen as the driver that could push anti-segregation sentiments.¹²¹

This raises the question: if the pro-segregation Southern Democrats opposed the statehood of Hawai‘i due to its perceived multiculturalism, why did they not have the same views towards Alaska, which saw the first anti-segregationist policy? This question goes seemingly unanswered within the historiography of statehood. Giles Scott-Smith proposes that the reason why Hawai‘ian statehood was a long and arduous process was due to its contention in Congress, where Southern Democrats opposed the notion of Hawai‘ian multiculturalism.¹²² Ann K. Ziker adds to this perspective, providing a deeper analysis of the battle for statehood in Hawai‘i and the goal of the Democrats of the South to keep the islands as a territorial holding, afraid of the potential sparks it could ignite within the anti-segregationist movement in America.¹²³ Both noted the perspective towards interracial marriage and multiculturalism as a catalyst for anti-statehood sentiments, yet neither highlighted the ongoing civil rights movement in Alaska prior to statehood.

Upon further analysis, it becomes clear that the motivation that led Southern Democrats to oppose the statehood of Hawai‘i over Alaska was control over the racial majority. Although

¹²⁰ J. A. Krug “Time Fast Running Out For Hawaiian Statehood: Secretary Krug Wonders if, like Banquo's Ghost, the 49th State Question Will Plague National Conscience.” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 16 May 1948. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83045462/1948-05-16/ed-1/?sp=50&q=hawaii+statehood&r=0.74,0.659,0.272,0.202,0.1>.

¹²¹ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset.” 260.

¹²² Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset.” 260.

¹²³ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire,” 443-444.

Alaska celebrated the new push for anti-discrimination laws, white settlers still held a majority over the Indigenous citizens of the territory. By 1960 (one year after statehood), there were 226,167 total people reported to be residing in Alaska, with 43,081 “native persons” and 183,086 “non-native persons.”¹²⁴ Therefore, the Indigenous population consisted of less than one-fifth of the white settler population. On the other hand, in Hawai‘i during the same year, the population of white residents was 202,230 compared to 413,125 non-white residents.¹²⁵ So, white residents of Hawai‘i were less than one-third of the overall population—a minority.

This had long been the case and created a sense of discomfort, especially for newly stationed men in Hawai‘i, who were not used to being a part of a regional racial minority. As Nakamura states, “Many mainlanders were surprised by the large number of Asians in the Islands... Instead of a tropical paradise for whites, Hawai‘i’s racial diversity ensured that whites were the minority, subverting traditional notions of white privilege.”¹²⁶ This had bled into the national consciousness; not only did white islanders feel unconscious discomfort, but people on the mainland felt it as well. Many of the Southern Democratic senators proposed that Hawai‘i become a commonwealth, rather than being allowed the full benefits of statehood. In an evaluation of statehood in 1954, Democratic Senator George A. Smathers of Florida argued that, as a commonwealth, Hawai‘i would see \$140 million annually, due to no longer needing to pay

¹²⁴ George W. Rodgers “Alaska Native Population Trends and Vital Statistics, 1950-1985.” ISEGR Research Note, Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research. University of Alaska (Fairbanks, AK). November 1971. https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/1971-AKNativePopulationTrends.pdf. 4.

¹²⁵ Robert C. Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778–1965* (Honolulu, 1968); United States Bureau of the Census, *1970, 1980, 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics* (Washington, DC); United States Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4)* (April 29, 2003); United States Bureau of the Census, *Census 2010 Summary File 1 (SF 1)* (June 16, 2011). <https://www.ohadatabook.com/T01-03-11u.pdf>. 1.

¹²⁶ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 482. This census data is a collection of various studies that were compiled together in 2010.

full federal taxes to the United States.¹²⁷ Other Democratic Senators continued to express their concerns about communism within the territory, delaying the process of statehood until the committee would receive an “appraisal of Communist strength in Hawaii before the bill is reported out.”¹²⁸ Although there was disagreement about any further plans for Alaskan statehood, Hawai‘i remained at the center of the ongoing debate regarding statehood.

The Republican Party quickly recognized the position that they were in regarding the statehood of Hawai‘i. For the Eisenhower administration, it had become not a question of if Hawai‘i would become a state, but when. The man appointed to this mission was Secretary of the Interior, Senator Douglass James McKay, who believed that Hawai‘i exhibited all the characteristics of a state, and that “the people of Hawai‘i want statehood.”¹²⁹ McKay believed that it was in the best interests of the American people to pass the statehood bill for Hawai‘i as quickly as possible. Since Eisenhower’s administration had promised the pursuit of statehood, it was originally scheduled for 1954, following the election. As McKay stated, “I believe that Hawaii is fully qualified for statehood and that our American Principles of constitutional self-governance call for speedy and favorable action.”¹³⁰ Even early on, there was adamant support for statehood from some Congressmen.

To report from Hawai‘i, in 1953, McKay obtained the help of Republican Delegate Joseph Rider Farrington, a Hawai‘i-born politician who adamantly supported statehood during his career. This ambition was inherited from his father, Wallace Rider Farrington, former

¹²⁷ “Commonwealth Plan For Hawaii Opposed By Island Delegate.” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 9 January 1954. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83045462/1954-01-09/ed-1/?sp=3&q=hawai%27i+statehood&r=0.351,0.507,0.301,0.224,0.3>.

¹²⁸ “Commonwealth Plan For Hawaii Opposed By Island Delegate.” 3.

¹²⁹ Associated Press “McKay Asks Congress to Give Statehood to Hawaii Now.” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 23 February 1953. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83045462/1953-02-23/ed-1/?sp=1&q=hawai%27i+statehood+native&r=0.425,1.141,0.274,0.203,0.1>.

¹³⁰ Associated Press “McKay Asks Congress to Give Statehood to Hawaii Now.” 1.

territorial Governor, who had been a supporter of statehood during the 1920s.¹³¹ Joseph Farrington was boosted by his father's career, and his platform was focused on the achievement of "equal rights and statehood."¹³² Needless to say, for Farrington, equal rights had not meant for all peoples of Hawai'i, but instead to have the same rights as provided on the mainland, rather than territorial rights. To McKay, Farrington was perfect for the job; he had the experience to testify for the statehood of Hawai'i. Since the start of his political career in 1933, Farrington had participated in nine congressional hearings for statehood.¹³³ However, even with this political support, the idea of statehood still had not been concrete within the public. It became necessary to gain full public support to push statehood forward in Congress.

Those in favour of statehood pointed out the fact that Hawai'i was already economically important; entering the 1950s, they were paying more in federal taxes than 26 other states.¹³⁴ Not only were the Republicans interested in statehood, but many of the executives of the 'Big Five companies' were interested in the prosperity that statehood could bring to their collective companies. The first step was creating positive sentiments towards the people of Hawai'i, especially on the mainland. To do so, propaganda campaigns took place in order to make "Hawai'i's nonwhite peoples less foreign."¹³⁵ This attempted to minimize pushback from those who had previously been against statehood.

Of course, this form of propaganda was not only for mainland Americans and the members of Congress. It was also deployed to garner more support for statehood in Hawai'i

¹³¹ "Hawaiian Delegate Farrington Found Dead in Capitol Office." *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.) 20 June 1954. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83045462/1954-06-20/ed-1/?sp=12&q=hawai%27i+statehood+native&r=0.09,0.261,0.27,0.201,0.12>.

¹³² "Hawaiian Delegate Farrington Found Dead in Capitol Office." 12.

¹³³ Associated Press "McKay Asks Congress to Give Statehood to Hawaii Now." 1.

¹³⁴ Krug "Time Fast Running Out For Hawaiian Statehood: Secretary Krug Wonders if, like Banquo's Ghost, the 49th State Question Will Plague National Conscious." 1.

¹³⁵ Saranillio, "Unsustainable Empire," 133.

itself. During the mid-1950s, although Hawai‘i had been seen as racially diverse compared to the mainland, it had already known a long-standing racial hierarchy that had been present since its annexation in 1898. This was highlighted by J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, who had analyzed the colonization of Hawai‘i, and how its annexation had stripped non-white and Indigenous Islanders of their self-determination.¹³⁶ The presence of this racial hierarchy persisted, and when the question of statehood was brought up, there were white islanders who feared that Hawai‘i’s statehood would affect the social and political hierarchy.¹³⁷ In short, the American media pushed to promote the beneficial position that Hawai‘i could occupy given potential statehood. Further, Hawai‘i also became important since it would serve as an example of political progression within the West, to deny the Soviet Union’s claim that the U.S. was an imperial power in the Pacific.¹³⁸ Of course, the U.S. denied this fact, instead claiming that it would secure Hawai‘i and its peoples.¹³⁹ This justification became a regular argument that the U.S. used during the Cold War in order to justify its increased imperial control over its territorial holdings. Chomsky defined this behavior as being an “emancipator,” in which the U.S. would claim to be “responding to the hostile or brutal acts of other powers, but apart from that, seeking nothing but justice, human rights, and democracy.”¹⁴⁰ This “righteousness” is something that continued into subsequent decades, and Chomsky discusses the importance of excluding oneself from this propagandistic mindset.¹⁴¹ The story of Hawai‘ian statehood thus became a story of the progress of American democracy rather than a continuation of its imperial control in the Pacific.

¹³⁶ Kauanui, “Native Hawai‘ian Decolonization,” 282.

¹³⁷ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset.” 261.

¹³⁸ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 133.

¹³⁹ “Hawaiian Delegate Farrington Found Dead in Capitol Office.” 12.

¹⁴⁰ Chomsky, “Visions of Righteousness,” 42.

¹⁴¹ Chomsky, “Visions of Righteousness,” 30.

Chapter 2: Military and Tourism Expansionism

Following the annexation of Hawai‘i and its incorporation as a territory in 1900, the new territorial government devised a strategy to diversify its economy and to expand the tourism industry on the islands. As a result, in 1903, the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce created the Hawai‘i Promotion Committee, which allocated money to increase tourism to the islands.¹⁴² Later, this committee would become the Hawai‘i Tourist Bureau in 1919, who oversaw advertising to the mainland of the United States. Over the next decade, in order to appeal to more tourists, the Hawai‘i Tourist Bureau—with the help of Hollywood and the music industry—created a fantastical image of Hawai‘i as a land of paradise. The poster-child of this “paradise” was the hula girl, representing of “primitiveness” and “exotic sensuality.”¹⁴³ As the 1930s and the Great Depression unfolded, Hawai‘i continued to be a vacation destination for those of the highest classes. In particular, Hawai‘i had become the “vacationland for movie stars,” which had garnered significant publicity on the islands, and continued to shape the tourist this fantasy.¹⁴⁴

In this chapter, we explore the rapid expansion of both the tourism and military industries during the 1940s and 1950s, and the growing consciousness of the loss of land and control over the bodies of Native Hawai‘ians. By analyzing the censorship of newspapers during martial law and the various medical programs (i.e. the blood donation and mandatory vaccination programs) instituted on the islands, it becomes clear that Native Hawai‘ian islanders had begun to push for statehood as a means of reclaiming some form of political autonomy. In their eyes, militarism had deprived them of the rights over their own bodies and blood; on the other hand, tourism had

¹⁴² Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 642.

¹⁴³ Farber and Baily, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 643.

¹⁴⁴ DeSoto Brown, “Beautiful, Romantic Hawaii: How the Fantasy Image Came to Be,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 20 (1994): 253–71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1504126>, 257.

represented the commodification of Native Hawai‘ian culture, without reinvestments back into the community. In short, statehood was a short-term solution to the loss of control of the government.

Hawai‘ian Tourism Industry

By the 1950s, the fantasy of Hawai‘i as a primitive paradise was cemented in the national perspective on the islands; the Hawai‘i Tourist Bureau did exactly what it set out to do.¹⁴⁵

Following the Second World War and the expansion of military defense expenditure within the islands, tourism experienced a massive increase in the overall annual expenditure.¹⁴⁶ This exponentially increased during the 1950s prior to statehood; in particular, between 1950 and 1959, the spending on tourism rose from \$24 million to \$109 million. Alongside the depiction of the hula girl, the Aloha shirt—another popular image of Hawai‘i—was created, which simultaneously acted as a promotional device.¹⁴⁷ Originally created in the 1930s, the Aloha shirt became nationally popular in the 1940s and 1950s due to its popularity among white servicemen stationed on the islands.¹⁴⁸ Of course, the Aloha shirt was more than just a fashion statement; it had represented the push of non-white islanders toward economic autonomy through the ritual of colonial prostitution.¹⁴⁹ As Sasaki elegantly puts it, “As an article of embodiment, the aloha shirt enabled militarized bodies to remake the self through performing both local and touristic fantasy, incorporating militourism vis-à-vis the fashioned body into the social order of Hawai‘i.” The act

¹⁴⁵ Brown, “Beautiful Romantic Hawai‘i,” 256, 270.

¹⁴⁶ Nakamura, “Revenge Bound Orgy,” 503.

¹⁴⁷ Brown, “Beautiful Romantic Hawai‘i,” 257.

¹⁴⁸ Sasaki, “Threads of Empire,” 645.

¹⁴⁹ Sasaki, “Threads of Empire,” 645.

of wearing an Aloha shirt was performative; the white islander could thereby place themselves closer to the pre-colonial primitive age.

At the same time, common advertisements from the Hawai‘i Tourist Bureau usually depicted a hula girl. For example, a 1950s United Airlines advertisement offers the line “only hours away via mainliner.” The main focus of the image is right in the centre; there is an Indigenous hula girl with exaggerated features, most notably a small-waisted hourglass figure.¹⁵⁰ Another example of this is a Pan American Airways advertisement from 1938, which shows a large Boeing 314 Clipper plane docked with dozens of white tourists being greeted by several Indigenous women in traditional hula garb.¹⁵¹ The newly arrived passengers are greeted right away by the primitive image of paradise that continues to be the main focus of the tourism industry in Hawai‘i. This trope of Hawai‘i had become common pre-statehood, in which the “friendly and sexually available” hula girl would emphasize the “soft-primitiveness” of the islands, which is still seen today.¹⁵² The hula girl becomes emblematic of the celebration of forgetting; the Indigenous woman gratefully receives white arrivals, in turn, erasing the colonial legacy that haunts the islands.¹⁵³ The theme of the Hawai‘ian hula girl continued through its induction as a state. A short informational film *Aloha Hawaii* by Universal Studios depicts the celebrations of statehood; one of its most prevalent clips shows various women in traditional hula garb dancing, while Hawai‘i’s culture is described as a “polyglot” and “colorful.”¹⁵⁴ Interestingly, the narrator claims: “Perhaps most important of all, Hawai‘ian statehood gives the

¹⁵⁰ *Hawaii: Only Hours Away Via Mainliner*. Circa 1950. Travel Advertisement. United Air Lines, Library of Congress Online Database. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008679042/>.

¹⁵¹ *Hawaii By Flying Clipper*. 1938. Travel Advertisement. Pan American Airways Corporation, Library of Congress Online Database. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95503069/>.

¹⁵² Miller-Devenport, “A Montage of Minorities,” 822, 831.

¹⁵³ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other Pacific Oceans,” 87.

¹⁵⁴ “Aloha Hawaii. Islanders Celebrate Long-Sought Statehood,” 1959/03/16 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming,” Internet Archive, April 6, 2005, https://archive.org/details/1959-03-16_Aloha_Hawaii.

lie to communist charges of American colonialism.”¹⁵⁵ In their eyes, Hawai‘ian statehood disproved the notion of American imperialism in the Pacific; the constructed depiction of Hawai‘i as a paradise had also contributed to this school of thought.

Hawai‘i is not the only place within the Pacific that has seen this caricature on the female body. Teresia K. Teaiwa, scholar and Indigenous activist, considers the implications of the invention of the bikini and its repercussions in the Pacific Islands. The bikini, Teaiwa argues, brings attention to the depoliticization of the sexualized female body, yet at the same time, reinforces the colonial origins of its name.¹⁵⁶ As she brilliantly concludes, “The bikini exoticized generic female bodies by constructing them as references to a Grecian Golden Age and a South Sea Paradise; in this genealogy, the more immediate colonial and nuclear ancestry was conveniently marginalized.”¹⁵⁷ The bikini became a mechanism in which white bodies could gain the chance to become more “exotic” by becoming more tanned and coloured.¹⁵⁸ Both the bikini and the Aloha shirt had been representative—and still are—of the transcendence to paradise; tourists could temporarily experience a “temporal stasis of primitiveness.”¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, tourists would then be able to return home before the colonial legacies of the islands become apparent.

The depiction of Hawai‘i as a land of paradise was not the only fantasy intentionally advertised through the U.S. in the age of pre-statehood; Hawai‘i became the unofficial symbol of early American multiculturalism.¹⁶⁰ As Miller-Davenport emphasizes, “The tourism industry’s

¹⁵⁵ “Aloha Hawaii. Islanders Celebrate Long-Sought Statehood,” 1959/03/16 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming,” Internet Archive, April 6, 2005, https://archive.org/details/1959-03-16_Aloha_Hawaii.

¹⁵⁶ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other Pacific Oceans,” 87.

¹⁵⁷ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other Pacific Oceans,” 93.

¹⁵⁸ Teaiwa, “Bikinis and Other Pacific Oceans,” 93.

¹⁵⁹ Franklin and Lyon, “Remixing Hybridity,” 53.

¹⁶⁰ Miller-Devenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 819.

embrace of multi-culturalist ideology was made possible... by the same structural processes of globalization and decolonization that turned Hawai‘i into both an American state and a site for mass tourism.”¹⁶¹ For the average American, Hawai‘i became symbolic of progress during the height of the segregation movement.

At the same time, the creation of the ‘Aloha Spirit’ became more present within the national perspective of Hawai‘i; this was, of course, a by-product of the tourism industry.¹⁶² As a result, the image of Indigenous Hawai‘ian was fictionalized—and pedestaled—representing “a golden people” (seemingly a Pacific version of the ‘noble savage’). The primary issue with Hawai‘i’s multicultural image is that the view of multiethnicity has become an “object of consumption” in itself.¹⁶³ Hawai‘i was a commodified form of American economic expansionism. Miller-Davenport argues that “multiculturalism was not only used as a way for people in power to placate... their right to cultural recognition. It was also a discursive and institutional tool for liberal policy-makers and business leaders... to facilitate American expansionism abroad and to make money at home.”¹⁶⁴ In a sense, Hawai‘i was a commodified product, and the Indigenous peoples of the islands had become its poster.

This message of multiculturalism was not only apparent in the national consciousness of Hawai‘i, but it was also a prevalent perspective on the islands as well. For example, in 1946, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH) came together to form a petition in the form of a brochure, which was then sent to Hugh Peterson, a Democratic Representative from the state of Georgia.¹⁶⁵ In this brochure entitled “Hawaii 49th State” (Alaska had not yet become

¹⁶¹ Miller-Devenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 819.

¹⁶² Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 818.

¹⁶³ Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 818.

¹⁶⁴ Miller-Davenport, “Hawai‘i Tourism and the Commodification,” 820.

¹⁶⁵ “Hawaii: 49th State” brochure c.1946, 2.

the 49th state), Calvin Ontai, the ASUH president, wrote about the ethnic origins of the islands and the benefits of Hawai‘i’s potential incorporation as a state:

To grant Hawaii statehood would extend the domestic frontier of the United States proper 2,200 miles to the West. It would establish a desirable precedent in granting the island peoples self-government and full political rights. It would be an example we could point to with pride—wordless criticism of the colonial policy of nations which to not choose to extend to the people under them similar rights. It would mean that within the boundaries of the United States would be included a state which would set an example of full racial tolerance, a state made up of people of many races and creeds living and working together without friction. It would serve notice to the world at large that the Central and Western Pacific constitute a defense zone of the United States.¹⁶⁶

For many of the young university students in the ASUH, much of their political concern for the islands was about their political autonomy within a system that did not grant full rights and privileges to the territories. Furthermore, the extension of rights was seen as combating the criticisms of colonial policy lurking within geopolitics. In their minds, the incorporation of Hawai‘i would disprove American imperialism in the Pacific.¹⁶⁷ The students of the ASUH also expressed interracial cooperation through the dismissal of racial bloc voting, something that politicians in the South had worried about. As one student stated, “a politician who bases his appeal on a racial issue finds himself committing ‘political suicide’... the people of Hawaii do not vote in racial blocs, but as educated, free-thinking Americans.”¹⁶⁸ The notion of multiculturalism and racial harmony, which was once a product of the tourism industry, became a part of the political psyche for many young students.

¹⁶⁶ “Hawaii: 49th State” brochure c.1946, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Ziker, “Segregationist Confront American Empire,” 442.

¹⁶⁸ “Hawaii: 49th State” brochure c.1946, 3.

The University of Hawai‘i was not the only school in which students had written about potential statehood. In 1951, an 8th-grade social studies class wrote a letter to Democratic Senator Joseph O’Mahoney of Wyoming. In the letter, the students proclaimed their desire to become the next state, so that they could vote in the next election: “We will all be happy to obtain the privilege of voting for the president of the United States and gain a voice in the laws that govern us.”¹⁶⁹ Seemingly, the younger generation of the island—those outside of the living memory of annexation—showed adamant support for statehood and the benefits of political autonomy. This then prompts the question: how could non-white islanders support the push for statehood given the explicit history of the unjustified overthrow of Hawai‘i?

Military Expansion and the Martial Law Period

The idea of statehood itself had first gained traction following the Second World War.¹⁷⁰ For politicians on the mainland, Hawai‘i was central to concerns of the expansion of communism; it was imperative that the United States cement the territory before potential unwanted interference.¹⁷¹ However, for islanders, there was another major reason to support statehood: the rapid expansion of the military. This expansion had also completely changed the economic makeup of the islands. Due to the influx of new arrivals (primarily servicemen), between 1941 and 1944, 8000 new businesses opened across the territory.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Letter from Yoshio Nishimori to Senator Joseph O'Mahoney, Chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, April 30, 1951; Records of the U.S. Senate, RG 46; National Archives, Washington, DC. <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hawaii/student-letter.html>. Of course, there are issues with using a letter from students. Questions may arise from this: why did the students write this? How involved was the teacher? What were the motivations of the students? Did they understand the geopolitical context in which they were writing? Of course, we cannot answer these questions and can only presume through the analysis of this letter.

¹⁷⁰ Heefner, “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 548.

¹⁷¹ Heefner, “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 549.

¹⁷² Sasaki, “Threads of Empire,” 648.

With the induction of Hawai‘i as a territory, the American military had already had its sights on expansion militarily in the Pacific; this would allow for the opening of Asia both strategically and economically. To achieve this, the building of Pearl Harbour commenced immediately after annexation, which was the first naval base in Hawai‘i.¹⁷³ However, in 1941, four decades after its construction, the military base was bombed, which pulled the United States into the war. As a result, on December 7th, 1941, Joseph Poindexter, the territorial governor of Hawai‘i, enacted martial law.¹⁷⁴ Importantly, it was Section 67 of the Hawaiian Organic Act of 1900 that gave the territorial governor the power to enact and maintain martial law for what was deemed necessary. The territorial governor could “call upon the commanders of the military and naval forces of the United States in the Territory of Hawaii... or call out the militia of the Territory to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection or rebellion.”¹⁷⁵ It becomes apparent that the primary concerns regarding Hawai‘i during the act’s creation in 1900 were internal threats, since three of the four aforementioned reasons for martial law are linked to internal violence rather than the fear of an external threat.

This completely changed the political structure of the territory; the islands were under martial law until the end of 1944, the longest period of martial law in American history.¹⁷⁶ During this period, the federal government took full control of the territory. One of the major policies that they enacted was a change to the public health program; islanders were subjected to forced vaccinations for typhoid and smallpox (also known as war diseases).¹⁷⁷ These forceful

¹⁷³ Nakamura “A Revenge Bound Orgy,” 478.

¹⁷⁴ Robert S. Rankin “Hawaii Under Martial Law.” *The Journal of Politics* 5, no. 3 (1943): <https://doi.org/10.2307/2125908>. 271.

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Congress, House, Hawaiian Organic Act of 1900, 56th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House April 27, 1900, <https://www.doi.gov/media/document/31-stat-141-hawaiian-organic-act-1900-pdf>. 153.

¹⁷⁶ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 23.

¹⁷⁷ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 26.

biopolitical military-focused policies and their intersection with the continued colonization of the islands is defined by Juliet Nebolon as ‘settler militarism,’ in which the legacy of colonization is continued under the guise of defense-focused military expansion.¹⁷⁸ Further, both settler colonialism and militarization are “two regimes that shared investments in white settler control, land acquisition, and Indigenous displacement in Hawai‘i.”¹⁷⁹ The military justified its presence on the islands by emphasizing its role in the tightly run public health system. The death from disease that was a result of colonial expansionism was temporarily buried and forgotten.

By the end of 1942—a year into martial law— Islanders started to become restless. Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, the newly appointed “military governor” of the islands, ran a tight ship, which started to affect the mental well-being of many Islanders.¹⁸⁰ As a result of the enactment of martial law, Lt Gen. Emmons had gained control of “Press, Labor, courts, municipal affairs, public health, hospitals, and transportation.”¹⁸¹ One of the major policy changes to the public health sector in Hawai‘i that occurred was the establishment of a lend-lease program for blood donation. Since the military was in constant need of a fresh supply of blood, the new blood donation program allowed people to have reduced sentences if they donated blood. In particular, one pint of blood would be the equivalent of a \$30 fine or 15 days in jail.¹⁸² On the surface, the blood donation program seemed as though it was mutually beneficial, in which those charged could uphold their “patriotic duty,” while being financially rewarded at the same time. However, it became apparent that the rate of “minor crimes” had drastically

¹⁷⁸ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 25.

¹⁷⁹ Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 40.

¹⁸⁰ Drew Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round.” *The Waterbury Democrat* (Waterbury, CT) 26 December 1942. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn82014085/1942-12-26/ed-1/?sp=6&q=military+in+hawaii&r=0.443,0.476,0.469,0.348,0.6>.

¹⁸¹ Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round,” 6.

¹⁸² Nebolon, “Settler Militarism,” 33.

increased. Since the justice system was under the control of the military, they had the ability to decide punishment for criminals. As Drew Pearson, a reporter in the *Waterbury Democrat*, exclaimed, “A civilian in Honolulu recently was brought up on a murder charge before the ‘military commission’ and was condemned to death by drumhead justice. There was no indictment, no jury, and the judges had no pretense of legal training.”¹⁸³ For many islanders, the period of martial law showed them that the government could enact overreaching control of their bodies. Further, the control over indigenous blood came full circle. Indigeneity on the islands had been dictated by blood quantum, which defined Native Hawai‘ians as containing at least 50% Indigenous Hawai‘ian blood.¹⁸⁴ So, within Hawai‘i, the territorial government had control over Indigenous blood both metaphorically and literally.

With the end of the Second World War in 1945, one could expect the end of the plans for military expansion; however, this was not the case. Of course, the end of the war had summoned the Cold War.¹⁸⁵ Due to the location of Hawai‘i, it would be used as the primary point of defense against engagement “if and when the Cold War turns hot.”¹⁸⁶ Therefore, islanders had to endure the continued military expansion by the government. Thus, support for statehood was garnered during the height of military expansion. It became clear—especially to the younger generations—that territorial makeup was a one-way street where the federal government had full control over the rights and privileges of the islanders; on the other hand, islanders did not have the political autonomy to vote for their leader federally. For the 8th-grade social studies class, as well as for University of Hawai‘i students, this had become fully apparent. So, even though the

¹⁸³ Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round,” 6.

¹⁸⁴ Kauanui, “Hawaiian Entitlement: Land Configurations,” 123.

¹⁸⁵ Heefner “A Symbol of the New Frontier,” 547.

¹⁸⁶ William J. Waugh, “Brass Says They Can’t Say For Sure.” *The Key West Citizen* (Key West, FL) 6 December 1954. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83016244/1954-12-06/ed-1/?sp=7&q=military+in+hawaii&r=0.321,-0.002,0.497,0.206,0.7>.

annexation had only occurred two generations prior, many young islanders supported the movement for statehood to regain control over their own political future.¹⁸⁷

The rate of interracial marriage and multiculturalism within the islands was prevalent compared to the mainland.¹⁸⁸ However, even though Hawai‘i had been primarily populated by non-white inhabitants, there was still the presence of white-dominated institutionalized racism. Joe Feagin and Sean Elias’s systemic race theory explains how, throughout the history of the United States, the non-white experiences have constantly been an uphill battle of anti-colonial resistance, which is a continued fight against the maintenance of this system of oppression.¹⁸⁹ Throughout their essay, they highlight the different identifiable forms of systemic racism apparent within the empire. It highlights the “maintenance of major material and other resource inequalities by white-controlled and well-institutionalized social reproduction mechanisms.”¹⁹⁰ In the earlier stages of the territory, this had been the control over the various industries of the island from the ‘Big Five’, who had sparked Hawai‘i’s annexation.¹⁹¹ This hierarchical maintenance would be passed on to the white-dominated tourism and military industries, which impacted the image of paradisaical multicultural Hawai‘i.¹⁹²

Soon after, the United States joined the Second World War, and a strain between white and non-white islanders began, especially between the Japanese population and servicemen stationed on the islands. This was a concern of “Hawai‘i’s elites,” who had spent millions of dollars and years forging the tourist image of Hawai‘i.¹⁹³ In order to preserve this image, many

¹⁸⁷ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

¹⁸⁸ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol to Division,” 258.

¹⁸⁹ Feagin and Elias, “Rethinking Racial Formation Theory,” 947.

¹⁹⁰ Feagin and Elias, “Rethinking Racial Formation Theory,” 936.

¹⁹¹ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

¹⁹² Miller-Devenport, “A Montage of Minorities,” 819.

¹⁹³ Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 654.

from Hawai‘i’s business class attempted to diffuse the situation by allowing servicemen to gain the tourist experience.¹⁹⁴ This phenomenon is defined by David Farber and Ben Bailey as the ‘fighting-man-as-tourist,’ which asserts the paradigm of wartime arrivals consuming the ‘otherness’ of Hawai‘i without the loss of individual identity, as well as the need to reject the ‘other.’¹⁹⁵ They conclude that “These men were not tourists, and wartime Hawaii was not paradise. But tourism supplied the discourse and the model through which their experiences were mediated.”¹⁹⁶ Although their argument regarding the experiences of servicemen in Hawai‘i is compelling, it oversimplifies the racial makeup of the islands and generalizes the relationships between islanders and new arrivals. In particular, they briefly mention the racial discourse between Japanese-American islanders and servicemen (hence the need to distance the men from the foreignness of Hawai‘i) but fail to analyze tensions between Native Hawai‘ians and white servicemen.¹⁹⁷ In short, they unconsciously put islanders into only two categories, white and non-white, without acknowledging the different relationships throughout the islands. Lastly, they discuss the concern of elite islanders with Hawai‘i paradisaical image being ruined by war-torn men, yet elide that military criticism in papers such as the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* was censored by the government.¹⁹⁸

The emergence of the tourism and military industries had provided Native Hawai‘ians a means of economic autonomy, at the cost of the commodification of culture, and concealment of the colonial legacies on the islands. Hawai‘i was by no means the image of paradise pushed within the national consciousness, nor was it the perfect exemplar of multicultural

¹⁹⁴ Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 654.

¹⁹⁵ Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 641.

¹⁹⁶ Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 660.

¹⁹⁷ Farber and Bailey, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 652.

¹⁹⁸ Pearson, “Washington Merry-Go-Round.” 6.

communitarianism that had been depicted. Instead, it was a complex system of multiracial relationships of all ethnic backgrounds. Overall, Native Hawai'ians and non-white islanders had one thing in common: despite collectively representing much of the population, they were placed on the lower rungs of the ever-present racial hierarchy built by the sugar planters and then maintained by the territorial and federal government.

Chapter 3: The Final Stages of Statehood

For in the ugly and violent history of the United States, indeed, of the Americas, you will find that many peoples and many nations occupy these lands, not under the Christian God or the United States Constitution, but in the diverse humanity of peoples, in the many-colored family of nations.¹⁹⁹

- Haunani Kay Trask (2004)

The fight for Hawai‘ian statehood reached its final stages in the late 1950s, following the dismissal of the argument that communism was rampant in the islands.²⁰⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, Southern Democrats argued against the incorporation of Hawai‘i as a state. As a result, the concerns over internally present communist support had faded within Congress, and with a newfound determination, bipartisanship regarding statehood occurred as the end of the decade approached.²⁰¹

At the same time, with the return of many Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) from the Second World War, voting shifted on the islands, and for the first time, both the territorial house and senate were Democratic.²⁰² This was known as the Hawai‘i Democratic Revolution of 1954, in which the younger generations of the islands overthrew the long-present Republican-supporting sugar planters.²⁰³ This led to the removal of many tax anomalies that favoured the wealthier landowners in Hawai‘i.²⁰⁴ These changes created discomfort for some

¹⁹⁹ Haunani-Kay Trask, “The Color of Violence,” *Social Justice/Global Options* 31, no. 4 (2004): 8–16, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/29768270>, 15.

²⁰⁰ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 296.

²⁰¹ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 307.

²⁰² Sasaki, “Threads of Empire,” 644.

²⁰³ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 293.

²⁰⁴ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 293.

wealthier white settlers, resulting in growing concern over whether the prospect of statehood would change the socioeconomic makeup of Hawai‘i.

On the mainland, Eisenhower had been an earlier supporter of Hawai‘i’s statehood, primarily for its strategic military position.²⁰⁵ Across the floor, Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson experienced a complete U-turn regarding support for Hawai‘i. Originally opposed to the idea, he had seen the growing national support for the territory’s incorporation into the union; he decided to spare his public image by ignoring the protests of his fellow Southern constituents.²⁰⁶ Southern Democrats continued to protest the Hawai‘ian statehood; this became further exacerbated by the passing of the first national civil rights bill in 1957. In particular, the 1957 Civil Rights Act ensured the creation of a civil rights committee, which had a primary focus of investigating if “certain citizens of the United States are being deprived of their right to vote” due to their “color, race, religion or national origin.”²⁰⁷ However, even with support from the Democratic leader, elected officials from the South did not give up on their concerns over the changing national racial dynamics. Those who voted against the 1957 Civil Rights Act also voted against Hawai‘i’s admission as a state.²⁰⁸ Additionally, some had even suggested Hawai‘ian independence, since many of the segregationists had believed that it would be dangerous to incorporate a state of “Orientals.”²⁰⁹ This view also reflected the growing post-war concern over the large Japanese American population on the islands.

²⁰⁵ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol to Division,” 264.

²⁰⁶ Scott-Smith, “From Symbol to Division,” 269, 270.

²⁰⁷ *An Act To provide means of further securing and protecting the civil rights of persons within the jurisdiction of the United States*, Public Law 85-315 (H.R. 6127), Sec. 104. 85th Cong. 3 January 1957.

https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Civil_Rights_Act_1957.pdf. 2.

²⁰⁸ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire,” 445.

²⁰⁹ Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire,” 461, 463.

In this final chapter, we will examine the final stages of statehood, as well as the opposition present on the islands. This chapter will examine the statehood bills more closely and the reactions of young islanders to the government's legislative response to joining the union. Additionally, I will analyze Alice Kamokilaikawai Campbell's—a Native Hawai'ian politician and statehood opposer—address to Congress to understand the interracial tension present following the Second World War. This research shows that most Native Hawai'ians did not share Campbell's worldview. Instead, most Native Hawai'ian islanders overwhelmingly supported statehood; however, this was not out of a simplistic push for Americanization. Rather, the goal was to become agents in the democracy forced upon Native Hawai'ians decades earlier.

The Inevitability of Statehood in the Late 1950s

Leading up to statehood, islanders became more accustomed to the idea of statehood; to many, it was no longer a matter of if, but when. Support for statehood continued to increase during the 1950s. On November 21st, 1958, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Maui sent a letter to President Eisenhower as well as the House, indicating their desire to join the union:

WHEREAS, the people of the territory of Hawaii have long and fervently hoped to achieve the status of first-class American citizens under the process of having the Territory of Hawaii admitted into the union as a State, WHEREAS, in spite of the denial of the admission of the Territory of Hawaii as a state in numerous past sessions, the people of this Territory still persist and desire to attain statehood; now, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Maui for and in behalf of the people of the said county of Maui that it does hereby reaffirm its stand heretofore taken in achieve statehood for the Territory of Hawai'i, and in this connection respectfully request and urge Congress of the United States to grant immediate statehood to the Territory of Hawaii in this coming session.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Res. 84 of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Maui, November 21, 1958; Records of the U.S. Senate, RG 46; National Archives, Washington, DC. <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hawaii/maui-resolution.html>.

The bottom of the resolution contained the votes of the nine sitting members of the board, who unanimously voted on behalf of statehood.

Politically, the Territory of Hawai‘i had little power within the national framework of the United States, while also paying a large amount in federal taxes. Between Hawai‘i’s annexation in 1898 and statehood in 1959, the islands had paid over \$2 billion dollars in taxes; overall, Hawai‘i had paid more taxes per capita than 20 mainland states prior to statehood.²¹¹ Even though the territory was producing a large amount of federal funding, it was not guaranteed the same local political sovereignty of full-fledged states. Any territorial bill could be vetoed by Congress, even if that bill had the full support of the territorial house and senate.²¹² Facing the growing frustrations from islanders who had continually seen their rights denied, statehood seemed like one of the only viable short-term options.

In a nation that had, since its birth, preached liberty and democracy, many islanders, especially the younger generations, felt as though their rights within American democracy was a one-way street. For example, shortly after the passage of the statehood bill of Hawai‘i, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i (ASUH) sent a resolution to Congress thanking them for statehood. In their perspective, voting for Hawai‘i’s statehood “has shown to the world that democracy is truly practiced in the United States of America” and that the “ASUH is fully cognisant of the high ideals of the 86th Congress.”²¹³ For many Hawai‘ians of different

²¹¹ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 305.

²¹² Bell, Fiftieth State,” 301.

²¹³ S. Res. 13 of the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii, March 17, 1959; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, RG 233; National Archives, Washington, DC.

<https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/hawaii/university-resolution.html>. Similar to the ASUH members a decade prior, statehood and democratic idealism had been a consistent theme within the student body of the islands. It should be mentioned that, firstly, the opinions and sentiments of students do not reflect the views of all islanders, let alone Native Hawai‘ian islanders. Secondly, one cannot know whether or not the statements provided by the ASUH were wholly shared among the student body. It is entirely possible that it was a contentious topic on campus; there is no way to be sure. But, this source does let us know that there were some students who fully supported

racial backgrounds, statehood seemed as though it was the best way forward to secure some form of political agency. Of course, it is difficult to know what the racial makeup of the University of Hawai'i was during the 1940s and 1950s; however, from the 49th state brochure in 1946, several students are listed as Japanese, "Cosmopolitan," "Part Hawaiian," and Caucasian.²¹⁴ So, the students of the university were mixed in terms of the racial demography.

One crucial pitfall to highlight within the historiography is the narrative of Hawai'ian statehood as a battle against racist, pro-segregation conservative forces on the mainland, or the feel-good story of a people fighting for their rights as Americans. This—although true for some—is a generalization that miscategorizes the ongoing concerns within the islands. For example, Scott-Smith concludes that the achievement of statehood for Hawai'i was most importantly a feat for Johnson, who went "from a domestically oriented party politician to a national leader who recognised the need to embrace more progressive causes."²¹⁵ Scott-Smith almost lionizes Johnson, while neglecting the internal struggles that Native Hawai'ians faced leading to statehood.

Heefner concludes in her analysis, "Assimilation and intermarriage thus became a way to rewrite the notion of multi-ethnic heritage by promoting polyethnic amalgamation. The people of Hawai'i were not Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino, but a mixed and mouldable hybrid that could and should become American."²¹⁶ Not only does she omit Native Hawai'ians from her analysis of Hawai'i's "racial internationalism," but she also lumps all non-white islanders into the 'other' category. Despite a decent-sized population of Japanese islanders who attempted to prove their

statehood, and from the other sources we looked at from students, it is most realistic to say that support for statehood was popular among the younger generations.

²¹⁴ "Hawaii: 49th State" brochure c.1946, 3.

²¹⁵ Scott-Smith, "From Symbol to Division," 273.

²¹⁶ Heefner, "A Symbol of a New Frontier," 570.

“Americanness” by serving in the Second World War, this was not true for all non-white islanders. This classic framing of Hawai‘i as the ‘melting pot’ of America loses sight of the overtly complex interracial relationship within the islands, and in turn masks the present systemic hierarchy, relegating Native Hawai‘ians to the bottom. As Haunani Kay Trask eloquently remarks: “We suffered increased land confiscations for military bases and fearfully watched as the vicious process of Americanization created racist political, educational, and economic institutions... being Hawaiian was a racial and cultural disadvantage rather than a national definition.”²¹⁷ Statehood itself was not a story of American democratic achievement, but one of the political agency of Native Hawai‘ian and other non-white islanders who pushed for self-determination.

Within academia, the critique of the exoticization of non-white islanders began to emerge during the 1920s and 1930s. Shelly Sang-Hee Lee and Rick Baldez argue this in their analysis of the sociological experiment of the 1920s and 1930s regarding Hawai‘ian multiculturalism and social liberal thought. As they note, “The exoticization of Hawai‘i and racialization of Asians and Native Hawaiians... has come under scrutiny... the view of the islands as an otherworldly paradise where the unorthodox race doctrine lives on persists.”²¹⁸ This becomes quite clear in much of the political historiography of the islands. For instance, Scott-Smith and Heefner, rather than focusing on the perspective of the islanders—or at the very least, noting the systemic hierarchical structure—focus on the advancement of the liberal notion of a multicultural egalitarian society. Yet these exotic historical images of Hawai‘i serve to “distribute a violent

²¹⁷ Trask, “The Color of Violence,” 11.

²¹⁸ Shelley Sang-Hee Lee and Rick Baldez, “‘A Fascinating Interracial Experiment Station’: Remapping the Orient-Occident Divide in Hawai‘i,” *American Studies* 49, no. 3–4 (September 2008): 87–109, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ams.2010.0027>, 89.

economy of occupation,” which then render “conservative and liberal notions of U.S. civil rights that attempt to render the U.S. occupation of Hawai‘i a logical impossibility.”²¹⁹ In short, the colonization of Hawai‘i and its subsequent statehood contradict American ideals of liberal social thought; Saranillio notes that Hawai‘i was a “liberal moral allegory” with the ‘melting pot’ allegory.²²⁰

When it comes to the view of both Hawai‘i’s annexation into the United States and its incorporation into the union as a state, there are two primary forms of thought. Firstly, the analysis of the ongoing settler colonial state of the islands, focusing on the militaristic expansion. The second is ‘occupation theory’: since Hawai‘i had been a legally recognized nation prior to its annexation, the history of Americanization is seen as an occupation, instead of colonial expansion.²²¹ Saranillio adds a further dimension to these two perspectives by arguing that both occupation and settler colonialism are not mutually exclusive; in the case of Hawai‘i they are directly intertwined. Further, he adamantly argues that interlinking both theories provides “a cogent understanding of the illegitimacy... while at the level of power relations, a discussion of settler colonialism can help to describe the form of power that normalized such occupation.”²²² The process of colonialism was one of the primary reasons that Native Hawai‘ian islanders became complacent regarding the occupation of the United States and the statehood of the territory.

After more than sixty years of pushing for statehood, on March 11th, 1959, the statehood bill came to a vote in the Senate and passed with an overwhelming majority. Out of a total of 91

²¹⁹ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 4.

²²⁰ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 5.

²²¹ Kūhiō Vogeler, “Outside Shangri-La,” 253, 260.

²²² Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 9.

votes, 76 had voted in favor of statehood, whereas 15 had voted against. Interestingly, out of the 15 against statehood, 14 were democrats.²²³ Following the vote in the Senate, an immediate debate was held within the House; the following day, the House voted 323 to 89 for the statehood of Hawai‘i.²²⁴ Thus, on March 18th, one week after the passing of S. 50 in the Senate, the bill reached President Eisenhower’s desk, where he officially signed the legislation into effect. However, before Hawai‘i could fully be incorporated as a state, there first had to be a referendum for the people of Hawai‘i to determine whether this was desired by islanders. As Eisenhower said in his national address, “Under this legislation, the citizens of Hawai‘i will soon decide whether their Islands shall become our fiftieth State. In so doing, they will demonstrate... principles of freedom and self-determination – the principles upon which this Nation was founded.”²²⁵ The people had to vote on statehood, and a plebiscite was held.

On the 27th of June, people of the islands cast their votes on whether they should be incorporated as a state or not. All in all, a total of 140,744 out of 155,000 (over 90%) registered voters turned up, the largest voter turnout in the territory's history.²²⁶ It resulted in a vote of 132,773 to 7,971 in favour of statehood; 94% of those who voted had supported statehood.²²⁷ Out of the 240 voting precincts present on the islands, only one had a majority vote against statehood (the small, privately-owned island of Ni‘ihau voted 70 to 18 against statehood).²²⁸ The population on this island was actively maintaining a traditional 19th century lifestyle, isolated

²²³ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 308, 310.

²²⁴ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 309.

²²⁵ James C. Hagerty, “Statement on the Signing of S. 50.” 18 March 1959. White House Press Release. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/hawaii-statehood/1959-03-18-press-release-signing-statement.pdf>

²²⁶ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 43.

²²⁷ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 43.

²²⁸ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 312.

from the other islands.²²⁹ On the other hand, the islands that had received the largest majority were those of Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i, which saw 1,904 to 75 in favour of statehood.²³⁰ In sum, across all of the islands in the territory, the citizens had responded to a 17-1 vote in favour of statehood from all racial backgrounds.²³¹

Although it is true that the voting towards statehood saw a majority of people in favour of the legislation, the plebiscite itself violated the 1953 United Nations resolution specifically mandating that all voters be given multiple choices on the ballot.²³² Only two options were given: either “yes” or “no” on whether or not Hawai‘i should be admitted into the union. There were no other options included, such as “independence” or “separate systems of self-government.”²³³ Thus, the islanders’ only choice was to either gain the full rights awarded to states of the union or to remain in a territorial limbo, in which their political agency was completely dictated by a mainland government thousands of miles away.

Opposition to Statehood

While statehood started to be a serious political topic, some were more reserved, especially in opinion polls.²³⁴ For example, in an opinion poll in 1958, 27% of Native Hawai‘ians, as well as 23% of white islanders, opposed statehood.²³⁵ The opinion polls are not entirely accurate; this number drastically deflated when the actual plebiscite was distributed. There were prominent people on the islands who had been advocates against Hawai‘ian statehood. One of the most

²²⁹ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²³⁰ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²³¹ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 43.

²³² Simeon Man, “Aloha, Vietnam: Race and Empire in Hawai‘i’s Vietnam War,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (December 2015): 1085–1108, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2015.0062>, 1090.

²³³ Man, “Aloha Vietnam,” 1090.

²³⁴ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²³⁵ Bell, “Fiftieth State,” 290.

notable was Alice Kamokilaikawai Campbell. Born to a wealthy white settler sugar planter father and a Native Hawai‘ian mother from the noble families, she had a privileged upbringing shortly before the annexation occurred.²³⁶ found a passion for her people through politics and was elected as a Democratic senator for Maui-Moloka‘i between 1942 and 1946.²³⁷

Following her term as Senator, on January 20th, 1948, a congressional hearing was held by the subcommittee of territorial and insular affairs during the 80th congress.²³⁸ During this day in the hearings, Campbell explicitly expressed her adamant rejection of the statehood movement in Hawai‘i. She started off her hearing by reaffirming her ‘Americanness,’ as a member of the generation that transitioned from annexation. In her words, “It took us quite a while to get used to being Americans—from a Hawaiian to an American—but I am very proud today of being an American.”²³⁹ It is clear that Campbell accepted the Americanization of Hawai‘i, and her protests against statehood were not out of a longing for the revitalization of an independent Hawai‘i. Instead, her protestation of the statehood of Hawai‘i was deeply rooted in the fears of the power of racialized voting (i.e. the bloc voting) of Asian-American islanders. In the hearing, she expressed her concerns over the growing Japanese population:

But I think in the last 10 years, I have lost a sense of balance here in Hawaii as to the future safety of my land. This un-American influence has come into our country, and even in the report of the Governor, you will see where he says one-third of the population are Japanese. If we were a State they would have the power to vote, and they would use every exertion to see that every vote was counted, if we become a state... We are too important to the mainland and, therefore, as a Territory, we have the safeguard of

²³⁶ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²³⁷ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 48.

²³⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, of the Committee on Public Lands: Bills that enable the people of Hawai‘i to form a constitution and state government and to be admitted into the union on an equal footing with the original states: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong., 2nd sess. April 15th, 1948. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015073437751&seq=3>. 410.

²³⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong, 410. It is important to mention that Campbell had spent the majority of her life living outside of Hawai‘i, in California, so her ‘Americanness’ may have been reflected differently from other Native Hawai‘ian islanders.

Congress... That, to me, is the greatest safety valve that the Territory holds today against any foreign element coming in and taking any possession of Hawai‘i.²⁴⁰

For Campbell, fresh after the Second World War, her primary goal was to ensure that the large Japanese population of the island would be politically neutered; she feared their potential power in national politics.

Campbell’s racist rejections targeted not only the Japanese population of the islands, but also the Chinese population as well. She claims that “The Japanese are not my people. The Chinese are not my people. The Caucasians, yes, and by adoption, it makes me American.”²⁴¹ Finally, she entertains an early conspiracy theory that all of the “communism” in Hawai‘i originated from the Japanese islanders.²⁴² Of course, the perspective of one prominent political figure, such as Alice Kamokilaikawai Campbell, is not representative of the views of all, or even any other Native Hawai‘ian. However, it serves as a crucial example of the complex interracial structures that were present on the islands, in this case, the relationship between some Native Hawai‘ian and Japanese islanders. Although prior to statehood, it is debatable whether Asian American or Native Hawai‘ian islanders were at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, one thing is clear: white islanders, despite being a small population, continued to be placed at the top.

Why Statehood?

This returns to the main question throughout this thesis: why was there support for statehood from Native Hawai‘ians and non-white islanders, especially after the illegal annexation of

²⁴⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong, 410.

²⁴¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong, 412.

²⁴² U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs: Hearings before the Committee on Public Lands, 80th Cong, 410. A rather absurd comment, but seemingly reflective of modern conservative conspiracy theories. One might think that Campbell would be an excellent conservative podcaster.

Hawai‘i? It becomes difficult to resist generalizing here since the experience of one person can completely differ from that of another depending on their race, socioeconomic standing, age, or even their home island. However, one thing is certain: statehood was overwhelmingly supported in the 1940s and 1950s, both on the islands and in the national consciousness.

Whitehead’s analysis of the ‘anti-statehood movement’ heavily pits itself against Trask’s assessment of the same event, who argued that support for statehood was a result of the temporary masking of fears regarding the loss of Hawai‘ian culture.²⁴³ Furthermore, he also argues against the notion that the vote in 1959 was limited by not allowing for more options other than statehood or non-statehood.²⁴⁴ He posits: “It is thus more likely that even those Hawaiians who had doubts about statehood thought it was preferable to remaining a territory. They were willing to give statehood a try.”²⁴⁵ By analyzing the anti-statehood movement and asserting its weakness in the grand scheme of Hawai‘ian statehood, it allows him to peer into the overwhelming support towards the statehood movement. Whitehead creates a fair counterargument to the ongoing assessment that emerged in the 1990s, that Native Hawai‘ians had internally opposed—or reluctantly agreed—the notion of statehood. However, he does not provide a convincing analysis of why Native Hawai‘ians may have supported the statehood movement itself. In short, he answers the question of whether statehood was supported or not, but fails to answer the question of why.

The only potential answer he provides to the aforementioned question is a collective negative memory of annexation and the attempt to reclaim lost power through statehood. In his words, “Statehood seemed a way to gain political power at home and overthrow the dominance

²⁴³ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 58.

²⁴⁴ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 58.

²⁴⁵ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 59.

of the people whom many Hawaiians still held responsible for toppling the monarchy in 1893... composing the tightly knit oligarchy of the Republican party and the Big Five.”²⁴⁶ This is very unlikely; not only was the overthrow and subsequent annexation of Hawai‘i outside of most people’s living memory (except for the oldest generation), but it is a simplistic, generalized explanation regarding the support for Hawai‘ian statehood. It also contradicts his argument that Native Hawai‘ians had wanted to “give statehood a try.”²⁴⁷ Based on Whitehead’s argument, one might ask—did Native Hawai‘ians support statehood because it happened to be better than the alternative? Or was there an underlying, collective attempt to reclaim power over white settler islanders? In short, neither answer is entirely sufficient to address the complexity of the internal political situation on the island.

More recent scholarship has painted statehood as an example of a successful propaganda campaign. Saranillio’s *Unsustainable Empire* argues that Hawai‘i was a victim of America’s unsustainable expansionism; its capitalist mode of production forced it to expand its borders to the Pacific.²⁴⁸ Rather than looking at the history of colonialism in Hawai‘i as a strong nation versus a small island, he flips the script by analyzing the United States from the view of a weakening empire.²⁴⁹ More specifically, regarding the push for statehood itself, he argues that proponents of statehood had propagandized its potential benefits to the islands, and in turn, manufactured consent from Native Hawai‘ians as well as other Native islanders. As he states, “a deeper look into the propaganda commissions and the cultural politics of statehood reveals that business and state leaders had already determined statehood as their aim... proponents of

²⁴⁶ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²⁴⁷ Whitehead, “The Anti-Statehood Movement,” 46.

²⁴⁸ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 9.

²⁴⁹ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 9.

statehood aimed to Americanize the nonwhite population.”²⁵⁰ Although it is a fair assessment that propaganda commissions had been present during the ongoing push for statehood, it not only generalizes but also victimizes Native Hawai‘ians. By claiming that the Native Hawai‘ian support for statehood was primarily—or entirely—dictated by the use of propaganda, it discredits the perspectives of those who may have supported, or disagreed with statehood, through their own informed assessments.

This once again brings back the question of why statehood had overwhelming support from islanders, including Native Hawai‘ians. As the past three chapters show, support for statehood responded to ongoing militaristic expansion in conjunction with the government’s direct control over the political autonomy of the islanders. Native Hawai‘ians had seen that the federal government could negate their rights during the time under martial law. Even after the Second World War and the beginning of the 1950s, islanders still did not have the power to vote in the federal election—yet the federal government had full control over the bodies of the islanders, as well as what the territorial government could or could not pass. Overall, the overwhelming support for statehood was very much a reflection of the early post-war years; the priority of Native Hawai‘ians, as well as other islanders, was to fight for their political autonomy in a system that only awarded ‘freedom’ to those who subjected themselves to it.

²⁵⁰ Saranillio, “Unsustainable Empire,” 6.

Conclusion

This thesis has focused on answering why there was overwhelming support for statehood from Native Hawai‘ians during the 1940s and 1950s, despite the ongoing racial tensions in Hawai‘i. As we have seen, this thesis is not the first to ask this question, but it offers a new perspective on the short-term goal for Native Hawai‘ians and other non-white islanders regarding the push for statehood. A particular goal was fighting for political representation in a government that was thousands of miles away. The evidence suggests this was a reaction to the hyper-militaristic expansion and a way to oppose the tight control that the United States had on its territory. Unfortunately, this short-term response did not cease the ongoing military expansion on the islands. Even though islanders now had a say in the federal elections, both parties continued to build bases on the islands.²⁵¹

Soon after the official achievement of statehood in 1959, the U.S. found itself in a hopeless war in the Pacific against Vietnam. Since Hawai‘i most closely resembled the natural topography of Vietnam, and was (relatively) close in proximity, it became the primary site for training and deployment. This led to the reclamation of “ceded lands,” through which the federal government continued military expansion.²⁵² Through this, America’s continued imperial expansion in the name of ‘freedom’ further reinforced internalized colonial expansion in Hawai‘i. As Simeon Man eloquently argues, “The atrocities they committed were no aberration... but instead underscored the intrinsic violence of Hawai‘i’s liberal inclusion into the US nation-state, a promise of freedom that reproduced and intensified state violence across the US Empire.”²⁵³ The ‘freedom’ that islanders fought for had a price: they traded political

²⁵¹ Man, “Aloha Vietnam,” 1086.

²⁵² Man, “Aloha Vietnam,” 1091.

²⁵³ Man, “Aloha Vietnam,” 1087.

autonomy for the military expansion of the empire—to disagree would be tantamount to rejecting Americanized democratic freedom.

This perspective was quite short-lived; in 1969, four years after the declaration of war, the full transcript of the Congressional debate surrounding the 1898 annexation of Hawai‘i was released, which led people to question its legality.²⁵⁴ At the same time, there had been protests regarding Indigenous rights on the mainland. Further, in 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed, which allotted 40 million acres of land and nearly one billion dollars in legal reparations to the Indigenous peoples of Alaska.²⁵⁵ This shockwave of indigenous activism reverberated on the islands of Hawai‘i, and by 1973, the ALOHA association, a Native Hawai‘ian rights organization, featured over 12,000 members.²⁵⁶ This was only the beginning, and as the decades progressed, so too did the Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement; people had begun to openly question American occupation again for the first time since its annexation.

Views towards the land of Hawai‘i began to shift as well. By the early 1970s, Native Hawai‘ians as well as other invested islanders started to protest the expansion of tourism and the continued construction of resorts on the island. The conflict on the islands had shifted from “locals versus tourists” into “aloha aina” (love of the land).²⁵⁷ Thus, the Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement was born. What originally began as a small group of university students protesting the

²⁵⁴ Kūhiō Vogeler, “Outside Shangri La: Colonization and the U.S. Occupation of Hawai‘i” In *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty* edited by Noelani Goodyear-Kaopua, Ikaika Hussey and Erin Kahunawaika’ala Wright, 252-266. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2014.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478094067-023>. 253.

²⁵⁵ Jessica Arnett, “Between Empires and Frontiers: Alaska Native Sovereignty and U.S. Settler Imperialism” (dissertation, 2018). 135.

²⁵⁶ Vogeler, “Outside Shangri La,” 254.

²⁵⁷ Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawai‘ian,” 126.

land expansion and imperial expansion into Vietnam has become one of the most successful and prevalent sovereignty movements, which is still active today.²⁵⁸

The following two decades saw different perspectives for Hawai‘i’s future, especially perspectives on potential reclamation of independence from the United States. By the 1990s, the Hawai‘ian sovereignty movement began to mature and became a common view as educational efforts persisted to uncover Hawai‘i’s colonial histories in relation to the United States.²⁵⁹ People had started to critique America’s involvement in the overthrow and annexation of Hawai‘i. Finally, on November 23rd, 1993, the 103rd Congress passed Public Law 103-150, which acknowledged and apologized for the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i one hundred years earlier. The bill recognized the fact that not only was the overthrow of Hawai‘i illegal, but the 1.8 million acres of land that were ceded from the Republic of Hawai‘i was done “without the consent of or compensation to the Native Hawaiian people of Hawai‘i or their sovereign government.”²⁶⁰ Furthermore, the bill had directly apologized for the “suppression of the inherent sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian people,” on behalf of “the people of the United States.”²⁶¹ Although a small step in the right direction, many of the commitments towards supporting Hawai‘ian sovereignty have yet to be fulfilled.

²⁵⁸ Trask, “The Birth of the Modern Hawai‘ian,” 132.

²⁵⁹ Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua and Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada, “Making ‘aha: Independent Hawaiian Pasts, Presents & Futures,” *Daedalus* 147, no. 2 (March 2018): 49–59, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_00489, 52.

²⁶⁰ [S.J. Res. 19] An act to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the January 17, 1893, overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii. Public Law 103-150, U.S. Statutes at Large 107 (1993): 1510. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg1510.pdf>. 3.

²⁶¹ [S.J. Res. 19] An act to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the January 17, 1893, overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii. Public Law 103-150, U.S. Statutes at Large 107 (1993): 1510. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg1510.pdf>. 4.

One thing has become clear: the territory itself was used as a political pawn to push the narrative of America's democratic support for decolonization. Naturally, one might make a fair argument that this push for Hawai'ian statehood and the forced Americanization of Hawai'i have continued to reinforce the internalized colonial structures that were, and are, present on the islands. This era of historical re-examination of Hawai'ian history has led scholars (such as Trask, Whitehead, Scott-Smith, et al) to look back into statehood itself to explain why there had been overwhelming support for statehood. A deeper examination of the historiography reveals that Hawai'i still gets instrumentalized in certain political narratives, including the push for a liberal multicultural narrative or to use statehood to preface the Hawai'ian sovereignty movement. However, such perspectives both oversimplify and overgeneralize the overtly complex history of Hawai'i, especially during the Post-War to statehood period. The statehood of Hawai'i shows just how malleable and mercurial political ideologies can be, shifting through the decades. In 1959, most Native Hawai'ian islanders were not concerned about a reclamation of independence like we see today; the decision to join the union was seen as a progressive push of American democracy. It would be irresponsible to project our modern political knowledge or biases (especially in today's political climate)²⁶² onto Native Hawai'ian islanders in the mid-twentieth century. Instead, we must recognize that Native Hawai'ians were their own agents in the push for statehood, not passive victims of the American system of governance. Yet this should not detract from the strength and importance of the Hawai'ian sovereignty movement; rather, it shows how political perspectives evolve over time, and how quickly they can adapt from one view to the other. Further, what was deemed progressive in the 1950s is not necessarily considered progressive today. In recent years, there have been efforts to tear down colonial

²⁶² I.e., Donald Trump.

structures in Hawai‘i. The next decades may see rapid growth of decolonization efforts in Hawai‘i and the United States—but in today’s political climate, this demands a fight.

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