

The Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement and U.S. Policy: Framing Consequences of Changing Policy

James E. Stobaugh*

Department of Behavioral Sciences, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas

Sean Huss

Department of Behavioral Sciences, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, Arkansas

Abstract

Why did the Hawaiian sovereignty movement adjust its framing over the past century? In this article, we elucidate the processes that can help move social movement organizations engaging in a frame war to unify around a common frame. Using comparative historical case study, we examine the history of the Hawaii Sovereignty Movement as well as the U.S. governmental policies related to Hawaii and Native Hawaiians across the twentieth century. We highlight the importance of external actors in creating the conditions by which social movements must alter their framing strategy. Specifically, we look at the impacts of specific policies and legal threats on movement framing strategies. We find that when movement organizations face an existential challenge to their existence, they are willing to overlook their individual differences and unify behind a common framing. Policies meant to undermine a movement can work to strengthen a movement by unifying its disparate parts. These findings have implications for future studies of social movements and social movement framings as well as governmental policy studies.

Keywords: Social movements; Hawaiian Sovereignty movement; Framing; Policy.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

1. Introduction

The Hawaiian sovereignty movement is composed of dozens of groups working for sovereignty for the Native Hawaiian people. Groups mobilize around various issues, ranging from environmental protection to cultural preservation to the political participation. They are part of an effort to achieve independence and sovereignty for the native people of Hawaii whose monarchy was overthrown by individuals supported by the federal government back in 1893. There is not one unified or monolithic sovereignty movement, instead, it is comprised of a diverse set of groups with sometimes competing agendas that have created various frames in order to differentiate themselves from each other, in a sometimes contentious manner. This paper is focused on how the various indigenous movements have framed their identities and how these identities have been altered in response to governmental policies.

Scholarship on movement frames has focused on frame construction from within social movements (Benford and Snow, 2000; Gamson *et al.*, 1992; McCarthy *et al.*, 1996; Tarrow, 1992), but this study explores the external influences on social movement frame construction, specifically how governmental policies influence frame formation. While movement frames are conceptualized as creations from within, they can also be influenced and shaped from the outside (Beamish, 2003; Benford and Snow, 2000; Stobaugh, 2015). This paper looks at distinct policy periods that have affected the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and how the individual social movement organizations have responded to the external stimuli.

We illustrate that in the case of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, governmental policies produced a frame war between movement groups that would seem to be likely allies. But just as governmental policies can divide movements, if the threat from the government policy is sufficiently threatening, it can lead these oppositional movements to band back together and end up create a unified frame.

2. Literature Review

Snow and Benford define a collective action frame as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment” (1992,137). Benford and Snow (2000) see framing as an “active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction” (612). Frames are not pulled from thin air but are often formed through a contentious process between various factions and their leaders.

Frames are constructed from two important parts, to diagnose problems and to propose solutions. Framing in the diagnostic stage illustrates that the present social condition is wrong, while the prognosis function is to offer a solution for the identified problem (Snow and Benford, 1992). Both parts of this frame construction are important because without proposing a specific solution to a specific problem, movements are at the mercy of ruling elites in offering a solution even if that solution is less than desirable. Hawaiian sovereignty groups diagnose the problem in similar ways; often around the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian nation and that the west has corrupted the Hawaiian

culture. Hawaiian sovereignty movements frame the preferred remedies in ways that are often diametrically opposed to one another.

But frame construction is not straight forward, frames are often the result of “media, local governments, and the state” engage in influencing the movement over the meanings of its frame (Benford and Snow, 2000). This is key because movement frames do not only come from within but are very much influenced from the outside. When demands are placed on the government they in turn become a prime player in shaping the movement frame through their response. They do this through challenging the demands of the movement as unreasonable, labeling the movement and its participants as criminals, or by offering mild appeasements that do not adequately address the demands of the movement. This last tactic leaves the public with the perception that the government acted in good faith towards the movement while incurring few costs.

The sovereignty movement is comprised of dozens of organizations working under the banner of Hawaiian sovereignty. This is not unusual as other movements in the past have had competing and complementary groups working for the similar causes, such as the anti-nuclear and the civil rights movement (Benford, 1993; McAdam, 1982). Gamson that when groups are unable to agree on “what has been or is happening” there is a frame dispute (Gamson *et al.*, 1992). These disputes often take on three forms: 1. disputes over the diagnosis of the problem; 2. disputes of the prognosis; 3. disputes on how reality should be presented though the frame (Benford, 1993). It is these disputes that threaten the progress a movement could achieve because these disputes require that precious movement resources be used debating what the true frame should be. This benefits the power structure because frame disputes draw the public’s attention away from the culpability of the movement target, usually the government, and refocusing it on the competing interests within the movement. This reduces the pressure on the government to make concessions to the movement because public attention is no longer focused on them. As shown, framing is not a simple task; it can be a contentious process among movement leaders, oppositional leaders, the media, and the government all attempting to create meaning.

Scholarship examining the Hawaiian sovereignty movement can be generalized into three main areas: 1) work on the early history of the sovereignty movement and outcomes of sovereignty (Dudley and Agard, 1990; Meller and Lee, 1997; Trask, 1999;2000; Weinberg, 1996b) work on one specific sovereignty group (Linnekin, 1983; McGregor, 2002; Weinberg, 1996a).

It is important to note what is meant by “sovereignty” in the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement. Sovereignty means different things to various individuals and as such one standard definition of sovereignty would be inappropriate. Instead it is easier to break sovereignty down into three different “visions” of what sovereignty could entail for the Hawaiian people. Some envision sovereignty based on the nation-within-a-nation model like that of Native Americans (Trask, 1999), and yet for others it means complete independence of the islands sometimes with the total withdrawal of U.S. forces and interests and the establishment of a Native Hawaiian Nation (Weinberg, 1996b). Yet for others, sovereignty means reparations for the theft of the land and the overthrow of the Hawaiian government, similar to the claims for reparations made by the African American decedents of slaves (Dudley and Agard, 1990). It is important to remember that these groupings are not mutually exclusive.

We will show how governmental policies influence the frames that movements construct but this influence does not always lead to a frame dispute. If it is the case that the government is attempting to change the status quo by reducing current protections and benefits then the movement will adopt a unity frame to stand against the encroachments. The literature on movement frames has shown the importance of frames for identifying problems and prescribing solutions. I have also illustrated that frames are not created in a vacuum but are a negotiated process often between the movement, its leaders, and the government.

Next I present a brief history of Hawaii so that the reader has a chance to become acquainted with the grievances round which the movement is based. Native Hawaiians have a long and troubling history with the federal government and the latest policies reflect this.

3. Methods

This paper uses qualitative historical case study of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement to examine changes in movement framing strategy in relation and response to governmental policies. Using a mixture of histories and media coverage, we traced the way that the broader movement has evolved, how the frames used by the movements have changed, and the different policies that the government has instituted in relation to the Native Hawaiian. A mixture of classical and contemporary Hawaiian histories was used to chart the historical trajectory of the movement. This general history of the state and movement are presented first. Following this, we present the modern policies implemented by the government in response to mobilization and claims by native Hawaiians. Accompanying this, we present the ways that various movement organizations have responded to these government policies. Through this qualitative examination of the movement and the intervening policies, we can see just how governmental action has affected the available options for movement framing.

4. Early History of the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement

On January 17, 1893, the Kingdom of Hawaii was overthrown with the aid of U.S. Marines stationed aboard the U.S.S. Boston who came ashore in support of the coupe against the monarchy. Eventually, Queen Lili’uokalani was forced to give up all claims to the land and relinquish control over the sovereign Kingdom of Hawaii (Daws, 1974). In place of the kingdom the perpetrators established the Republic of Hawaii, run by business interests seeking the

annexation of Hawaii by the United States to increase exports to the United States, therefore expanding the market for sugarcane and pineapple (Haley, 2014).

Prior to the overthrow, the Kingdom of Hawaii enjoyed good relations with the United States, England, and Japan and was viewed in the international system as a sovereign entity. Upon the overthrow, Queen Lili'uokalani appealed to Washington, D.C. and President Cleveland to help restore her to the throne (Meller and Lee, 1997). While admitting that the overthrow was illegal and improper, Cleveland refused to offer any support or sanction the perpetrators. Five years later the leaders of the Republic of Hawaii, the perpetrators of the overthrow, got their wish when President McKinley annexed Hawaii. With the annexation, the Republic of Hawaii turned over nearly 1.5 million acres of land to the federal government that was formerly owned by the monarchy (Meller and Lee, 1997). This is important because the issue of land is often central in the Hawaiian movement.

For several generations the Hawaiian people operated under annexation but after the end of the Second World War the United Nations recognized Hawaii as a colonized and declared it a Non-Self-Governing Territory, along with many other nations controlled by colonial powers (Morin, 1997). The people of Hawaii were supposed to be given the right to vote to determine their future. In this vote they were offered the choice between becoming a state or remaining a territory. To many Native Hawaiians the vote failed in key aspects, first, it failed to offer the people a chance to be independent of the United States by only giving them the choice between statehood or remaining a territory. Secondly, the vote was open to all people living in the territory at that time, regardless of their ancestry. This allowed non-native peoples to outnumber native voters. Based on this vote the United Nations removed Hawaii from the Non-Self-Governing Territory list, limiting Native Hawaiians access to international organizations for relief (Morin, 1997).

When Hawaii was made a state in 1959 the majority of the lands controlled by the federal government were returned to the State of Hawaii. The state was mandated by congress to hold the ceded lands in a public trust with the proceeds to be used for five specific purposes, one of which was the "betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians" (Morin, 1997). Here the term Native Hawaiian refers to people with at least fifty percent Native Hawaiian blood; this becomes important for who can receive benefits and who is excluded. For years, the state used the proceeds to fund education while neglecting the Native Hawaiian population which was falling further behind of the rest of the state's population in areas of poverty, education, and wellbeing (Meller and Lee, 1997).

The Hawaiian sovereignty movement gained momentum throughout the 1970's with groups forming around a broad range of Hawaiian issues, from stopping development of native Hawaiian farm land in Kalama Valley to stopping the bombing of the island of Kahoolawe to the oversight of the administration of the Hawaiian Homeland Commission. This was the decade when Hawaiians mobilized around their identity in order to achieve an improved standard of living for Native Hawaiians and in some cases sovereignty. The activities of these groups helped to bring the plight of the native Hawaiians to the attention of the public throughout Hawaii.

In 1978, at the state constitutional convention, it was passed that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) would be established to manage the interests of the Native Hawaiian people and that twenty percent of the proceeds from the ceded land use would go to OHA (Morin, 1997). The OHA board would be comprised of Native Hawaiians and elected by the Native Hawaiian population. This was a major victory because the state recognized the special status that Native Hawaiians had in the islands and that they deserved special programs and services to try and repair the harm done to the Hawaiian community and population through the colonial policies of the United States. Although it was not all benevolent, these programs were to be paid for with a portion of the money generated from the use of the ceded lands which many Hawaiians felt was rightfully theirs anyway because those lands had been illegally obtained and many felt they should receive all the proceeds.

Into the 1980s, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement continued to challenge the federal government. One of the most visible groups was the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO) which formed in 1976 to secure the return of the island to the native Hawaiians. For decades following World War II the Navy used the island for bombing practice. Success for the movement came when the PKO filed a civil suit against the Navy in Federal Court in 1980, which resulted in an out-of-court settlement which mandated that the Navy cleanup one-third of the island, eliminate the goats which had taken over the island, work to stop the erosion and rejuvenate the soil, allow for regular visits to the island for educational and religious purposes, and survey the island to identify historic sights which should be protected (McGregor, 2002). Once these sites were officially recognized, the Navy was still only willing to protect and clean up a fraction of the sites (New York Times (NYT), 1980).

The history presents a mixed picture of the status of Native Hawaiians and their interaction with the U.S., which as a colonizing force, supported the overthrow of a sovereign nation which it had officially recognized, and eventually annexed its territory. At the same time, there were clear indications that Native Hawaiians held a special status in the islands through acts such as requiring the use of proceeds from the ceded lands be used for the betterment of Hawaiians to the Navy agreeing to limit bombing of ancient Hawaiian sites.

This abbreviated history of the Hawaii and the early emergence of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement was intended to portray the grievances around which the movement mobilized and the interaction between the Native Hawaiians and the U.S. government. I now examine the changing policies of the federal government from the early nineties through the present, as they relate to Native Hawaiians, and explore how these changes affected the movement frames of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

5. Changing Policy and Movement Reaction

We identified three distinct periods of governmental policies towards the Native Hawaiians. To many the policies toward Hawaiians would be domestic policies but to the Native Hawaiians, who never gave up the right to self-determination, the policies of the federal government toward them are clearly foreign policies (Trask, 1999). These periods were from the overthrow in 1893 through 1989 which encompasses the passage of statehood in 1959, from 1990 through 1999, and from 2000 through the present. In this section we present the policies of these periods on the movement's actions and show the effects of these different policies had on the social movement frames.

The policy of the federal government from statehood forward was one of instilling upon the state the responsibility of mild benevolence toward the Native Hawaiians at the state level coupled with disdain for the wishes of the Native Hawaiians at the federal level. During this period, the roots of activism were planted for the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. With the advent of statehood, the federal government returned millions of acres of land, known as ceded land, which had been owned by the monarchy at the time of the overthrow. The government's policy stated that proceeds of the land would be used for the betterment of Native Hawaiians (Morin, 1997). This policy reflects the opinion of the federal government that the Native Hawaiians hold a special status in the islands.

At the same time the government was issuing these mandates they were actively denying their culpability in the overthrow of the monarchy and refusing to honor the demands of the sovereignty movement. Throughout the seventies, the federal government refused to end its policy of using island of Kaho'olawe for bombing and target practice. This activity was particularly damaging to ancient Native Hawaiian sites (McGregor, 2002).

By the 1980s, the government had considered the legality of the overthrow and claims for reparations when they convened the Native Hawaiian Study Commission (NHSC). This body examined the economic and cultural concerns of Native Hawaiians and they also looked at the historical context of the U.S. and Native Hawaiian relationship. The commission's report was criticized for its flawed methodology and biasness against the Native Hawaiian accounts because it utilized second hand historical sources in creating its final report while neglecting the native voice (Dudley and Agard, 1990). In the report the NHSC found that the United States bore no responsibility for the overthrow of the kingdom and therefore owed the Hawaiian people nothing, not reparations nor special status. This report was accepted by the government which continued the policy of denial of the government's role in the plight of Native Hawaiians.

Because of these policies, the sovereignty movement focused its effort primarily on educational efforts about the true nature of the overthrow and the culpability that the government bore in the overthrow. There were many different groups who had various ideas about what sovereignty should look like but they had one thing in common, they were all working to re-educate the government and the public. With the government's policy of denying responsibility, the movement had to gain the attention of the government. As it stood the government had no incentive to give concessions because the public was unaware of the overthrow and, as such, the government felt no pressing need to address the grievances of Native Hawaiians. To gain attention, the movement began challenging federal policies in court. It was here that the Hawaiian sovereignty movement experienced one of its earliest success. In 1980, the PKO sued the Navy to end the bombing of Kahoolawe and eventually reached an out-of-court settlement in which the Navy agreed to limit bombing to select portions of the island and allow Native Hawaiians access to the island.

This settlement foreshadowed the next period of governmental policy but it would take another decade before the policies of the federal government would shift. During this decade, a main aspect of all movement activity was directed toward trying to persuade the government that their grievances were legitimate and that they needed to be addressed.

As the movement entered the 1990s, the policies of the government were changing and it appeared that the promise of Native Hawaiian sovereignty was within reach. Throughout the eighties, the movement pressured the government to admit wrong doing so that the process of securing Hawaiian sovereignty could proceed. After a decade of pressure the government knew that it had to act and began changing its policies regarding Native Hawaiians.

Building on its previous success, the PKO was instrumental in obtaining the return of the island of Kahoolawe. In October 1990, President George Bush instructed the Navy to cease using the island for bombing practice. This was a huge victory for the PKO and the Hawaiian sovereignty movement because they had achieved one of its goals and the movement proved capable of changing the governmental policy, although it costs the lives of two of its members in the process (Enomoto, 1997). It appeared that the struggle for Hawaiian sovereignty was not in vain because the movement, after decades had begun to have policies created for their benefit.

Three years later during the year of the one-hundredth anniversary of the overthrow the government gave new attention given to the Hawaiian sovereignty cause. During this year that the government once again expressed policies giving credence to the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and bestowed credibility on the claims that the movement had been making for decades. In November 1993, Congress authorized the return of the island of Kahoolawe to the State of Hawaii. On May 9, 1994, the island was officially handed over to the State of Hawaii, which is to hold the island in trust until such a time that a sovereign Hawaiian entity can claim possession (McGregor, 2002). Although the island was returned in 1994, the Navy was still obligated to clean up the island over the decade.

The return of the island to the state with the caveat that it be held until a sovereign entity could take control of it was an important signal to the movement community and the Native Hawaiian population that the federal government recognized the legitimacy of Native Hawaiian claims. It also signaled that the government expected at some at some point in the future for the movement to achieve some level of sovereignty as a colonized indigenous people.

An even more historic event occurred on November 23, 1993 when President Clinton signed Senate Joint Resolution 19, recognizing the fact that the Kingdom of Hawaii was illegally overthrown with aid of the United States and apologized to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States (Fu and Heaton, 1999). This was important to the people of Hawaii because it was official recognition that the Kingdom had been wrongfully overthrown and gave further credence to the movement because it proved what they were saying for a century about legality of the overthrow was true. The Apology Bill held the promise of sovereignty and was taken by many as a signal that it was a crucial first step toward achieving sovereignty because the claims of the native Hawaiians had been corroborated by the perpetrator. This new policy of the federal government was heralded throughout the islands and it was widely assumed that sovereignty, in one of its various forms, was not far from being achieved.

For all the hope that the Apology Bill held, it was the best action for the federal government to take when faced with the demands of the sovereignty movement. By issuing the apology they were admitting their guilt in the overthrow of the kingdom, which many sovereignty groups had been demanding for years, so in the public's perception the government was trying to work with the sovereignty movement. This benefited the government because it costs them very little to admit that the federal government of a century before partook in this illegal act but gained the benefits of looking as though they cared about the issues of Native Hawaiians. In the aftermath of the Apology Bill there was the assumption that the government was going to take the demands of the sovereignty movement seriously because they had taken the first step in the process by admitting wrong doing in the past.

This move by the government was important, not just because it cost them little, but also because it helped to fracture the sovereignty movement. Recognizing that the demands of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement would grow and put increasing pressure on the federal government to remedy the situation, they created a policy that divided the movement by having the various sovereignty groups expend their energy fighting amongst themselves there by diminishing the pressure on the government to do anything meaningful about the movement's demands. In terms of the movement framing, the federal government was successful in creating a frame war within the sovereignty movement. This forced them to expend resources battling one another over who was going to lead the movement toward the promise of sovereignty offered by the government. This left the government looking like they were making concessions while leaving the sovereignty groups wondering what was next.

While the sovereignty factions had long framed their individual movements around different notions of sovereignty they did not compete with one another because their frames were always directed towards the federal government. But once the government initiated policy changes it helped entrench the divide that existed between the different sovereignty groups (Honolulu Star-Bulletin Editorial Board, 2000). This is illustrated in the mandate to the state that the island of Kahoolawe should be held in trust until "a sovereign Hawaiian body" can be created to take possession of it. The government makes no mention of which of the dozens of sovereignty groups should be the leader of the sovereignty movement and as the voice for Native Hawaiians. The ambiguity of this period helped incite a frame war within the movement and relieved pressure on the federal government (Sedensky, 2003).

The frame dispute between The Nation of Hawaii and Ka Lahui, two of the more prominent sovereignty groups in the islands, began around their differences on the ultimate goal of the sovereignty movement, full and total independence or a nation-within-a-nation model, respectively. There were often disagreements over which group represented more Native Hawaiians or which groups spoke for Native Hawaiians and the movement (Holo, 2000). This helped project the movement as one unable to find direction from within. The movement factions were left battling one another instead of utilizing their resources to demand improvements for the status of Native Hawaiians.

This period served the government well because the policies that they implemented cost them little, the return of the island of Kahoolawe and an apology for actions committed by U.S. troops one hundred years earlier. The public saw the government as working with the sovereignty movement although this policy did little to improve the lives and fortunes of Native Hawaiians. The policies of the government during this time were influenced by the sovereignty movement but unfortunately the effect was that the government felt threatened and needed to reduce the pressure that the movement exerted in the previous decade. The frame war that ensued within the movement grew contentious and heated.

It was obvious that the promise of Hawaiian sovereignty had failed to materialize in the decade following the return of Kahoolawe and the Apology Bill. By the end of the nineties, the movement was about to face a major threat from a new policy, this time from the courts. In 2000, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in the Rice v. Cayetano decision that ancestry is a proxy for race and therefore is a suspect class (Statham, 2002). This meant that all citizens of Hawaii, regardless of ancestry, could now vote in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs elections. This signaled a new policy of the government, and while it came from the courts, it was no less caustic than the previous governmental policy which had supported the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. This policy allowed for individuals to target the few programs designed to benefit Native Hawaiians. The Rice decision marks the beginning of the current policy period.

A follow-up ruling based on the Rice decision allowed non-Hawaiians to run and serve on OHA. This meant that the one government agency run by and for Hawaiians (Laenui, 1993) could end up in the hands of the very people the movement saw as colonizers. Because of the Rice decision Senator Akaka, the junior senator from Hawaii of native Hawaiian ancestry, introduced a bill to classify native Hawaiians in a similar manner as that of the Native Americans. This would afford them special protection under the law and allow government agencies to work solely for their benefit. The Akaka bill was held up in the Senate by Republicans who do not want to recognize another protected class (Honolulu Star-Bulletin Staff, 2005).

Following the Rice decision there were other cases filed in federal court attacking the very few remaining benefits that Native Hawaiians received (Omandam, 2000). One case attempted to force the acceptance of non-Hawaiian students into the Kamehameha Schools, which were established through a private trust to educate Native Hawaiian children (Beamish, 2003). Another case challenged the policy that twenty percent of ceded land proceeds were being used for the betterment of Hawaiians through Hawaiian only programs, which was mandated by the federal government at the time of statehood. Yet another case challenged the Hawaiian Homeland system which offers land to native Hawaiians at minimal costs. The court cases are a direct extension of the Rice decision which showed the vulnerability of Native Hawaiians because they are not “officially” recognized by the federal government even though one can point to many incidents over the past one-hundred and twenty years that shows that the federal government has often regarded the Native Hawaiians as a special class. These court cases represent a new attack on the native people of Hawaii.

The movement has had to change its tactics and outlook to respond to the serious threats of the governmental policy following Rice. The promise of sovereignty that was present at the beginning of the nineties has been replaced with fear of further threats over the present decade. The movement can no longer afford to be divided because as the attacks continue through the courts, coupled with the acquiescence of the government, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement is most vulnerable.

To stand up to these egregious policies the Hawaiian sovereignty movement has come together in the post-Rice environment under a banner of unity to stand-up for Native Hawaiian rights and sovereignty and to challenge the creeping policy of the courts and the federal government (Apgar, 2004; Honolulu Star-Bulletin Editorial Board, 2000; Nakaso and Viotti, 2003; Omandam, 2000; Staton, 2003). This does not mean that the previous divisions have disappeared but they are put on hold while the movement deals with the threat posed by the latest policies. The visions of what sovereignty should look like are still radically different but one thing is clear, if Hawaiians lose what little they have gained it is unlikely that they will ever get it back, and under that scenario it become easy for the previously contentious movements to band together (Holo, 2000).

We have presented the policy changes over three distinct policy periods in the history of Hawaii. The question remains, how do governmental policies affect social movement frames? The issuing of an apology and the subsequent governmental policy which projects that the government cares about and is willing to work with the Native Hawaiians removed the pressure from the government. This is important in understanding why the promise of the early nineties went unfulfilled. This paper builds on the findings that governmental policies do impact social movement frames and explores the question what happens to the movement frame if a policy threatens the existence of a social movement, in this case, the possible loss of the few protections that were afforded to Native Hawaiians.

McAdam (1982) showed that governmental policies can be crafted to favor certain factions within a movement while causing other factions to wither. He gives the example of policies meant to encourage less contentious factions in the Civil Rights Movement while other policies were crafted to directly discourage the existence of militant groups. From his example, these factions respond to the changing policy, non-threatening groups tend to flourish and contentious groups often disappear. But what about if the policy threatens the entire movement, does it disappear? The answer is no. As can be seen in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, when the entire movement is threatened by government policies the movement unites, they come together to form a unified framing and protect the broader movement. In this case, the frame war ended and the movement quickly banded together under a unity frame to protect all factions (Apgar, 2004; Nakaso and Viotti, 2003). The external threat from the government helped to foster a climate of fear which caused those in the movement to stop wondering if their group was going to lead the sovereignty movement and begin to question if there was going to still be a sovereignty movement (Holo, 2000). This had the chilling effect of harnessing the decades old contention and help unit the factions under a unity frame.

This frame is clearly discernable from the daily papers in Hawaii. Before the Rice decision the papers often reported on the personal squabbles of movement leaders (Honolulu Star-Bulletin Staff, 1997; McKenzie, 1996; Smyser, 1999) and the debates about which group had more members or was the true representative of the Native Hawaiian people or which plan for sovereignty was the “correct” model for the islands to follow (Trask, 1999;2000; Weinberg, 1996a). After Rice, almost every article spoke of unity within the sovereignty movement. There were large scale public marches in which several groups would participate in, all with varying visions and opinions on sovereignty but willing to adopt the unity frame to protect future losses. In a poll taken in 2001, one of the main things that Native Hawaiians wanted was greater unity among the sovereignty movement (Ten, 2000). The unity frame has had the benefit of mobilizing its base and outsiders (Apgar, 2004). In this case, while the governmental policies were meant to hamper and destroy the movement it had the consequence of forcing the movement to build a unity frame which has encouraged greater mobilization. The need for unity was clearly necessary to protect against the government’s policies and helped to mobilize previously untapped masses.

6. Conclusion

The Hawaiian sovereignty movement has been affected by the changing policies of the federal government. The most notable aspect of this influence has been in the framing of the movement. Sovereignty groups framed their issue in opposition to the government but with a policy shift the movement was left in a frame war where the different groups were battling one another over the “true” frame which would allow that group to control the movement as it moved towards sovereignty. In 2000, the policy of the government changed again because of several court cases challenging the status of Native Hawaiians. In response to this shift, the sovereignty movement adopted a unity frame to stand against the attacks on the few benefits available to Native Hawaiians.

This paper sought to extend that understanding by looking at how a policy which threatens the entire population that a movement seeks to mobilize can solidify the movement under a common unity frame. This does not mean that the many different sovereignty factions have disappeared but know they are careful to project a united frame of cooperation as they stand against the “colonial” policies of the government. This frame helps the movement mobilize its constituents and appeals to the wider public.

This paper has shown how competing movements, engaged in contentious framing, can unify when confronted with a specific threat. In this case, the threat posed by the governmental and legal policies of the United States helped create the conditions by which the movement coalesced around a common frame in support of their broader objectives. In these instances, the movement factions understand that there is safety in numbers. A movement solidified has a greater chance of drawing attention to the government’s actions and gaining the public’s support. Employing a unity frame has the added benefit of pleasing constituents who wish for unity in the movement, this also encourages their mobilization. For the case of social movements, aligning with another social movement organization, even if there are differences in perspectives and goals, is worthy when confronted with a common enemy. In a sense, the threat posed by the U.S. government helped create the conditions for the various sovereignty groups to look past their differences and come together. When looking at social movement framing, it is important to consider the external factors that affect the internal framing decisions made by social movements.

References

- Apgar, S. (2004). *Hawaiian March Floods Waikiki*. Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Beamish, R. (2003). *Programs for ethnic hawaiiians survives; preference battles likely to continue*. Sec. A: The Washington Post.
- Benford, R. D. (1993). Frame disputes within the nuclear disarmament movement. *Social Forces*, 71(3): 677-701.
- Benford, R. D. and Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(2000): 611-39.
- Daws, G. (1974). *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*. University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Dudley, M. K. and Agard, K. K. (1990). *A call for hawaiian sovereignty*. Na Kane O Ka Malo: Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Enomoto, C. K. (1997). *My Turn*. Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Fu, X. and Heaton, T. B. (1999). Implications of status exchange in intermarriage for hawaiiians and their sovereignty movement. *Sociological Perspectives*, 42(1): 97-116.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W. and Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18(1992): 373-93.
- Haley, J. L. (2014). *Captive paradise: A history of Hawaii*. Martin’s Press: New York.
- Holo, I. M. (2000). *Roundtable Discussion on the Future of the Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement after Rice v. Cayetano*: The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Honolulu Star-Bulletin Editorial Board (2000). The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Honolulu Star-Bulletin Staff (1997). *Hawaiian sovereignty activist ‘bumpy’ kahahele pleads guilty*. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Honolulu Star-Bulletin Staff (2005). *Lingle to talk to mccain about akaka bill support*. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Laenui, P. (1993). The rediscovery of Hawaiian sovereignty. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 17(1): 79-101.
- Linnekin, J. S. (1983). Defining tradition: Variations on the Hawaiian identity. *American Ethnologist*, 10(2): 241-52.
- McAdam, D. (1982). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970*. The University of Chicago: Chicago, Illinois.
- McCarthy, J. D., Smith, J. and Zald, M. N. (1996). *Accessing public, media, electoral, and governmental agendas*. In *McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (ed.) comparative perspectives on social movements*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- McGregor, D. P. (2002). Kaho’olawe: Rebirth of the sacred. *Amerasia Journal*, 28(3): 68-83.
- McKenzie, T. L. (1996). *Don’t let detractors discourage pursuit of sovereignty*. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Meller, N. and Lee, A. F. (1997). Hawaiian sovereignty. *Publius*, 27(2): 167-85.
- Morin, J. L. (1997). Hawai’i: Stirrings in the colony. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 31(3): 10-14.
- Nakaso, D. and Viotti, V. (2003). *Thousands join march for Hawaiian rights*. Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- New York Times (NYT) (1980). *Navy agrees to partial cleanup of Hawaiian Island*. The New York Times. 81.
- Omandam, P. (2000). *Non-hawaiiians back hawaiiians on rights, self-determination*. Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Sedensky, M. (2003). *Speeches, songs mark overthrow*. Honolulu Star-Bulletin.
- Smyser, A. A. (1999). *Trask sisters’ alarmingly racist tactics*. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

- Snow, D. A. and Benford, R. D. (1992). *Master frames and cycles of protest*. In Morris, A. D. & Mueller, C. M. (ed.) *frontiers in social movement theory*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Statham, E. R. J. R. (2002). Ethnic Nationalism versus American Constitutionalism: The impact of Rice v. Cayetano. *World Affairs*, 164(3): 135-44.
- Staton, R. (2003). Hawaii call for independence. *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*:
- Stobaugh, J. E. (2015). The pragmatist and the purist: Religion and internal framing struggles within the creationist movement. *American Journal of Sociological Research*, 5(3A): 22-32.
- Tarrow, S. (1992). *Mentalities, Political Cultures, and Collective Action Frames*. In Morris, A. D. & Mueller, C. M. (Ed.) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
- Ten, B. J. (2000). *Hawaii poll: Hawaiians search for unifying leaders*. The Honolulu Advertiser.
- Trask, H. (1999). *From a Native Daughter*. University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Trask, H. (2000). Native social capital: The case of hawaiian sovereignty and ka lahui Hawaii. *Policy Sciences*, 33(3/4): 375-85.
- Weinberg, B. (1996a). Land and sovereignty in Hawaii. *Native America*, 13(1): 30-41.
- Weinberg, B. (1996b). The sovereign nation of Hawaii: Come again? *Nonviolent Activist*, 13(1): 6-17.