When Aloha Meets Martin Luther King Jr.

The Historical Relationship between Hawai'i and the Civil Rights Movement

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Summary This paper brings to light the historical relationships between Hawai'i and the Civil Rights Movement. By examining three encounters of Hawai'i and Martin Luther King Jr., a well-known leader of the Civil Rights Movement—King's two visits to Hawai'i in 1959 and 1964 and Hawai'i's residents' participation in the Selma March of 1965, this paper explores how and why the residents and the Democratic Party of Hawai'i came to support the Civil Rights Movement in the continental United States. Additionally, this study considers Hawai'i's grassroots movements for social and political change, which first emerged during the 1940s and 1950s. It depicts how it was given a new direction in the late 1960s locally as well as connects it with Hawai'i's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

Introduction

In March of 2015, two Democratic politicians from Hawai'i, the U. S. Senator Mazie K. Hirono and the U. S. Representatives Mark Takai traveled to Alabama for the fiftieth anniversary of the historic "Bloody Sunday" March calling for African Americans' voting rights. The two policymakers presented more than a hundred flower *leis* to the attendees of the event in the same fashion that Reverend Abraham Kahikina Akaka of Kawaiaha'o Church had sent to march leaders, including Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., fifty years ago. Hirono stated that their delegation with Hawaiian *leis* aimed to "bring the spirit of peace and *aloha*1' from across the Pacific to Selma." ²¹

The historical relationship between Hawai'i and the Civil Rights Movement can be traced through an analysis of the discourse of the lawmakers and current journalism. During his address to the House of Representatives, Mark Takai expressed his intention to participate in the anniversary event to honor the

historical bonds between Hawai'i and the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders. Additionally, Takai mentioned King's visit in 1964 to Hawai'i emphasizing friendship between the civil rights leader and Reverend Akaka. Journalists in Hawai'i frequently covered the story of King and other civil rights leaders during the 1965 Selma-Montgomery March with photos of participants wearing the Hawaiian *leis*. The 2015 souvenir book for Martin Luther King Jr. 's Day in Hawai'i, featured the story of the residents of Hawai'i who took part in the 1965 Selma March. Source in the 1965 Selma March.

Previous scholarship has explored grassroots movements for social and political change within Hawai'i. Okamura (2014) argues that racial reform movements began in Hawai'i even before the end of the World War II, while the similar movements did not emerge in the continental United States until the 1950s. Movements advocating equality for nonwhite residents were mobilized through labor organization, electoral politics, and the statehood movement. A strike in 1946 initiated by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (hereinafter ILWU), secured a ban

on racial discrimination against plantation workers eighteen years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1954, the Democratic victory⁸⁾ achieved largely due to the support from the ILWU and Japanese American veterans to end white Republicans' control in Hawai'i.⁹⁾ Previous literature also notes the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the growing Hawaiian sovereignty movement and other local activist movements regarding such issues as anti-Vietnam War, housing, and land reform from the late 1960s, including the establishment of the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. ¹⁰⁾ Yet, the details of the story of Hawai'i's participation in the Civil Rights Movement have not yet been fully explored.

Recent scholars often interpret domestic political issues from the international perspective. Studies as Mary L. Dudziak (2011) argue that the federal government promoted civil rights reform as Cold War policy to deal with international criticism regarding racial issues. 11) The history and politics of Hawai'i also have recently been analyzed from a global perspective to explore the relationship between Hawai'i and the continental United States. Recent studies often point out that both leaders on the continent and in the Islands embraced the importance of Hawai'i during the Cold War. John S. Whitehead (2004) claims that Hawai'i became an ideological outpost for the U.S. after 1950. 121 Furthermore, Gretchen Heefner (2005) argues that the statehood was not only important for the residents of Hawai'i but for the federal government because it would enable the U. S. to present America's positive image and its ideal of democracy to the world by emphasizing Hawai'i's role of a bridge to Asia and representing Hawai'i as a symbol of racial harmony. 13)

Building on previous scholarship, this study considers Hawai'i's role in participating in the Civil Rights Movement. This paper pays attention to three encounters between Martin Luther King Jr. and Hawai'i, which King's two visits to Hawai'i in 1959 and 1964 and the Hawai'i delegation's participation in

the 1965 Selma, Alabama March. By tracing each event, this paper explores when and why the residents of Hawai'i began to support and take part in the Civil Rights Movement traveling across the Pacific to the continental U.S. Additionally, this paper aims to uncover the aim of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i's coalition with the Civil Rights Movement and the way in which the image of Hawai'i benefited the federal government. Finally, it examines its relationship with the growth of social activism in Hawai'i during the 1940s and the 1950s and from the late 1960s.

I. King's Visits to Hawai'i

In this section, I will analyze the interactions between Martin Luther King Jr. and residents of Hawai'i during his two visits to Hawai'i. Mary L. Dudziak (2011) discusses how racial segregation and lynching captured international attention after World War II, making racial issues of America grist for Soviet propaganda by 1949. Through an analysis of King's speeches and interviews with the Honolulu newspapers, this section explores when and how the residents became aware of the Civil Rights Movement.

1. Martin Luther King Jr.'s First Visit to Hawai'i in 1959

King's first visit to Hawai'i was from September 14 to 18, 1959. After leading the Montgomery bus boycott and becoming a world renown figure in 1955, King traveled widely, gave lectures on civil rights struggles, and fought for school integration. His first visit was part of his scheduled speaking engagements for that year.

During his visit, King focused on three issues. First, he criticized the federal government's leadership and stressed the need for civil rights legislation. In an interview with Honolulu daily newspapers, King opposed the idea of slowing down on civil rights legislation advocated by Congressmen such as a Republican U.S. Senator Hiram L. Fong from Hawai'i. Fong argued that Congress should tread

carefully with civil rights legislation because racial issues gradually resolve themselves as time elapsed. ¹⁵⁾ In response, King stated, looking back at the Little Rock Crisis of 1957, "time does not heal problems of a social order," therefore, a strong federal law was required to curb white Southerners' racially discriminatory behaviors. ¹⁶⁾ In addition, King criticized President Eisenhower for caving in to Southern resistance to school integration, declaring that only federal civil rights legislation would improve school integration. ¹⁷⁾

Second, King provided a critique of racial problems in the continental U.S. from the perspective of international relations. When he addressed the public at the McKinley High School auditorium, King demonstrated a concern over the growing criticism against racial segregation, especially from the Soviet Union and newly decolonized African countries. King stated that if America wanted to remain a first-class nation, then citizenship rights should not be denied based on racial differences.¹⁸¹

Third, King found much to commend in the democratization of Hawai'i when he addressed the State House of Representatives on September 17. King praised the residents' contribution to the grassroots movements for social justice and equality in Hawai'i. He saw the statehood movement as a means to provide greater opportunities and enhance racial equality for nonwhite residents in the Islands. King also claimed that Hawai'i had accomplished relatively harmonious racial relations and its success in that endcavor should serve as an example for the nation in fostering racial equality. ¹⁹⁹

2. King's Second Visit to Hawai'i in 1964

It was King's second visit to Hawai'i in 1964 that directed the public's attention to the Civil Rights Movement. His visit was co-sponsored by the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i, at Mānoa as well as the Honolulu Council of Churches. Following the flowering of student activism in the continental United States, some students became

interested in racial issues in other parts of their country. Articles in *Ka Leo*, the student newspaper at the University of Hawai'i, at Mānoa in the early 1964, criticized the apathy of most students towards the Civil Rights Movement, unlike the rest of America which was spellbound by King's famous "I have a dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963.²⁰ Inspired by the 1963 speech, some of the University's student body invited King and other civil rights leaders to a week-long symposium called "Civil Rights Week" at the Mānoa campus to arouse students who were indifferent to the Civil Rights Movement.

King often referred to the civil rights bill. After arriving in Honolulu on February 18, he addressed an audience of 5.500 people at the Central Union Church.211 King stated that nothing could be more tragic than witnessing the defeat of the civil rights bill in the session of Congress.²²¹ Although, the civil rights bill passed in the House on Feburary 10 by a vote of 290 to 130, King was concerned that the Senate would block the bill's passage or kill it entirely. In addition, he predicted that the civil rights bill would require a long struggle because the Republican candidate in the 1964 presidential campaign, Senator Barry Goldwater opposed it. King then warned that if Goldwater won the election, it would be a catastrophe for the Civil Rights Movement.231 On the morning of February 19, King addressed for the annual "God and Country Service" at Kawaiaha'o Church sponsored by the Honolulu Council of Churches, in conjunction with the opening of the State Legislature. Although Governor John A. Burns did not attend, an estimated half to two thirds of the legislators were in attendance.241 King urged the legislators and other listeners to write letters to their congressmen asking them to push through the civil rights bill.251 Concerned that the result of the upcoming presidential election would damage their efforts on behalf of the enactment of civil rights legislation, King urged the audience to act now before it was too late.261

At noon of the same day, 10,000 people,²⁷¹ 8,000 of which were University of Hawai'i students,²⁸¹ gathered

at the Andrews Amphitheater of the University of Hawai'i Mānoa to hear King's speech. It was the largest crowd in the history of the stadium. This attendance is indicative of the growing attention towards the Civil Rights Movement and King among the students as well as the wider public in Hawai'i, in comparison, the audience at King's address just six years earlier at the McKinley High School numbered only 1,200²⁹⁾ Simeon Acoba Jr., who brought up the idea of inviting King for organizing the Civil Rights Week symposium, commented:

There wasn't very much empathy for the civil rights movement in Hawaii in public or on campus [before King's speeches]. I think what was important was that after he came and the week of speakers, people became more sensitive to the civil rights movement and what it was.³⁰¹

King did not only address the audience about his fight for racial equality but also encouraged the students to get involved in his movement. King urged university students to come to the South and join his campaign to help register African American voters. 31) James Farmer, Director of the Congress of Racial Equality (hereinafter CORE), invited to the Civil Rights Week symposium as one of the guest speakers, stated CORE recruited young people of all races for its no-violent direct-action programs. The participants would be paid only subsistence wages—about \$25 a week—and could volunteer for a summer, six months, or a year. 32) Farmer stated that the students could still support CORE financially if they could not participate in the Civil Rights Movement directly. 33)

It was the civil rights leaders' call for involved action in their campaign that stimulated interest in the Civil Rights Movement among the residents of Hawai'i. After King's second visit to Hawai'i, the residents developed an affinity for the Civil Rights Movement. In March of 1964, three residents of Hawai'i, Reverent Abraham K. Akaka, Charles M. Campbell, the chairman of the Civil Rights Conference

of Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Advisory Committee to the U. S. Civil Rights Commission, and the Reverend Lawerence S. Jones, president of the Honolulu Council of Churches, traveled to Washington, D. C. to press for passage of the civil rights legislation.

II. The Participation in the Selma, Alabama Campaign in 1965

Martin Luther King Jr. and his organization, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (hereinafter SCLC), launched a campaign in Selma, Alabama challenging the racial exclusion in the local voting system and forcing President Lyndon Johnson to legislate a federal law to ensure the voting rights for all African Americans. Attempts to walk from Selma to Montgomery on March 7 and 9 were blocked by state troopers and the city police twice as the marchers were trying to cross Edmund Pettis Bridge. After witnessing the bloody scenes on March 7 on national television and hearing the tragic news of a white minister, James Reeb, who came from Boston for the protest, being attacked and beaten by a group of segregationists, many people across America found the incident outrageous and gathered in Selma to protest.

In Hawai'i, there was also a movement to participate in the Selma campaign. In this section I will focus on the residents of Hawai'i's participation in the Selma campaign. First, the motivation for traveling from Hawai'i to join the historic event is examined. Second, it considers the significant political role played by Daniel K. Inouye, a Congressman from Hawai'i, in both Hawai'i and in the continental United States. Finally, the relationship between the Civil Rights Movement and the social movements in Hawai'i is considered.

The Delegation Team from Hawai'i in the Selma Campaign

Six residents of Hawai'i joined the third civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama beginning on March 21, 1965. It was a multiracial delegation consisting of an African American, three whites, and a Japanese American student together with a Japanese American news reporter. The African American, Charles M. Campbell, headed two civil rights associations in Hawai'i, and was flanked by three white supporters—Robert Browne, a psychiatrist at St. Francis Hospital; Linus C. Pauling Jr., a psychiatrist whose father awarded two Nobel Prizes, one in chemistry and the other for peace; and Nona Springel, a graduate student and a research assistant in psychology at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Also included in this delegation from Hawai'i were Glenn T. Izutsu of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, representing the student body and Tomi Knaefler, a Japanese American news reporter at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

An article, dated January 15, 2015, in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser explains the reason for the delegation. The concept of the Selma campaign—peaceful mobilization for justice-resonated with Hawai'i's political grassroots movements that historically challenged the white elites' political, economical, and social domination in the Islands.341 Knaefler noted that the residents of Hawai'i, especially the students of the University of Hawai'i and the intellectuals sympathized with the African American sensibilities about racial injustice by reflecting Hawai'i's own immigrant history of injustice and struggles against white hegemony.351 William D. Hoshijo, the executive director of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, which Charles M. Campbell headed, explained the reason for the delegation's presence in Selma saying that the historical experience of people of color in Hawai'i before World War II was in some ways paralleled the discrimination and segregation against African Americans in the South.361

The Hawai'i delegation made an immediate splash. On March 21, they received attention at the opening for the five-day-march in front of Brown Chapel A. M. E. Church because they brought plumeria *leis* and a banner, "Hawaii Knows Integration Works." The team was invited to go on stage and present the *leis* to the

March leaders including Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Bunche, the undersecretary of the United Nations. The delegation received cheers from the crowd of more than 7,000 participants. It was obvious that King felt honored by the distance this delegation had travelled to express their support for the voting rights act for the African Americans. When Charles M. Campbell presented the *lei* to the civil rights leader, King stated, "to think you came all that way. You don't know what this means to us." ³⁷⁾ King and other leaders wore the *leis* during March until all of the petals fell off.

The participants strengthened Hawai'i's narrative of racial harmony in the Civil Rights Movement. In the March 22, 1965 issue of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Tomi Knaefler showed how both of the leis and the banner symbolized the hope for racial harmony to be achieved in Selma through a peaceful campaign. 381 The delegation team believed racial integration had been achieved in Hawai'i after they embraced the importance of solidarity across racial and ethnic differences through labor and political grassroots movements during the 1940s and 1950s, effectively challenging racism against nonwhite minorities.391 One of the participants, Nona Springel explained the Hawai'i's delegate's motivation to take part in the Selma campaign was due to the delegation members' strongly held belief that racial integration could be achieved at that time, although, she realized that it was hard to make the ideal a reality in today's world. 401

On the first day of the march, National Guard personnel were assigned by President Johnson to protect the 8,000 marchers. His King led the March, successfully crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and walked to a campsite eight miles away. About 300 of the marchers camped there while others went back to Selma for the night. From the second day of the march, the number of marchers was limited to 300 by a federal court order which provided the permit for the March. Among the delegation from Hawai'i, Charles M. Campbell and Glenn Izutsu were included in the 300 and walked the entire fifty miles. Robert Browne,

Linus C. Pauling Jr., and Nona Springel volunteered in the medical unit backing up the 300 marchers.⁴²⁾

A key facet of the March was, multi-racial unity among the delegation team from Hawai'i, other marchers, and local residents in Alabama. The African American community in Alabama and civil right leaders were welcoming to participants from outside of Alabama. Lucile Smith, who provided the Hawai'i team with housing told the participants, "you've come to help us and we're grateful." The delegation from Hawai'i appreciated their warm welcome.

On the other hand, the delegation members from Hawai'i experienced hostility from those opposed to the March in Alabama. Some white residents treated non-local marchers as outsiders by asserting the idea of "local sovereignty" or "local control" as the governing principle of democracy widely accepted throughout many Southern states. They held signs that read, "Stay out of Alabama's business, Johnson," and "Dethrone King." They called the marchers from Hawai'i and other regions of the United States and Canada "agitators" or "provocateurs."

2. Analysis of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i's Involvement in the Civil Rights Movement

SCLC invited members of Congress in the House and Senate to provide marchers from their staffs to the Selma March. In response, Senator Inouye sent his special assistant, Henry Ku'ualoha Giuguni. Giugni joined Izutsu and Campbell and walked all the way to the end, carrying the Hawai'i's flag to the Capitol in Montgomery. Inouye, the first Japanese American to serve in Congress, strongly supported civil rights legislation, as opposed to Republican U. S. Senator Hiram L. Fong. Inouye strengthened his ties with the delegation team from Hawai'i by inviting them to his office in Washington, D. C. 460 After the passage of the Civil Rights Bill, Martin Luther King Jr. sent a letter to Inouye expressing his appreciation for the senator's support of the bill. 470

Inouye's link with the Civil Rights Movement galvanized support from nonwhite residents in the

Islands. 48) The senator's support for civil rights legislation provided a powerful tool for the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. Sending his assistant to the March. Inouye enabled the Party to visibly demonstrate its commitment to racial equality and social justice. As Okamura (2014) has claimed that the Democratic Party focused on eliminating racial inequality and fostering economic reform after the 1954 Democratic victoryand the political leaders successfully garnered strong support from nonwhites voters who felt oppressed under the Republican dominance. 49) The senator's involvement in the grassroots movement to challenge racial discrimination and segregation in the continental United States also facilitated the Democratic Party's political goal of winning the support of nonwhite residents of Hawai'i.

Hawai'i's Democratic Party attempted in advocating their commitment, improving racial equality in Hawai'i, as a vivid example for the rest parts of America. In addition to his support for the civil rights legislation and the Civil Rights Movement, Inouve employed the strategy of emphasizing Hawai'i's Democratic Party's promise in Congress. For example, in his 1963 speech before the U. S. Senate, Inouve articulated his intent to address the issue of racial inequality and social justice for minorities. In addition, the senator declared that the minority voice would be reflected in his appearance before Congress. 50) Ellen D. Wu (2014) claims that Senator Inouve serves as a metaphor of racial progress under the American liberal democracy by highlighting his achievement as a nonwhite politician of prominence and his ambivalent relationship with Japan. 511 In the presidential campaign of 1968, President Johnson urged Hubert Humphrey to make Inouye his running mate believing that it would be a useful way to gain support from nonwhite voters as well as to show America's commitment to racial issues by choosing for the vicepresident a nonwhite candidate who advocated racial equality and social justice for the vice-president. Thus, Hawai'i's Democratic Party's manifesto of addressing racial equality was folded into the national

narrative of racial democracy as Cold War policy.

3. Analysis of the Relationship between the Participation in the Civil Rights Movement and Social Movements in Hawai'i

Despite Senator Inoue's support for King's Civil Rights Movement, social movements in Hawai'i, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, were confronted by the contradictions of Hawai'i's Democratic Party policies. In fact, as Kotani (1985) points out Hawai'i's social movements which emerged from the late 1960s often opposed the Democratic Party leadership. 520 Hawai'i's Democratic Party produced an economic boom by expanding tourism through a partnership with the U.S. military beginning in the 1960s.⁵³¹ However, their policy, coupled with the overdependence on tourism, did not facilitate upward economic and educational mobility for ethnic minorities such as Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, and Samoans, resulting in widespread ethnic and racial inequality among residents.⁵⁴¹ In addition, the militalization of Hawai'i and land development presented unique challenges to the ideals of democracy as it dispossessed Native Hawaiians' lands, nature, resources, and culture in the Party's alliance with the military. 551 Thus, the activists have organized movements in support of native sovereignty, opposition to war, demilitarization, and affordable housing, much of which derived considerable inspiration from grassroots movements against economic inequality and the Vietnam War organizing which Martin Luther King Jr. took up in his later years of his life.561

The nuances of *aloha* as "peace" and "racial harmony" blended well with the symbolism of King's message of non-violence and racial integration. In some ways, the Hawaiian *leis*—a symbol of peace, love, and compassion adorning the civil rights leaders' in the March—obscured Hawai'i's role in the U.S. military and the Vietnam War, the local power structure among the residents, and the subjugation of the Islands's indigenous people. Yet, the emphasis of peace and racial harmony by the two current

Democrats from Hawai'i as we have seen allows the Democratic Party to avoid culpability for its own contemporary inequality and injustice challenged by the local activists since the late 1960s. In addition, through solidarity with the Civil Rights Movement, the Democratic Party of Hawai'i can praise its historic contribution to fight against white supremacy in the Islands in local grassroots movements during the 1940s and 1950s. Also, the Democratic Party can evade its own responsibility and place all blame on the Republican Party for Hawai'i's racism, inequality, and injustice by placing white oppression against African Americans in the continental United States and racial minorities in Hawai'i on the same moral ground, Furthermore, the illusion of Hawai'i-the realization of racial unity and equality for all-incorporated into the American racial liberalism was reinforced.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the historical relationship between the Civil Rights Movement and Hawai'i from the late 1950s to 1960s through three encounters between Martin Luther King Jr. and the residents of Hawai'i—King's two visits to Hawai'i in 1959 and 1964 and Hawai'i's participation in the Selma March of 1965. Through these encounters, historical, cultural, and political reasons for Hawai'i's residents' participation in the social movements challenging racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans in the continental United States and the nuances of their implications are uncovered.

Although Martin Luther King Jr. visited Hawai'i for the first time in 1959, it was his second visit in 1964 that sparked the residents of Hawai'i's interest in the Civil Rights Movement. Student activists of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa provided a bridge between King and Hawai'i. Through their interactions with King, the residents were stimulated to take part in the Civil Rights Movement across the Pacific Ocean.

The delegation's involvement in the civil rights

march had both cultural and historical motivations. The members saw their own immigrant history in Hawai'i reflected in the African American struggle against racial segregation in the south. They believed in the importance of coalition building across racial and ethnic divides resulting from the successes of racial solidarity in their own multiracial labor and political movements. King's ideal of racial integration and non-violence appealed to the participants from Hawai'i. They brought *leis*—a symbol of peace—as well as a banner which was titled "Hawaii Knows Integration Works," which expressed the hope for peace and racial integration.

Hawai'i's Democratic Party also took part in the Civil Rights Movement to show firm their commitment to racial equality and social justice. This strategy worked well in gaining support for the Democratic Party from nonwhites residents in Hawai'i who opposed the historic domination of white Republicans over the state politics and called for racial equality and social justice. Thus, participation in the Civil Rights Movement played a role in strengthening their political power and in shifting the ideological responsibility of inequality and injustice in the Islands to the Republican Party. Within the many layers that must be read in these encounters, we see the complex relationship that Hawai'i has had with Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

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- 4) Takai, "Takai Addresses House on Upcoming Civil Rights Pilgrimage,"
- 5) Marsha Rose Joyner, "From Hawaii to Selma," in

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- 16) Ibid.
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- 32) Ibid.
- 33) Ibid.
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- 35) Ibid.
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- 40) Ibid.
- "Showered by Segregationist Leaflets Rights March in 2nd Day," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 22, 1965, A1 and A-1A.
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アロハとマーティン・ルーサー・キング・ジュニアが出会ったとき ── ハワイと公民権運動の歴史的関係の考察 ──

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要旨 本稿はハワイと公民権運動の歴史的関係性を考察する。公民権運動の主要な指導者であるキングとハワイの住民やハワイ民主党議員との関わりを分析するために、1959年と1964年のキングの2度のハワイ訪問、1965年のハワイ住民のアラバマ州セルマ行進の参加という3つの歴史的出来事に焦点を当て、ハワイ住民がアメリカ本土で展開された公民権運動に関して興味を持つようになった経過や公民権運動に参加してきたハワイ民主党の意図を明らかにする。そして、ハワイ住民の公民権運動の参加は、1940・50年代のハワイ内の社会的・政治的構造改革のための民衆運動や1960年代の後半からハワイで取り組まれるようになった反戦運動やネイティブハワイアンの文化・主権回復運動などの社会運動とどのような関わりがあったかを議論する。