Prioritizing national security over care for land?

A qualitative study on the social, ecological and cultural impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii

Yuichi Tsuchibuchi

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Abstract:

Social, ecological, and cultural impacts associated with the U.S. military in Hawaii are egregious. However, due to the historical oppressions and injustices to Hawaiians, the U.S. military maintains their hegemony by wielding a disproportionate decisive political and economic power. This study aims to explore perceptions of Native Hawaiian and non-native activists regarding the military impacts and the ways they address these impacts. Online interviews are conducted to fulfill the aims. Social impacts include housing insecurity, unexplored ordinance, water pollution, human health and sexual violence. Ecological impacts include threats to and loss of indigenous and endangered flora and fauna. Cultural impacts include limiting access to sacred sites, religious practices, eradicating traditional lifestyles and cutting off genealogical connections. To subvert the military hegemony, activists engage in community education, restoration program, storytelling and legal approaches. The study highlights the importance of collective actions in the demilitarization movements.

Keywords: U.S military, place attachment, collective identity, counter-hegemony, political opportunities, social movement

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List of abbreviations:

RIMPAC	The Rim of the Pacific
PTA	Pōhakuloa Training Area
Red Hill	Red Hill (Kapūkakī) Bulk Fuel Storage Facility
PFAS	Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
UXO	Unexplored ordinance

1. Introduction

The impacts of military activities are devastating yet how to address them is barely discussed. Although conservatively calculated by not including the impacts of warfighting, it is estimated that approximately 5.5% of global annual greenhouse gas emission is produced from militaries (Parkinson & Cottrell, 2022)**.** By the U.S. government lobbying, an automatic exemption from the CO_2 emission goal was given to the militaries in the Kyoto protocol and the militaries emissions reporting remains voluntary under the Paris agreement (Ambrose, 2021; The Military Emissions Gap, 2021). Hence, with this large loop-hole perpetuating, the U.S. federal government's department of defense maintain prioritizing a national security narrative while disregarding alternatives such as socio-ecological security (Herpel, 2009; Na'puti & Frain, 2023).

In this respect, the links between military activities and their social, ecological and cultural impacts are seldom discussed and structurally excluded under the name of national security. With the narrative of national security, continuous military exercises with little or no consideration of socio-ecological-cultural degradations – destruction of native land, biodiversity loss, loss of traditional knowledge, identity, etc. - have been justified (Ireland, 2010; Kajihiro, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2015). Considering how much destructions the military activities can cause, and with climate change most likely increasing instability and insecurity around geopolitics over resources (Buxton, 2018), an examination regarding the implications of military activities on surrounding environment and local residents is crucial.

Hawaii is the headquarters of the U.S. military operations in Asia and the Pacific. The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise, which is the world largest international maritime exercise, has been held every two years since 1971 (Albertini, 2021; Herpel, 2009; Na'puti & Frain, 2023; Uyeda,

2022). In Hawaii, the U.S. military occupies 224,897 acres of land and have 142 military bases and installations (Compoc & Enomoto, 2022). After tourism, military is the second largest industry in Hawaii, indicating the U.S. military has a strong political power. The history of the U.S military presence and expansion in Hawaii goes back to an illegal annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii back in 1887 (2.2 & 2.3).

Some of the recent contested military's sites are Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawaii (Figure 1), and Red Hill (Kapūkakī) Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (hereinafter referred to as Red Hill) on the island of Oahu.

PTA is the largest contiguous live-fire range and maneuver training area located between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa with lava and volcanic soil, which is a habit of endangered indigenous species (Dobbyn, 2022; Knodell, 2022). The U.S. military occupies this training area since World War II and currently gained a 65 years of lease at the cost of one dollar until 2029 (Ana et al., 2022; Dobbyn, 2022). However, around and within PTA, there are 17 numbers of endangered species (Stein et al. 2008). For example, it is a habitat of rare species such as *nene* or Hawaii's state bird and Palila, an endangered honeycreeper that populate only in this area (Dobbyn, 2022; Knodell, 2022). The tension has intensified since two Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) filed a lawsuit in 2014 against the U.S. military for not following the terms of the lease (Ana et al., 2022). Although depleted uranium has been detected in the public water resources, risking public health due to the U.S. military's improper waste treatment of weapons and ammunition, the state government rejected its severity and instead supports the presence of the U.S. military for the sake of global security concerns (Ana et al., 2022).

Red Hill locates 100 feet above Oahu's major aquifer for a drinking water resource of about 1 million people on the island (Jedra, 2021; Kaufman, 2022). Since its installation in the early 1940s

for World War II, Red Hill spilled more than 70 times of fuel leaks no matter it is large or small, reaching at least 180,000 gallons of leak (Jedra, 2021; Nast, 2022). The presence of Red Hill has become even controversial after 14,000 gallons of fuel leaked from the facility in late November of 2021, polluting the major water resource on Oahu (Jedra, 2021). Moreover, a lots of health issues by drinking the poisoned water have become apparent when the Hawaii Department of Health confirmed the presence of firefighting foam, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) known as forever chemicals in the contaminated soil and water (Corbett, 2022). Many civilians including the U.S soldiers and their families suffer from a wide range of health issues that resulted in the U.S. Department of Defense announcing the permanent shutdown of Red Hill by August 2027 (Afshar, 2022; Compoc & Enomoto, 2022).

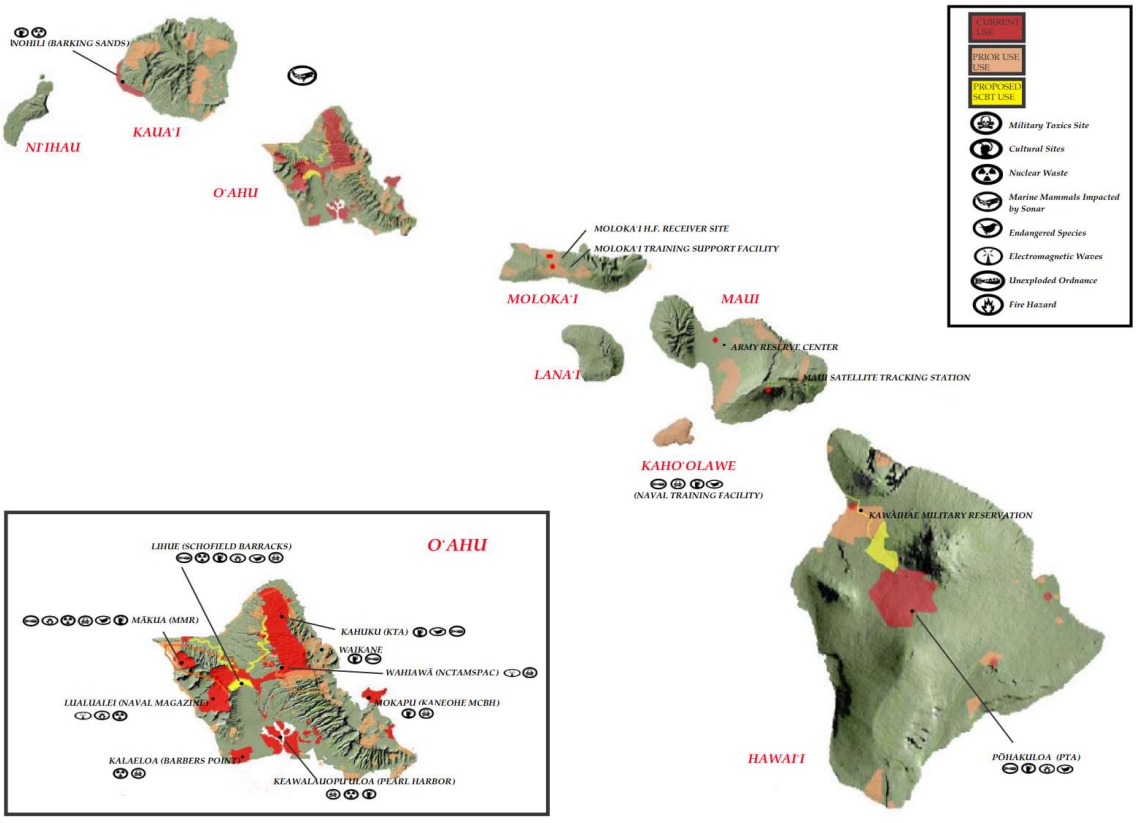

Figure 1. A map shows the U.S. military occupation and its impacts on eight islands in Hawaii. The map is made by Summer Nemeth in 2007 and it is reproduced by a permission from DMZ-Hawai Aloha 'Aina.

For Kānaka Maoli, place has a critical role in their traditions and customs that intertwine physical, spiritual, genealogical and social connections to the land (Kanaÿiaupuni & Malone, 2006). As Oneha shared a Hawaiian saying “ka mauli o ka ‘āina a he mauli kānaka, the life of the land is the life of the people” (2001 as cited in Kanaÿiaupuni & Malone, 2006), Hawaiian identity is rooted tightly with the land. ‘Āina, the Hawaiian word for land articulates how humans are interconnected with land and nature in an intimate reciprocal relationship of mālama ‘āina (caring for the land) as ‘āina cares for people (Beamer et al., 2023; Kanaÿiaupuni & Malone, 2006). The idea of mālama ‘āina emphasizes balance and coexistence, signifying the virtue of sharing and not seeing the land as a commodity (McGregor et al., 2003). McGregor et al. (2003) explains that *Ohana* (Family, extended family adopted children beyond blood relationship) represents a sense of bond, shared responsibility, emotional support, and mutual independence.

Drawing on the case of Hawaii, this study explores the social, ecological, and cultural impacts of the U.S. military presence from perspectives of Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists advocating for demilitarization, social and environmental justice, and independence. By examining these impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii from their perceptions and how they address these impacts, this research looks at how concepts of place attachment, collective identity, power, hegemony, political opportunities and counter-hegemony are presented.

1.1 Aims and Research Questions

The aim of the study is to explore how activists involved in organizations fighting for demilitarization, including Kānaka Maoli and non-native, perceive the ongoing the U.S. military activities, particularly focusing on social, ecological and cultural impacts, and their attempts to address these challenges. This is important in order to amplify the voice of people in Hawaii who have been historically and structurally marginalized and under-represented (See section 2), and

demonstrate the urgency to provide meaningful solutions to current and future military impacts to the environment and the surrounding people. To accomplish the aims described above, the study addresses the following research questions.

RQ1: What perceptions do Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) and non-native activists hold with regard to social, ecological, and cultural impacts of the continuous U.S. military activities in Hawaii?

RQ2: How do these activists address the issues associated with the U.S. military in Hawaii?

1.2 Contribution to Sustainability Science

By framing the presence of the U.S. militaries for the sake of national security and Hawaii's strategic location, social, ecological, and cultural impacts of militaries are overshadowed (Kajihiro, 2014). Issues with regard to the U.S. military could be considered as a wicked problem as different factors including but not limited to – politics, perceptions, history, culture - are complicatedly intertwined (Jerneck et al., 2011; Webber, 1973). Because of this complexity, I found that there is a huge research gap regarding the military issues. I attempt to fill this gap. By researching on the issues associated with the U.S. military, this research contributes to sustainability science which attempts to understand complex interactions between nature and society (Clark & Dickson, 2003). Sustainability science is also solution-oriented and bridging different disciplines to address a wicked problem is a common approach (Jerneck et al., 2011; Kates et al., 2001; Wiek et al., 2011). By applying theories of place attachment, collective identity and counter-hegemony used in across different academic disciplines, this study contributes to the field of sustainability science. It is also crucial to clarify values (Spangenberg, 2011) and

power structures entangled with the U.S. militaries in understanding the root causes of the U.S. military problems and seeking for a possible solution. In that sense, this research looks for a possible leverage point, a point where an intervention brings a transformative change in a complex system by examining remarks from Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists (Abson et al., 2017; Davelaar, 2021; J. Fischer & Riechers, 2019; Meadows, 1999; Tarrow, 1998). By getting insights from these activists, I intend to find a way for meaningful solutions to this complex U.S. military issues in Hawaii.

2. Background: the history of Hawaii

Tracing the history of Hawaii is key in understanding the militarization of Hawaii, struggles of Kānaka Maoli, current power dynamics and the dominant narratives regarding the social, ecological, and cultural impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii.

2.1 Ancient resource management system (around 500 – 1778)

Since Hawaii has the finite available resources due to its isolated location, Hawaiians developed their own political and social system, called Kapu system, an ancient Hawaiian code of conduct entwined with the religion of Hawaii, that enabled Hawaiians to manage resources strictly yet sustainably (Beamer et al., 2023; S. Kuykendall, 1947). Although the class hierarchy – chief, priest, and commoner- existed within Kapu system, it was believed that Ali'I, or chiefs were descended from the gods and they understood their privileges and accountabilities to people (Beamer et al., 2023; S. Kuykendall, 1947). Thus, ancient Hawaiians rigorously redistributed wealth and power according to the Kapu system.

2.2 First contact with European (1778) and the era of Kingdom of Hawaii (1795-1893)

The way of life in Hawaii started to change after the first contact with an European Captain James Cook in 1778 with the introduction of a trade system and a concept of private property (S. Kuykendall, 1947). While the Kamehameha dynasty flourished through economic commerce in furs, sandalwood and whale oil (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023; Kuykendall, 1934), after Kamehameha II inherited the dynasty in 1819, many Hawaiians were converted to Christianity with the arrival of Christian missionaries in the coming years (Gonzalez, 2013; Moore, 2022). Glowing influence of Christianity not only resulted in the abolishment of Kapu system but also spurred the erosion of the Kingdom of Hawaii's political and social autonomy (Blackaby, 2021; Gonzalez, 2013; S. Kuykendall, 1947). In the meantime, sugar and fruits plantations expanded for commercial purposes that in return reinforced business interests over fertile plantation lands (Ireland, 2010).

In 1840, a first constitution was established and Hawaii became a constitutional monarchy by a complete influence of American missionaries, furthering control over Hawaii (Moore, 2022). The aftermath of the 1840 constitution accelerated interests in private land ownership among western businessmen and missionaries that brought the Great Mahele, great land division in 1848 and the Kuleana Act in 1850. (Hawaii.Gov, n.d.; Maui Real Estate School, n.d.; Moore, 2022). The Great Mahele and the Kuleana Act allowed every class including foreigners to privately own land that as a result alienated Hawaiians from their lands (Gonzalez, 2013). Increasing influences of westers impacted the native population. It is estimated that the population of Hawaiian was at least 800,000 – 1 million at pre-1778 but the population dropped precipitously to 40,000 by the end the century due to the brought diseases such as smallpox and measles (Ireland, 2010; Kanaÿiaupuni & Malone, 2006).

To take more control over Hawaii, the plantation owners and the U.S. Navy forced Kalekaua monarch to sign the new constitution, known as Bayonet constitution, in 1887 that stripped king's authority, diminished the power of monarchy and disenfranchised native Hawaiians and poor immigrants (Blackaby, 2021; Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.; Gonzalez, 2013). After the death of Kalekaua, his sister Queen Lili`uokalani succeeded his position in 1893 and she attempted to invalidate the 1887 Bayonet constitution, proclaiming herself in absolute monarch (Kajihiro, 2014, 2022). The white settlers and the U.S. Marines responded to her plans with a *coup d'etat* against the queen and sought annexation by the U.S. government (Kajihiro, 2014; Kanaÿiaupuni & Malone, 2006).

2.3 Illegal overthrew of Hawaiian monarchy and annexation (1893 - 1898)

The Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally overthrown by the United States in 1893 for the business interests with the help of the U.S. Marines despite the disapproval of most Native Hawaiians (Ana et al., 2022; Gonzalez, 2013). Native Hawaiians who supported the Queen Lili`uokalani attempted counter-protests for opposing the annexation; they were not successful (Sai, 2004). The outbreak of the Spanish-American War emphasized Hawaii's strategic location value as a base to serve as a coaling station for battles in the Philippines (Sai, 2004). Subsequently, this event paved a way for the annexation in 1898 and Hawaii became a territory of the United States in 1900 (Blackaby, 2021; Ireland, 2010).

2.4 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and U.S military expansion (1941 – present)

The military presence dramatically expanded after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and this event obfuscated America's imperial history while strengthening the narratives of national security and necessity of militaries to protect Hawaii (Ireland, 2010; Kajihiro, 2014). The

attack on Pearl Harbor led to the declaration of the martial law, which resulted in the exacerbation of the military power and the justification of the military dominance in Hawaii (Ana et al., 2022). For examples, the whole island of Kaho'olawe was commandeered for the military bombing practice site for 49 years from 1941 till 1990 during the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War (Ana et al., 2022; Kajihiro, 2020; Wright et al., 2020).

2.5 Becoming the 50th state of the U.S and continued U.S military presence (1959–present)

Since the early 1900, an inclusion of the Territory of Hawaii to the U.S state began to escalate (Sai, 2004). And eventually, the U.S. Congress passed the Hawaii admission Act in March 1959 and for that referendum residents were given only two options: remain as the U.S. territory or become a state (Mililani B, 2020; National Archives, 2016). Since Hawaiian residents knew they won't get full voting rights under the status of the U.S. territory, the majority of them voted for statehood: Hawaii became the 50th state of the U.S. in August 1959 (Blackaby, 2021; Mililani B, 2020; National Archives, 2016).

3. Theoretical framework

This section introduces the theoretical concepts employed in this research. To make sense of the implications of the U.S. military impacts on socio-ecological-cultural spheres in Hawaii from Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists' perspectives, I bring together three theoretical concepts. Firstly, I draw on place attachment (3.1) to examine how the attachment to a place at affective, cognitive, and behavioral levels is reflected by activists. Secondly, I use collective identify (3.2) to observe what means are used by activists and in their organizations to take collective actions in order to demilitarize Hawaii. Thirdly, I employ power and hegemony (3.3) to analyze how the

U.S. military exerts power and maintains their hegemony while investigating the emergence of counter-hegemony with a rise of political opportunities. Lastly, I elaborate how these concepts are interlinked in the research (3.4).

3.1 Place Attachment

The concept of place, place attachment and sense of place have been studied in multiple disciplines including architecture, anthropology, cultural ecology, environmental psychology, geography, and sociology (Brehm et al., 2004). Tuan (1974) is a human geographer who explored a sense of place at the earliest stage of this concept, asserting that there is an affective bond between people and place. Relph (1976) further expanded on Tuan's idea by focusing on people's identity with regard to place. Building on these early scholars, many similar terms such as place identity (Proshansky, 1978), place attachment (Gerson et al., 1977), place dependence (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981), sense of place (Hummon, 1992), and sense of community (Sarason, 1974) were coined. However, because of similarities and overlaps of these terms, there is no universality in terms of its name, definition and methodological approach (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Perkins, 2006)

Scannell & Gifford (2010) proposed the tripartite model of place attachment (Figure 2). The three dimensions of place attachment are person, process and place. The person dimension states that place attachment happens at both individual and collective levels by relating the place with personal memories and cultural or symbolic meanings respectively. The place dimension is about the place itself and it has social and physical place attachment originating from social connections and a sense of belongingness at different geographic scales (ex. household, neighborhood, and city levels etc.). The process or psychological dimension talks about how individuals and groups relate to a place at affective, cognitive and behavioral levels.

The affective place attachment underscores the emotional connection to a place or emotional bond with a place that satisfies human needs and well-being. People feel this affective attachment when experiencing displacement or relocation due to a natural disaster, war or migration (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Besides experienced displacement, future concerns of potential impacts from an anticipated war or ecological destructions such as biodiversity loss and change in landscape due to climate change can also activate the affective place attachment (Guy Jackson et al., 2022; Nicolosi & Corbett, 2018). The cognitive place attachment signifies memories, beliefs, meaning and knowledge that people associate with a place. At the cognitive level, people consider the connection to a place as a foundation of a self-identification (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The behavioral place attachment is an action expressed by proximity-maintaining behavior. An effort to return home due to homesick or a religious pilgrimage are examples of the behavioral attachment to a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

In this paper, I employ the process dimension of the tripartite model of place attachment because one of the focuses of the research is perceptions of social, ecological, and cultural impacts of the U.S. military where the reflection of the idea: Mālama ʻāina and reciprocal relationship with land could be observed among Kānaka Maoli. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of my research to examine the all three-dimensions of the place attachment model. Instead, I fill the person and place dimension of the model with collective identity (3.2) (Figure 3) to bring the aspects of social movement (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, 2018; Tarrow, 1998) in order to better analyze the role of collective actions for demilitarization in Hawaii.

It is worth noting that people are usually unaware of their place attachment until the place is disrupted (Podeschi & Howington, 2011). This means that those who experience strong place attachment are feeling that their important places are being threatened for the rapid

development, anticipated war and increasing environmental degradation (Podeschi & Howington, 2011; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). As people in Hawaii have been under the threats of the multi-scale impacts due to the U.S military presence, the application of place attachment is appropriate.

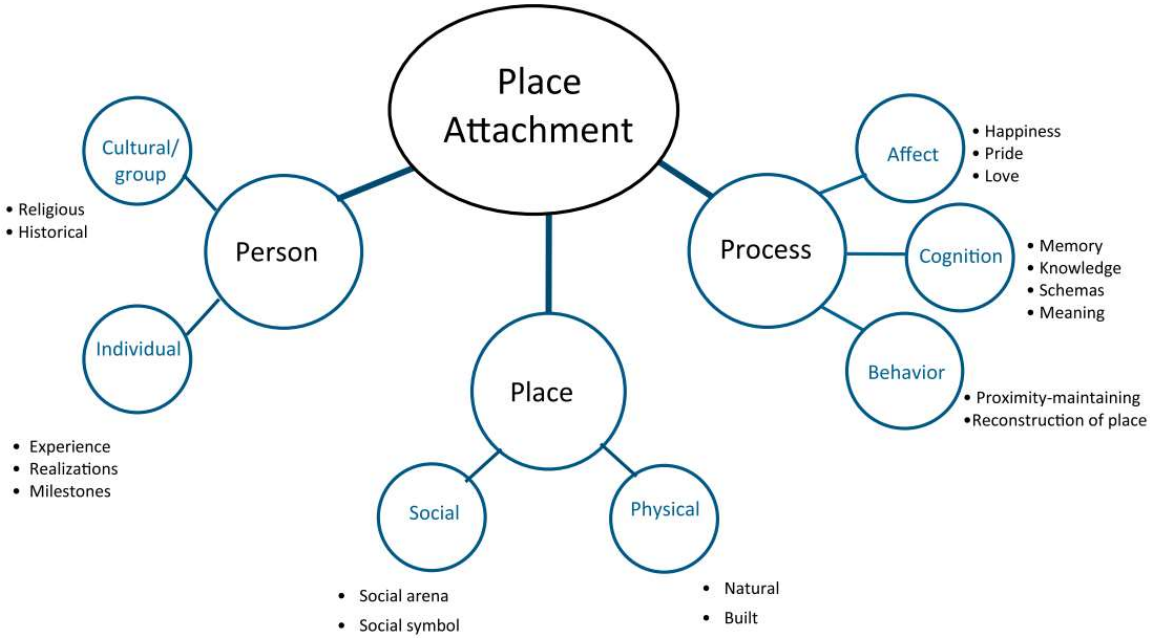

Figure 2. The tripartite model of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

3.2 Collective Identity

The collective identity is a concept mostly used in social movement theory to understand how social movements emerge and maintain their movements (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, 2018). Same as place attachment, there is no single definition of collective identity. For example, Polletta & Jasper (2001) define collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (p. 285). Whereas Taylor & Whittier (1992) define collective identity as "the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (p. 105). Despite these

differences in the definition of collective identity, what scholars agree is that in order for movements to arise and sustain, some forms of shared purpose, reciprocal bonds, and interactions among participants are necessary (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, 2018; Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

To accommodate social and physical aspects of place attachment (3.1), this paper uses collective identity by Alberto Melucci (1995). For Melucci (1995), collective identity refers to "an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place" (p.44). He also emphasizes the importance of a certain degree of emotional commitment as well as a network of active relationships through interaction, negotiation, and opposition in establishing collective identity (Melucci, 1995). To put it differently, the formation of collective identity is fluid and relational, constantly interplaying with personal identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Flesher Fominaya (2010) stresses the importance of the ability to distinguish self among collectives. This is crucial because members do not necessarily have to agree on everything - ideologies, beliefs, interests, or goals – to come together and take collective actions (Flesher Fominaya, 2018). Since people involved in the demilitarization movements in Hawaii are multicultural and multi-ethnic, it is vital to be aware of these differences.

Expressions of collective identity can be seen in cultural forms including but not limited to names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, and clothing (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). According to Taylor & Whittier (1992), there are three constituents of collective identity: the sense of "we", the sense of consciousness, and direct opposition to the dominant system. The sense of "we" simply means that individuals see themselves as part of an organization. The sense of

consciousness indicates awareness of participants' social and political positionality against the dominant group. Lastly the direct opposition to the dominant system involves emergence of counterinstitution, opposing narratives, and values as forms of resistance (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). It is suitable to use collective identity as Kānaka Maoli value the reciprocal relationship with 'āina or land and they are currently fighting for the demilitarization (McGregor et al., 2003).

3.3 Power and Hegemony

Power affects individuals' daily practices and understandings of reality by establishing standards and norms that individuals are expected to act and comply in certain ways without any apparent coercion (Nash, 2010; Svarstad et al., 2018). The power operates underneath of consciousness; thus, without being questioned, it shapes what individuals consider to be right and wrong (normalization of ways of thinking such as their perceptions, beliefs, and preferences) (Berberoglu, 2017; Foucault, 1973, 1995; Lukes, 1974). Gramsci (1971) argues that the normalization of the certain ideologies – social, cultural and moral values - is achieved through hegemony. The hegemony is attempts of the dominant groups to control and shape what's real in the society without necessarily relying on the coercive power (Berberoglu, 2017; Carnoy, 1984).

Gramsci (1971) and Mills (1956) point out that the military gains hegemony by wielding a disproportionate decisive political and economic power. The military exerts power to manipulate civilians' mind by molding public opinion in favor of the military's viewpoint (Mills, 1956). However, where there is a power, there is a resistance (Nash, 2010). A counter-hegemony challenges and questions the hegemony (Adkin, 2022) and to counter the ruling hegemony, the subordinate groups need to gain their consciousness through active participation in their collective organizations (Berberoglu, 2017; Tarrow, 1998). Nash (2010) claims that the collective

will in social movement is the main way to make unspoken problems visible and politicize the dominant views. Adding to this claim, Tarrow (1998) argues that under certain conditions, collective actors can perform enormous effects against the powerful groups. One way is finding political opportunities where there are changes in the political environments that give opportunities and incentives for people to participate in collective actions (Tarrow, 1998). Since the U.S. military holds power and hegemony over people in Hawaii, it is best to investigate the political opportunities as a means of counter-hegemony.

3.4 Operationalization of theories

Drawing on concepts and theories mentioned, I adapted the tripartite model of place attachment for this research. My model (Figure 3) explains that place attachment and collective identity are intertwined concepts that could evolve into counter-hegemony. In this paper, I use this model to examine what drives the activists to engage in the demilitarization activities and how the counter-hegemony emerges.

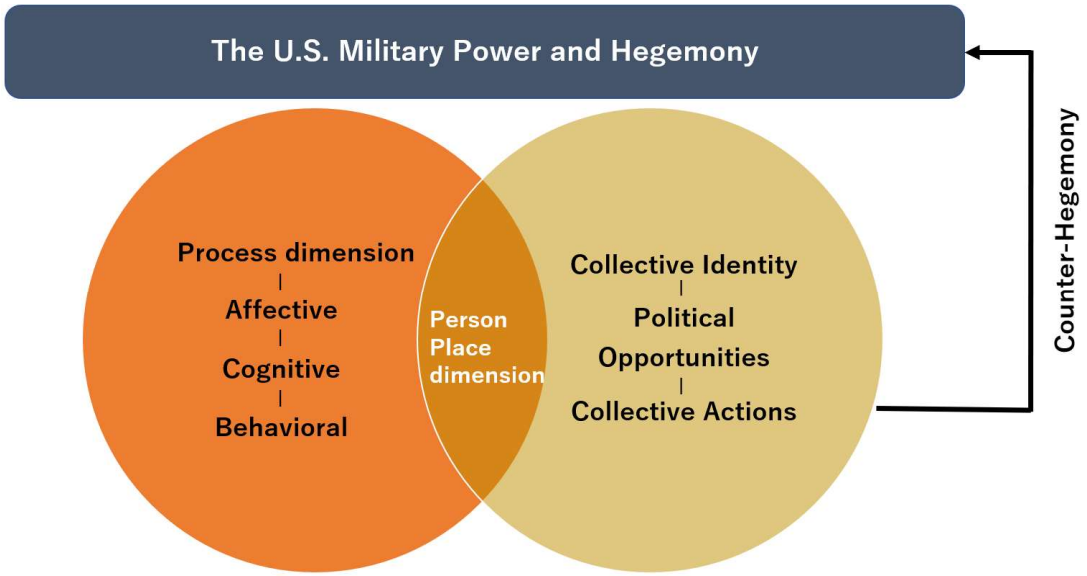

Figure 3. A visualization of the relationality of place attachment, collective identity, political opportunities, power, hegemony and counter-hegemony applied in this research. (Made by author)

4. Methodology

In this section, I outline the methodology of this research. First, I describe the case study research design (4.1), which is followed by the description of the case (4.1.1). I then describe the criteria of and brief explanations of selected interviewees and organizations (4.2), and thereafter I outline how I used semi-structured online interviews to collect data. Subsequently, I introduce the data analysis (4.4), ethical consideration (4.5) and finally conclude this section with my positionality and limitation in the end (4.6). With this methodological approach, this paper attempts to generate deep insights concerning the social, ecological, and cultural impacts of the U.S. military activities in Hawaii.

4.1 A case study research design

In order to explore the ongoing social, ecological, and cultural issues associated with the U.S military in Hawaii, I chose a case study approach. The case study was suitable as it allows to conduct an intense and detailed examination of a single case (Bryman, 2016). While the selected case cannot usually represent other similar cases (Yin, 2014), it still helps to shed light on a particular setting that may provide something useful in other similar contexts. The purpose of the case study is to use the comprehensive data from a particular site to develop a theoretical analysis and further advance conceptual ideas that could be applied to other similar contexts (Bryman, 2016). For these reasons, the case study is suitable in answering the research questions.

4.1.1 The case: Hawaii

Hawaii was chosen purposively according to their history and the ongoing debates over the U.S. military activities for the following three reasons. First, because of its isolation from any continental landmass, the Hawaiian archipelago is home to a large number of endemic fauna

and flora that are only found in Hawaii (Mālama Mākua, 2012). Second, Hawaii's unique ecosystem, existing cultural, and geographic features allows to observe human-environment relationship with relatively limited available resources which could provide a hint to address environmental-related issues in other contexts (Beamer et al., 2023; Kueffer & Kinney, 2017; Singh et al., 2020). Lastly, on the Pacific Island region is disproportionately vulnerable to climate change impacts and land, sea, and biodiversity are being threatened while they are the foundation of cultural, psychological and spiritual well-being of Pacific Islanders (Guy Jackson et al., 2022; McNamara et al., 2021). Climate change and the U.S. military activities would only exacerbate immense losses already incurred due to colonization, land confiscation, and globalization (Pearson et al., 2021). All reasons listed above makes Hawaii a suitable case to study.

4.2 Selection of interviewees and organizations

The selection of interviewees was carefully made to match with the research questions and the research topic. I chose nine organizations that have been actively engaging in demilitarization, social and environmental justice, and decolonization in Hawaii. I used Instagram, Facebook, email, LinkedIn and website inquiry to reach out to the selected organizations. After a couple of initial interviews, the interviewees provided me with referrals with the contact information and hence, I ended up using the snowball sampling to recruit more participants. The interviewees kindly shared their stories regarding their experiences and opinions regarding the U.S. military in Hawaii. However, it is important to mention that what they shared with me are personal views and it is not necessarily representing opinions of their organizations.

I purposefully selected my research participants to be Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists in the organizations (Table 1) to observe different perspectives and how collective identity arises.

Besides this reason, it is crucial to amplify the voice of marginalized and under-represented groups as there is a lack of research focused on minority, marginalized, or indigenous populations (Nicolosi & Corbett, 2018).

Table 1. Descriptions of the organizations and the interviewees' affiliation.

Respondent	Organization	Descriptions
Interviewee 1	Sierra Club of Hawai'i	Working to advance climate solutions, act for justice, and protect Hawai'i's lands, water, air, people and wildlife
Interviewee 2	Kākoʻo Haleakalā	Working to save indigenous species, end military facilities' lease renewal, and booste community-based management
Interviewee 3	MĀLAMA MĀKUA	A Kanaka Maoli-led organization with a mission to bring about the return of sacred Mākua from the U.S. military for culturally appropriate use
Interviewee 4	Hawai'i Peace and Justice	Working toward a liberated world throught the promotion of peace, abolition, demilitarization, climate and social justice
Interviewee 5	O'ahu Water Protectors	Working to shut down the Navy's Red Hill fuel facility
Interviewee 6	Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana	Working to perpetuate Aloha ʻĀina throughout our islands through cultural, educational, and spiritual activities that heal and revitalize the cultural and natural resources on Kahoʻolawe
Interviewee 7	Earth Justice	A nonprofit environmental law organization, working to pretect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy and to combat climate change
Interviewee 8	Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation	Working to perpetuate the rights, customs and practis that strenghten Native Hawaiian identity and culture through legal and other advocacy
Interviewee 9	MĀLAMA MĀKUA	Same as Interviewee 3
Interviewee 10	Women's Voices Women Speak	Working to demilitarize by reporting on how issues of militarism and colonialism affect Native Hawaiian peoples specifically women
Interviewee 11	Earth Justice	Same as Interviewee 7
Interviewee 12	MĀLAMA MĀKUA	Same as Interviewee 3

4.3 Semi-structured online interviews

This research used semi-structured online interviews to collect empirical material, where a list of questions was prepared before the interviews. I prepared an interview guide to assist the interviews. The interview guide is consisted of three themes: 1) socio-ecological impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii, 2) worldview toward nature, ʻāina (land), water, and mālama ʻāina (care for land), and 3) experiences in organizations advocating for demilitarization (Appendix 1). This ensured me to cover the relevant topics for my research while still allowing the interviewees to express and elaborate their thoughts and opinions (Bryman, 2016). I chose the online interviews

because of its flexibility in terms of geographical barriers enabling me to conduct the interviews from Sweden, since I could not travel to Hawaii for practical and financial reasons. All in all, a total of 12 interviews - 11 semi-structured online interviews over zoom and one additional email interview - were carried out from March 4th to until March 17th. 3 of these were with women and the other 9 with men. 6 of interviewees were Kānaka Maoli activists and the other 6 were non-native activists. The age range was between 21 to 79. The interviews lasted between 45 - 1h and 45 minutes but on average it lasted approximately about 1 hour.

4.4 Data process and analysis

The data analysis was conducted after the empirical data was collected. Each interview was recorded via Zoom that later was transcribed by importing the audio files to Otter Voice Meeting Notes (from here on "Otter"), which makes use of artificial intelligence to transcribe. As interviews involve transcription, coding, and analysis that are time-consuming (Bryman, 2016), the use of Otter saved time. The Otter mostly transcribed the audio files accurately with me fixing the minor mistakes (For example, almost all Hawaiian terms, the service did not transcribe correctly). For the data coding, I used the Microsoft Excel.

As a qualitative analysis approach, I adopted a thematic analysis method by Braun & Clarke (2006) (Figure 4). By conducting a thematic analysis, it enabled the themes most frequently appeared in the interviews to stand out (Bryman, 2016). Following the thematic analysis process (Figure 4), the data was gathered, transcribed and then repeatedly read. Secondly, the initial codes were generated. In this process of the thematic analysis, both a "concept-driven" coding approach (coding based on previous literatures, studies, my own intuition) and a "data-driven" approach (coding based on empirical data from interviews) were applied to code the 12 interviews (Gibbs, 2007). Thirdly, the themes were identified by categorizing topics stood out

during the interviews. This was done on the Excel. Fourthly, the themes were redefined by re-coding and identifying subthemes. Fifthly, the themes were re-evaluated so that they fit in a broader picture of the research. Lastly, the data was used in findings and discussion sections of this paper.

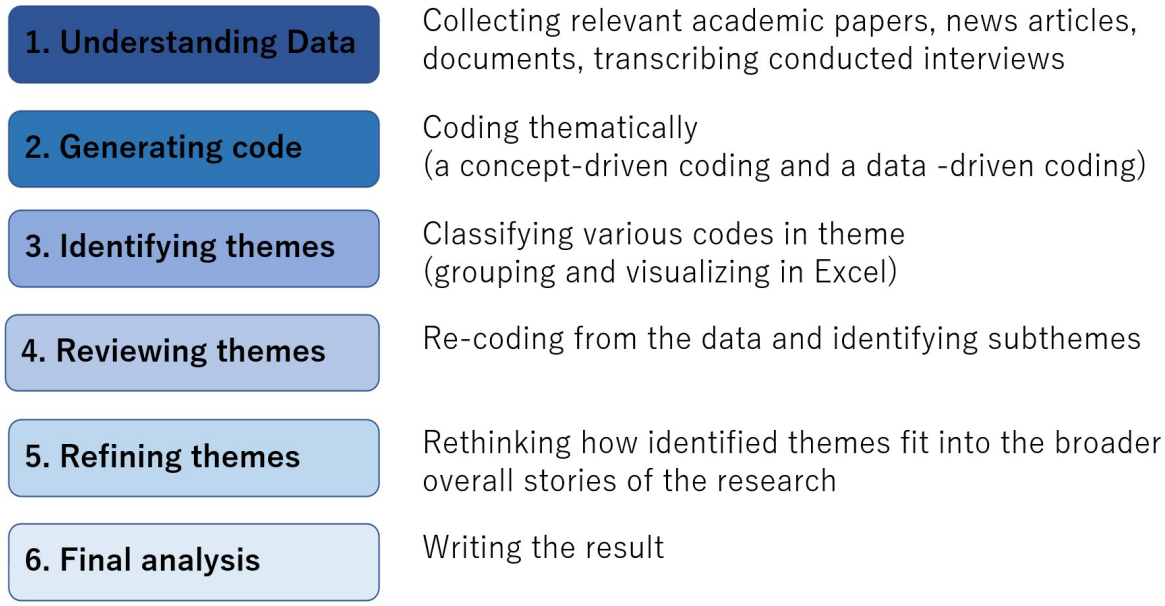

Figure 4. Six steps in thematic data analysis showing the research processes used in this research. The figure is created by author and adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006).

4.5 Ethical consideration

Before carrying out the online interviews, I sent out an information letter about the research and a consent form to all interview participants (Appendix 2 and 3). Following the ethical guideline established by The Swedish Research Council (2017), interviewees were notified and agreed that they will be anonymous in the presentation of the research outcome, the interview will be recorded, their participation is completely voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I collected the informed consents from the interview

participants either by interviewees signing the document or by going through it together and having an oral consent recorded at the beginning of the interview.

4.6 My positionality and limitations

As a self-reflective research process (Wittmayer & Schäpke, 2014), it is important to note that how my positionality – gender, ethnicity, my own value, background, and experience - affects how I collect, analyze and interpret data (England, 1994). I am a Japanese man who has seen the U.S militaries issues in Okinawa, Japan. I have studied in Hawaii as an exchange student during my bachelor between 2017 and 2018. During my study in Hawaii, I took a Hawaiian studies course where I learnt about Hawaiian history, culture, religion, and traditional taro farming. However, it has been a while ago and my understanding is partial; therefore, I must admit that my own limited knowledge of Hawaiian culture and lack of understanding in Hawaiian language limits nuances of Hawaiian terms when being translated into English. I also acknowledge that I lack Hawaiian epistemology as Lynette Paglinawan (1997 as cited in Meyer, 2001) states:

> One has to experience it […] one has to be open to be bombarded by the environment, by the 'aina, by nature, and one has to be willing to delve into living an aspect of the way our forefathers lived in order to be able to get a glimpse of what it is to be Hawaiian (p.129).

Meyer (2014) further claims that "Knowledge comes from direct experience […] a knowledge ethic shaped by the needs of place and people" (p.96). Due to my lack of Hawaiian epistemology, the data collection approach, the data interpretation, and the data presentation may be influenced by my positionality.

5. Findings

In this section, I present the findings of the research. In regard to the first research question, I identified housing insecurity, bombing, mass live-firing, improper treatment of ammunition, depleted uranium, PFAS, unexplored ordinance (UXO), water pollution, human health, sexual violence and dominant narrative of national security as social impacts, followed by limiting access to sacred sites and a self-determination, impeding religious and cultural practices and breaking off traditional way of lifestyle and genealogical connections as cultural impacts and lastly, threats to indigenous endangered fauna and flora as ecological impacts of the U.S. military presence in Hawaii, as perceived by activists (5.1). In regard to the second research question, activists engage in community organization, legal approaches such as litigation and lawsuit, restoration program, study and work with women and indigenous peoples, and storytelling to address these issues (5.2).

5.1 Social, cultural and ecological impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii [RQ1]

5.1.1 Housing issues

As nearly all interviewees raised the rising rent cost as one of the social issues due to the U.S. military presence in Hawaii. One interviewee said that the U.S. military personnels living off the base get the cost-of-living allowance (Interviewees 3). The military people stationed in Hawaii get significant amount of housing support (3,000 to 4,000 USD a month) on rent (Interviewee1). This drives up the cost of living for local families making it impossible to stay on the island simply because they cannot afford to (Interviewees 5 and 7). Consequently, the U.S. military contributes to the issue of houselessness and homelessness and many Hawaiians are disproportionately impacted because they rely on rental housings for their accommodation

(Interviewee 1, 2, and 9). One interviewee shared his thought on this matter that “rising cost of housing, which directly displaces Hawaiians and puts them into poverty puts them into the houselessness and then pushes them out of Hawaii” (Interviewees 2).

Furthermore, since the military personnels don’t have to pay the state taxes (Interviewee 9), they invest their housing stipend to buy properties (Interviewee 1) that further increasing the housing price in Hawaii while taking up and eliminating the availability of lands for native Hawaiians and local families (Interviewee 3).

It is important to emphasize the connection between the active involvement of the U.S. military to the illegal overthrow of Hawaii in 1893, declaration of the martial law after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the ongoing housing insecurity due to the U.S. military. Regarding this, one interview participant stated that:

> The U.S. bases are on traditional ancestral Hawaiian lands or Hawaii national lands, which should be returned to the original ancestors, the families and the descendants of those ancestors whose lands were condemned and taken away for these military bases (Interviewee 6).

The confiscation of lands stemmed from the expansion of the U.S. military exacerbates the displacement of native Hawaiians and alienate them from ‘āina or land (Interviewee 6 and 9). Although there is a housing program for native Hawaiians called “A Hawaiian Home Land”, many native Hawaiians are on the waiting list (Interviewee 8). He continued to explain that there is a designated area for the house slot, which was a former military training site in Waimea on the island of Hawaii, but “there is no house because the federal government won’t sign off because of the UXO” (Interviewee 8).

5.1.2 Continuous military training and waste treatment issues

Several interviewees claimed that whether there are currently active military trainings or there were prior military trainings, their impacts remain enormous. For example, at PTA on the island of Hawaii, at Makua Valley on the island of Oahu, and on the island of Kaho'olawe, there are a bunch of UXO that prohibit people from accessing to sacred sites (Interviewee 3, 6, 11). On the island of Oahu, the wastes of the military' bombing, chemical contamination, jet fuel, contaminated diesels and ammunition are dumped into Waimanalo Gulch sanitary landfill where there are native Hawaiian communities nearby (Interviewee 3).

One of the most egregious examples is PTA. There has been an incredible amount of bombing and contiguous live-firing on a very regular basis (Interviewee 2). One interviewee stated that the state is leasing four sites to the U.S. military until 2029: "30,000 acres at Pōhakuloa, and about 800 acres at Makua Valley just $1 for 65 years each […]" (Interviewee 4). Another research participant further explained the problem of the long-term lease: "The state in the last 50 years or so have never really inspected the property to make sure that the military is complying with the lease terms, which requires cleanups after every exercise, they've done very minimal inspections there" (Interviewee 8).

However, the reality is that it is almost impossible to clean up the military's mess because it requires tremendous amount of money and also the scattered UXO limit the cleaning endeavors (Interviewee 9, 11, and 12). One of the interviewees stated that: "The best thing that could happen is that the, you know, the volcano erupts, and it runs over all of the training range area, and that will be probably the best way […] for that contamination to dissipate" (Interviewee 11).

Under the lease terms, the state has a fiduciary duty as a trustee to oblige the U.S. military to follow the lease conditions and not to abuse the land. The use of lands is supposed to benefit the public and native Hawaiians as the state law says that 20% of money generated from leasing the lands need to go to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (Interviewee 8). However, because the U.S. military is leasing these lands for $1 a year, the publics are not benefitting at all (Interviewee 8). Rather these lands are completely destroyed from bombing and the military trainings. The state of Kaho'olawe signifies how difficult it is to restore the lands from the military degradation. After the military bombing stopped in October of 1990 and they withdrew entirely from the island of Kaho'olawe in 2004 (Interviewee 6) with continuous cleaning efforts made afterwards, it is said that only a 10^{th} of the island is considered safe (Interviewee 4).

5.1.3 Water pollution and human health issues

The U.S. military presence also has repercussions on polluting aquifer for drinking and daily use and thus, adversely affecting health of residents in Hawaii. Red Hill is a good example regarding this matter. As described in 1.0, the 14,000 gallons of fuel leaked in late November of 2021 was one of the outrageous incidents. One interviewee described the leak as: “That resulted in about 100,000 people being unable to drink the water that was coming out of their taps in their homes or take showers or wash their clothes for about a four-month period of time” (Interviewee 7).

PFAS or forever chemicals are found from the pollutants of Red Hill and these are extremely toxic (Interviewee 1). This implies that where there’s a military facility, that could be a potential for PFAS contamination. It is further stressed that what’s happening at Red Hill is implicated with the destruction in Guam and Okinawa through the military apparatus (Interviewees 4). The jet fuel, depleted uranium and other toxic chemicals spill into the aquifer from Red Hill is clearly showing what’s happening at the majority of installations across Hawaii (Interviewee 2). Several

interviewees pointed out that a lot of health issues – headaches, nausea, cancer, reproductive issues, neurological issues, skin rashes, dead pets, lose the sense of balance, thyroid diseases, and throat issues – are being reported due to drinking fuel laden water (Interviewee 1, 2, 10 and 11). One interviewee explained the situation caused by Red Hill as:

> The harm that actually transcends time. And a place like Red Hill is just an existential threat to our life on this island right now. That's both past, it's a present crisis. And it will continue to be a future problem, because we still don't know what happened to all those millions of gallons that have leaked out over the years, where it's going, how it's behaving underground, and it could still surface as a problem in the future (Interviewee 4).

However, almost all interviewees understood that it is very difficult to know how far the contamination spread because when the U.S. military was asked to investigate the influence of the contamination, "they excavated the sites and backfill with clean soil and then covered them with asphalt" (Interviewee 1). Another interviewee claimed that, "It took people getting hurt for the politicians and the military officials to take this seriously" (Interviewee 11).

Throughout the interview, it became clear the importance of having access to clean water. One participant claimed that "Our water aquifer is what gives us life. We can't live on these islands without water" (Interviewee 6). Another interviewee stressed that:

> In Hawaiian society, the word for wealth is wai wai. wai means water. […] to us, a community's wealth was only worth as much as water was clean, […] that was at a core human level globally, you need water to survive (Interviewee 2).

As can be seen, there is no doubt that the U.S. military in Hawaii is threatening the lives of people by polluting the major water resources in Hawaii.

5.1.4 Solicitation and sexual violence issues

Only a few interviewees mentioned the relationship between sexual assaults and the U.S. military. One of them explained that native Hawaiian women and girls are more likely to be the victims of sex trafficking, being raped and being murdered (Interviewee 1). Since the army recruits from poor communities, namely Hawaiian communities, their socio-economic status make them vulnerable in the economies structured around militarism (Interviewee 1, 9 and Interviewee 10). The interviewees said that prior to a small progress made with the publication of reports regarding missing and murdered native Hawaiian women and girls by the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, the military was not included as a structural part of the problem whether it's domestic violence, solicitation, rape and other kinds of sexual trauma (Interviewee 1 and 4). As a result, it was analyzed broadly that men are causing problems on women (Interviewee 1 and 4).

Furthermore, as a nature of the military that the majority of them are men perpetuates certain ideas of what masculinity is like that send them backwards of having non-violent men in the society (Interviewee 10). That in turn aggravates the objectification of women as sexual labor, and sexual exploitation (Interviewee 4). That is how the military creates conditions where men are told to hold a gun, "then you are entitled to sexual services of those around you" (Interviewee 10). In Hawaii, women's right to their reproductive health, and abortion has been maintained but it is under pressure. On this matter, one interviewee remarked that:

> The U.S. is now going through this phase where, you know, the woman's right to an abortion access, specifically reproductive right is you know, being eroded, right, like abortion isn't accessible and is interrupted in the majority of the continental U.S. (Interviewee 11).

It shows that Hawaiian women and girls become particularly vulnerable during the RIMPAC because the number of military violence and sex trafficking escalates due to increased demand (Interviewee 10).

5.1.5 National security as the dominant narrative

Many interviewees pointed out that national security justifies what the U.S. military does. One interviewee explained how much influences the U.S. military has in Hawaii's economy and politics as follows:

> Economy is so distorted by supporting the military and the military pumps millions of dollars into the economy and provides jobs and business opportunities for so many of our businesses. It's still at the same time as a drain on our water resources, our ocean resources or natural resources. And it prevents our economy from becoming more fully independent (Interviewee 6).

This statement shows how much the military is embedded in across Hawaii that makes it very difficult for people to imagine an economy and a society without the military dependence (Interviewee 10). Some interviewees stated that it was impossible to talk how to practically demilitarize Hawaii because Red Hill was categorized as critical national security infrastructure (Interviewee 1,7,9,10 and 11). Throughout the interviews, I found that the loss of Hawaiian sovereignty due to the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii has the cascading effects of

social, cultural and ecological impacts. Moreover, it can be said that the control of civilians' perceptions toward the U.S. military is structurally shaped as the military is portrayed as a way to get an education and leave the poor Hawaiian communities to travel (Interviewee 9 and 10). In addition, because the U.S. military provides job, for many Hawaiians serving for the U.S. military was a way to demonstrate becoming a good American (Interviewee 3 and 9). As a result, it has created retired soldiers who show a sense of loyalty to the U.S. military, supporting their presence in Hawaii (Interviewee 12).

Furthermore, several interviewees stated that the power of the U.S. military is reflected in the legal systems. One of them stressed that generally a lot of judges are inclined to give the benefit to the military if it is necessary for national security (Interview 7). He continued that:

> The Endangered Species Act says, if the Secretary of Defense says something's necessary for national security, the military can do it, even if it would drive the species to extinction. The Marine Mammal Protection Act says, even if it would damage the Marine Mammal population, if it's necessary for national security, they can exempt themselves from the law for a period of some years (Interview 7).

Under these broken laws, when the U.S. military is required to do environmental and cultural impact assessment, they sometimes hire archaeologists and consultants that do their job tailored to the interests of the military (Interviewee 4). This is how the U.S. military prioritizes to protect national security while cultural and ecological conservation are neglected. Moreover, the majority of interviewees said that the Russian invasion to Ukraine is ramping up the security concerns in Hawaii for potential conflicts with China and North Korea. As a result, the narrative of national security strengthens the necessity of the U.S. military to be the world's largest and

most well-funded military force to prepare and be ready for an anticipated war (Interviewee 7 and 11).

5.1.6 Restrictions of sacred sites and of self-determination

Kānaka Maoli interviewees expressed that they have been restricted to have access to sacred sites by the U.S. military. They further explained that all military destructions have started with the deprivation of self-determination and of Hawaiian sovereignty that are attributed from the illegal overthrow and occupation of Hawaii under the U.S. military. To explain how these facts have had negative consequences on Hawaiians and the islands, one interviewee claimed that:

> The loss of sovereignty over Hawaii by the Hawaiian Kingdom and by Native Hawaiians is […]one of the fundamental contradictions of the military presence in Hawaii, which led to the loss of control over land use. The destruction of sacred places and environmental resources led to the displacement of Hawaiians from the land. It led to the Hawaii becoming a target in war. […] It prevents Hawaii from having full decolonization and self-determination (Interviewee 1).

By occupying the stolen lands from the Kingdom of Hawaii (Interviewee 4), the U.S. military has been excluding Kānaka Maoli from accessing to their lands and denying the rights to exercise their culture and sovereignty (Interviewee 3 and 4). At Makua Valley, for example, people are only allowed to access the sacred valley twice a month with conditions of getting a permission from the U.S. military and accessing the site with military securities (Interviewee 3 and 9). These are the ways to suppress Hawaiian culture and limit Hawaiians from accessing to their sacred sites (Interviewee 1, 3, 12).

It is crucial to understand how the U.S. military played a major role in the referendum in 1959. As described in 2.5, there were only two options: to remain as a territory or become a state. A point is that the military soldiers were allowed to vote for the election in 1959 (Interviewee 9) and there were no choices of becoming a sovereign nation or independent (Interviewee 3 and 9).

This fact shaped a condition, a condition that is in favor of the U.S. military, allowing them to do whatever they want by exerting its illegal self-determination over Hawaiian Islands (Interviewee 5). This has resulted in the U.S. military taking up land and resources from Hawaiians and they have left with poisoned land, water, and environment (Interviewee 2, 3, 5, 10, 12). With regard to this, one of the interviewees remarked that "this is how a lot of the Hawaiians' significant areas have been treated, either exclusion, turning it into a dump, desecrating the cultural sites and eliminating our access" (Interviewee 3).

As demonstrated, there are many historical layers of the U.S. military influences. Among them, the illegal overthrow and the deprivation of the self-determination are the major causes of the ongoing negative consequences of the U.S. military.

5.1.7 Disruptions of religious and cultural practices

Limiting access to the sacred sites indicates disruptions of religious and cultural practices. Before the contact with the James Cook (See 2.2), there was a very intimate relationship between Kānaka Maoli and the land as a famous saying says that *"The land is chief and the people are servant"* (Interviewee 4,8 and 9). One interviewee explained how the Kumulipo, a creation chant in Hawaiian religion, describes that there is a deep sense of reciprocity with ʻāina or land for Hawaiians:

> If you look at the Kumulipo […] and other practices, it's pretty clear that cultural understanding is grounded in Kānaka Maoli's connection to their land, and as if 'āina […] is, like a living relative of yours, like an elder. […] And then if you poison, it's like posing your grandma (Interviewee 1).

This statement indicates that a lot of traditions and spiritual beliefs are informed by the Hawaiian chant (Interviewee 6). For example, the Makahiki celebration, which is dedicated to the Hawaiian god Lono (the god associated with fertility, rain and agriculture), was a way for Hawaiian ancestors called for rains to the god to stabilize and fertilize soils so that water and foods remain abundant for their survival (Interviewee 6).

For Hawaiians, 'āina is not just land and mālama is not just care. One of the interviewees described the deeper meaning of 'āina:

> 'Āina is the ancient word for ohana. And what that meant is that 'Āina is all living things. The air, the water, the plants, the bugs, the stones, and everything that lives there. And 'Āina mean, 'Āi is food. And na is everything. So the food that feeds all of us (Interviewee 3).

Besides Mālama 'āina means to take care of land so it feeds us, it also means that you have a responsibility to protect the islands (Interviewee 1,2,5,7, and 11). One interviewee elucidated:

> As Kānaka, but all people living here, we have a kuleana or responsibility to protect our resources. Mālama 'āina means to protect everything that all of the resources, be it the ocean, the land, the air […]. So you have a responsibility to provide stewardship over these resources, prevent them from contamination, help them be healthy, helpful, productive, reproductive, and what we call sustainable (Interviewee 6).

Stories of the interviewees explain that Hawaiian identity and cultural identity are strongly tied to the land.

5.1.8 Disregard of traditional way of lifestyles and genealogical connections

The expansion of the U.S. military in Hawaii has drastically transformed the economy, the agricultural system, and adversely affected genealogical connections with Hawaiian ancestors. Hawaiians were always self-sustaining before the contact with the West (Interviewee 2 and 6). One interviewee expanded on this matter:

> […] our relationship has drastically changed with ʻāina and with wai, with water in a way which we import, about 90% of our food and so transforming an economy in an agricultural system from 100% food security to almost zero, only 10% of the food that we grow here supports our population (Interviewee 2).

It shows that the food system is broken and agricultural lands are contaminated and occupied by the U.S. military. Two interviewees stated that the military's control over the lands and water system displaced Hawaiian communities to thrive because they could not fish and farm the way they used to do (Interviewee 1 and 2). One interviewee explained how resources were abundant:

> It was a sustainable community that could live off the land, had numerous springs to provide water, the stream was flowed, and the fishing was so abundant in the near shore […] they were able to really support their community very well (Interviewee 3).

However, the military trainings degrade and make Hawaiians unable to go places where they use to go hunting, fishing, and gathering (Interviewee 8). For example, the military conducts

amphibious vehicle trainings in the old fish ponds (Interviewee 5). Moreover, the pacific missile range facility on island of Kauai limits the fisherman's' access to fertile fishing grounds during the training because that are in the flight path of the missiles launched from the facility (Interviewee 11).

Interviews showed that not only has the military altered the food system in Hawaii but also destroyed the genealogical connections to Hawaiian ancestors. One of the interviewees stated that when the Kaneohe Marine Corp Base was built, the U.S. military dug up over 1500 bones and bodies of Hawaiian ancestors and they were not treated respectfully (Interviewee 6). Another interviewee underscored how important it is for Kānaka Maoli to keep ancestral connections:

> […] many Hawaiians believe that […] one of our creation stories is that the first thing that was created was the coral polyp. So it's not surprising that coral when it dies become sand. And it's also not surprising that Hawaiians significantly buried in sand. And it shows again, this circle of man, and land, and ʻāina, and how we come from the coral, and we get returned to it and become a part of it (Interview 8).

Therefore, the land is where their ancestors' burials exist. Since the burials disintegrate and turn into land, the land is your family because it is the bones of your family ancestors (Interviewee 2). One interviewee further elaborated that: "our connection to our Hawaiian lineage is through the land through the ocean, through natural resources. […] for many Hawaiians their relationship to the land is incredibly important to how they view themselves as Hawaiians" (Interviewee 8). Another interviewee claimed how horrible what the U.S. military has done to Hawaiians by saying: "removing them from those ancestral connections to land, you're

committing a form of cultural genocide, you're causing the erosion and deterioration of that cultural practice and knowledge" (Interviewee 4).

5.1.9 Threats to indigenous species and their habitats

Only a few interviewees brought up the ecological impacts. The U.S. military has been threatening ecosystems, marine creatures, and endangered fauna and flora in Hawaii. As described in 4.1.1, Hawaii is rich in biodiversity and indigenous species. Two interview participants claimed that the military's exercises also affect marine mammals such as whales and dolphins. Sonar training disrupts their signaling abilities; thus, affecting foraging, reproduction and communication capabilities (Interviewee 1 and 6). During the RIMPAC, navies use decommissioned ships as their target and blow them up with no clean-up obligation (Interviewee 10). They also conduct large-scale amphibious assault landings that destroy reefs and marine habitats (Interviewee 10). Moreover, anything flushed out from the ships and UXO that leak toxic to water that eventually leads to ocean pollute ocean (Interviewee 6 and 12). This is how these explosive trainings destroy and diminish populations of marine species and endangered sea turtles (Interviewee 1 and 7).

Two interviewees told how the military changed the landscape at Makua Training Site, damaging native forests and endangered species. One of them stated that:

> The military has had so many fires at Makua, it has changed the environment from a forest to a grassland. And as the grasses burned and burned up into the endangered habitat. So not only the habitats are destroyed, but also the endangered species are destroyed (Interviewee 3).

Furthermore, several interviewees explained that Hawaiian people have spiritual connections with animals and plants because they are considered as their families' amakua, or family god that originated as deified ancestors (Interviewee 7,9 and 12). One of them shared that "all the living things here, people have connections with, so you hear about your family guardians being sharks, turtles or owls, those are sort of the famous ones, but bones in some families were considered to be family guardians" (Interviewee 9)

From the interviews, it showed that ecological impacts and cultural impacts of the U.S. military are interwoven.

5.2 Means to address the social, cultural, and ecological impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii [RQ2]

The interviewees expressed multiple means to deal with the social, cultural and ecological impacts of the U.S. military in Hawaii including community organization (Interviewee1), legal approaches such as litigation and lawsuit (Interviewee 1,2,3,6,7, and 11), restoration program (Interviewee 4 and 12), study and work with women and indigenous peoples (Interviewee 4), and storytelling (Interviewee 11). What I found common as cores for propelling their motivations into actions is that they share the same values and objectives. Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists want demilitarization and restorative justice in pursuit of reclaiming Hawaii' independent sovereignty, stolen lands back, and self-determination for better resources use. Beside this, how they decide actions is solely grounded in their reciprocal connection with land and ancestors that are passed down from Kūpuna or elderlies. One interviewee stated that "your kūpuna, your elders give the guidance and everybody works together collectively for the benefit of the island" (Interviewee 6). Ultimately, the guidance from 'āina or land where their ancestral bones are buried is placed at a center of actions. One of the interviewees shared:

> […] ʻĀina wants the restoration, ʻĀina wants the stream is back, ʻĀina wants our native forests back so it can call the rain, and the native species can multiply and thrive again. That helped give us the vision, but also help give us a guide and a pathway to follow. That wasn't us, you know, it wasn't manmade it was the land who was telling us how to do it and what to do (Interviewee 3).

By sharing these understanding together, the concrete measures have been taken. At Makua Valley, for example, the U.S. military was sued in 1999 because of continuous negligence of cleaning up training wastes and lack of consideration on the environmental and cultural impacts (Interviewee 3,7,9 and 12). In this lawsuit, the U.S. military was asked to conduct an environmental impact assessment with a condition if they don't complete by 2004, they cannot conduct live-fire trainings at Makua Valley (Interviewee 3 and 7). As a result of this, with very limited trainings between 2001 and 2004, no single bullet was shot afterward because the military did not complete the assessment (Interviewee 7). This is one of the cases where the limited access to the sacred site for religious and cultural practices has been guaranteed.

It is also important to note that after the U.S. military stopped the live-fire trainings at Makua Valley, the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan from October of 2001 and in Iraq from March of 2003 with Hawaiian soldiers trained including at Makua Training Site (Interviewee 7 and 9). One interviewee explained how this fact became an opportunity to prove what the military claims for the sake of national security no longer makes sense:

> The war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq continued for more than a decade after that, with Hawaii based soldiers, being perfectly well trained without ever firing a bullet at Makua. And so, the rhetoric that they had in 1998, which said this is essential to national

security, they couldn't, the facts on the ground wouldn't back it up anymore (Interview 7).

Another recent case is at Red Hill. Advocates' sense of solidarity and emotional connectedness to shut down Red Hill are expressed by (Figure 5) as well as by a following statement:

> Ola l Ka Wai means water is life has been coined as a slogan for the Red Hill movement in itself. But when you remove one word, Ola Ka Wai, water itself is life. Then you begin to respect water for its right to exist with or without the human existence. And that is a different spiritual level. So for many of us, we fight for the existence of water in itself, not only because we depend on it, but because it has the right to remain uncontaminated (Interviewee 2).

Figure 5. An illustration of a slogan "Ola I Ka Wai" (Water is Life) used in Red Hill Shutdown movement. It has been used in social media to tell what's happening at Red Hill. Reproduced by permissions from Shar Tui'asoa @punkyaloha and Jun Ono @junxjo.

One interviewee explained that by sharing the same goal, people are empowered to join the movement to let their voices be heard and to apply their own powers, networks and strengths to change the status quo and shutdown Red Hill (Interviewee 1). It was also acknowledged among the interviewees that people need to be a part of a broader social movement because it is very difficult to do on one's own (Interviewee 2,3,4,6,8,9, 10 and 11). The power of working in solidarity and collaboration is demonstrated by interviewees that they could have not been able to make the secretary of defense announce to defuel by July 2024 and shutdown Red Hill eventually without the broad mobilization of various sectors in Hawaii (Interviewee 4 and 9).

This fact explains that the common-sense notion that the military is necessary for protecting citizens is falling apart (Interviewee 7,10 and11). One of the interviewees stressed that:

> Red Hill was real game changer in terms of the politics of the military in Hawaii. […] it turned 180 […] there's been a huge distrust of the military. […] The whole attitude has changed from one where the political structure was very supportive of the military to where it's very questioning, there's a lot of pushbacks about the military's lack of transparency and honesty (Interviewee 7).

Several interviewees additionally described that knowing there were generations of resistance and there will be generations after the current generation continuing to resist gives them Kuleana or responsibilities and Mana or sacred power to perpetually resist against the U.S. military (Interviewee 2, 10 and 12). Moreover, it is also stated that organizations have institutional powers with necessary infrastructure (Interviewee 4) where advocates can surround themselves with like-minded activists, and feel partnerships that help them keep going (Interviewee 3,8,9 and 11).

6. Discussion

Section 3.3 points out that the military exerts power to influence the public opinions and how civilians understand the world, and thus, maintain their hegemony. My findings showed that the U.S. military have caused a variety of the social, ecological and cultural impacts throughout the history of illegal overthrow and under the name of national security. In the following sections, I discuss how the military power and hegemony prevailed the normalization of the military presence in Hawaii (6.1). In 6.2, I bring my model (3.4) and discuss how place attachment, collective identity, political opportunities, and counter-hegemony are reflected in activists' statements.

6.1 Normalization of the U.S. military presence through power and hegemony

As shown in the findings section (5.1), the social, cultural, and ecological impacts of the U.S. military are devastating. Despite their significance and urgency to tackle these issues, people were afraid to speak up against the military because the military has so much economic and political power as well as national security justifies everything what the U.S. military does (5.1.5). Also, the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii and the expansion of militarism in Hawaii have created the condition in favor of the U.S. military. As Nash (2010) and Svarstad et al. (2018) stated that these are the ways in which the military power influenced ways of thinking of people in Hawaii.

It is also indicated that there are many interests aligned with maintaining militarism and narrative of national security in Hawaii: strategic location value, money-making, accumulation of US capital, and expansion of the dominance over economy and politics (Sai, 2004). Combined with how the power affected individual thinking and behaviors, what I found is compatible with

what Berberoglu (2017), Foucault (1973 & 1995), and Lukes (1974) described how the normalization of the dominant views are made. By portraying the U.S. military as the organization for the education guarantee, stable job, and travel opportunities, mind of the civilians were manipulated tailored to the U.S. military (Mills, 1956). As a result, this enabled the U.S. military to maintain hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) where the U.S. military plays a major role in the economic and political system of Hawaii, exerting their power throughout the history of the illegal overthrow and with the narrative of national security.

The findings also demonstrated that the military power is wielded in obfuscating their impacts. For example, it is only 2022 when Kānaka Maoli were officially recognized as indigenous populations by the U.S. president as being disproportionately impacted by the systemic violence due to historical oppression and inequalities (Cristbal, 2022). Moreover, the power is also implicated in the U.S. constitutions that the military is exempted to follow the laws to preserve biodiversity if it is for the sake of national security (5.1.5). Last but not least, the fact that the militaries are not being obligated to report their emissions (1.0) is another example of the military exerting their power (Ambrose, 2021; The Military Emissions Gap, 2021).

6.2. Formations of counter-hegemony

As 5.2 described, there are means to counteract the impacts of the U.S. military. By revisiting my model (3.4), I discuss how the activists expressed their attachments to the place, what shaped their collective identities, and what political opportunities emerged to form the counter-hegemony.

To start off, the affective place attachment was observed when the activists shared their statements regarding their grief and anger towards the lands and the U.S. military when they

experienced the restrictions on access to the sacred sites, the loss of endemic fauna and flora, and the disconnection with their ancestors and amakua, or family god. This is consistent with what Scannell & Gifford (2010) explains that people feel the affective place attachment when they are displaced and concerned about war, biodiversity loss and change in the landscape.

What the interviewees shared also exemplifies that there is the cognitive place attachment. They have memories and meanings of connecting with the ʻāina or land as it feeds them and satisfies their well-being. Demonstrating with their religious beliefs that the connection to ʻāina or land is a foundation of Hawaiian identity is also compatible with the explanations of the cognitive place attachment made by Scannell & Gifford (2010).

The behavioral place attachment can be seen at 5.2 because the activists employ proximity-maintaining behavior to protect their lands, identity and ancestors (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) by reconnecting themselves with the places where they have been alienated and blocked from accessing through the religious practices and suing the U.S. military.

The place attachment at affective, cognitive, behavioral level observed among the interviewees match with Podeschi & Howington (2011) as their places have been disrupted by the U.S. military activities.

The collective identity are expressed in forms of having the shared purposes, emotional commitments and the network within communities and across organizations (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, 2018; Melucci, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The use of the slogan: Ola l Ka Wai or water is life is exactly one of the examples of showcasing collective identity described by Polletta & Jasper (2001). Furthermore, what being shared by the activists is also compatible with what Taylor & Whittier (1992) listed as components of collective identity. The sense of “we” is

conveyed when the activists claimed that everyone has kuleana or responsibilities and roles in joining the cross-generational demilitarization movement for sustaining future generations. The sense of consciousness is indicated that Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists are aware of their positionality from the historical oppressions and injustices placed by the U.S. military (Section 2). Lastly, the direct opposition is expressed in forms of the litigation, restoration and storytelling movements that develop the foundation of shaping a counterinstitution and opposing narratives.

The case at Makua Valley and Red Hill (5.2) can be considered as political opportunities (Tarrow, 1998) because it has disproved the U.S. military's logic of keeping the military facilities for national security. By the U.S. Department of Defense confessed that they will defuel and shutdown Red Hill permanently (Jedra, 2022)**,** it created changes in political environment and public sentiments so that unspoken issues of the U.S. military became visible and politicized (Nash, 2010; Tarrow, 1998). The gradual shift in the narratives from prioritizing national security to shutting down Red Hill could become a leverage point that would propel Hawaii into prospect future of demilitarization. It would positively affect the attitudes of local politicians also as the military lease extensions are coming to expire in 2029. A series of these events could eventually evolve into the establishment of the counter-hegemony to subvert the U.S. military hegemony in Hawaii.

7. Conclusions and future research

This research aimed to understand the perceptions of Kānaka Maoli and non-native activists toward the U.S. military in Hawaii and their attempts to address the issues associated with the U.S. military. Specifically, it explored social, cultural, and ecological impacts of the U.S. military

activities (RQ1), and how the activists address these impacts through multiple collective actions within and across the organizations (RQ2).

Findings revealed that social impacts range from housing insecurity, treatment of used weapons, water pollution, human health, and sexual violence. Culture impacts range from limiting access to sacred site, religious and cultural practices, and disconnecting Kānaka Maoli with their traditional lifestyle and ancestors. Ecological impacts range from threatening to the endangered species and destroying habitats for fauna and flora. The research also showed that the social, cultural and ecological impacts are intertwined that cannot be separated. These findings imply that the U.S. military has power and hegemony to maintain the narrative of national security through the history of the overthrow and the military seen as the essential economic force and the way to access education, job and travel. However, with a variety of approaches – community education, restoration program, storytelling, litigation and lawsuit – this research also demonstrated that the necessity of the U.S. military has been questioned and politicized. With examples at Makua Valley and Red Hill, this research showed that there is a hope to demilitarize Hawaii.

Future research could address the implications of restoring Hawaii's sovereignty in relation to the demilitarization and climate crisis and how learning from ancestors and maintaining the reciprocal relationship with 'āina or land and nature could bring a transformation in the current system from seeing them as commodities that are exploitable to seeing them as relatives that need to be taken care of. Research could also look into the military issues at macroscale by exploring similarities and differences in terms of struggles, histories, power dynamics, narratives, and political opportunities, for instance, in Guam, Okinawa and the Philippines, which could potentially help showing patterns and connections that would urge the emergent political

actions. Understanding the political contestations between the U.S. and China, North Korea, and Russia and dissecting different interests from their positionalities are also crucial in seeking for ways to discuss how to diminish the military expenditure and bring peace.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide

Opening the interview

First of all. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your time and participation. Your contributions really mean a lot to my research and hopefully we can have a meaningful conversation. Let me allow myself to first talk about myself and my research project.

About me

My name is Yuichi, I am originally from Japan but I moved to Sweden in summer of 2021 to complete my master degree in environmental studies and sustainability science. In 2017, during my bachelor, I did 1 year exchange at University of Hawaii at Manoa to study tourism and business. That is when I realized and had first-hand experience that tourism development comes at the expense of huge social and environmental costs in Hawaii. That is also a period where I immersed myself into nature so much (surfing and hiking) and learnt about Hawaii. Which definitely sparked my interest in looking for a symbiosis between people and nature. While studying my master, my view has been challenged constantly and I faced complexities of social and environmental issues that have led my interest develop into the intersection of militarism, colonialism and tourism development in Hawaii.

About my research

I am currently writing my master's thesis with the aim to explore 1) the perceptions of native Hawaiian people/ local people in Hawaii with regard to the socio-ecological impacts of military presence in Hawaii, and 2) to investigate how they seek to address these impacts through engaging in environmental NGOs. To get better understanding about the issue, I reach out to {**name of organization or person}** because of your engagement for environmental/social justice, land back, and demilitarization. I prepared questions to guide this interview.

Information from the interview will only be used in the purpose of my research. You will be anonymous in the presentation of the results, but if it is okay with you, I would like to use the name of your organization in my paper. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw your participation at any time without giving a reason.

Do you have any questions before we start? I want to ask if I can record the interview? I also need to ask you for your informed consent, after starting the recording.

[Start recording]

Do you consent to be interviewed for my master's thesis project and for me to use your answers in my paper?

Do you consent to the interview to be recorded? Do you consent to the interview being recorded?

Do you give me permission to use the name of your organization in my paper?

Can I quote you directly or would you prefer me to email/DM you the quotes for approval before using them in my paper?

Thank you for your consent. Now I would like to move on to the questions.

Interview Questions

Personal questions:

1. Gender (pronouns)
2. Age
3. Where are you from? (Do you consider yourself as Hawaiian?)
4. Can you tell me how long have you been part of [**name of organization]**?
5. Can you tell me about your role at [**name of organization]**?

Questions about military presence

Now I would like to move on to questions about military presence at Hawaii. I am interested in knowing your opinion about military presence. (Following questions are designed to guide interviewees to jump into a main topic of my research.)

1. Can you tell me about environmental and social impacts from military presence in Hawaii?
2. What are your (recent) concerns about military activities in Hawaii?
3. What do you think about environmental degradation from military presence in Hawaii?
4. What do you think about military presence in Hawaii?
5. In your opinion what do militaries symbolize?

Questions about your worldview toward nature and land

I am interested in knowing your worldview toward nature and land and how militaries are affecting your worldview. Following questions are designed to better understand native Hawaiians' perspective and seek for clues for potential solutions with regard to the issue.

6. How would you say that you are affected by military activities?
7. How would you say that militaries are affecting native land and nature?
8. Can you tell me what does land and nature mean to you?
9. Can you tell me about what does "Malama aina" (care for land) mean to you? In what ways do you think is "Malama aina" important in relation to environmental and social impacts from military activities?
10. In your opinion, what would be needed to bring a solution to environmental and social impacts from military activities?

Questions about collective identity and role of environmental NGOs

I am interested in knowing how environmental NGOs address issues regarding military activities and your role in that. Following questions are designed to understand how your organizations address the military-associated issues, your motivations and feelings in regard to joining the organization and how that translate into your actions for demilitarization or environmental challenges.

11. Can you tell me why you joined/ your motivations to joining the [**name of organization]**?
12. Can you tell me what activities have your organization engaged in regarding military activities and their social and environmental impacts?
13. Can you tell me how [**name of organization]** is organized? What are shared values or objectives?
14. How do you feel about being a part of an environmental NGOs compared with acting by yourself?
15. Finally, is there anything further you would like to add that you think would be valuable to my research?

Great! That's everything I wanted to talk about, is there anything that you would like to ask me? Thank you so much for your time and contribution!

Appendix 2. Information for research participants

Who am I

My name is Yuichi Tsuchibuchi, I am originally from Japan. But I moved to Sweden in summer of 2021 to complete my master degree in environmental studies and sustainability science at Lund University in Sweden. In 2017, during my bachelor, I did 1 year exchange at University of Hawaii at Manoa to study tourism and business.

That is when I realized and had first-hand experience that tourism development comes at the expense of huge social and environmental costs in Hawaii. Which definitely sparked my interest in looking for a symbiosis between people and nature. While studying my master, my view has been challenged constantly and I faced complexities of social and environmental issues that have led my interest develop into the intersection of militarism, colonialism and tourism development in Hawaii.

About my research

I am currently writing my master's thesis with the aim to explore 1) the perceptions of native Hawaiian / local people in Hawaii with regard to the socio-ecological impacts of military presence in Hawaii, and 2) to investigate how they seek to address these impacts through engaging in environmental NGOs.

Use of interview results

Information from the interview will only be used in the purpose of my research. The data gathered will be archived in a safe manner which assures protection of your personal rights. You will be anonymous in the presentation of the results, but if it is okay with you, I would like to use the name of your organization in my thesis paper.

Participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw your participation at any time without giving a reason.

What I am asking of you

With this letter, I am asking you to share your experiences and opinions regarding socio-ecological impacts of militaries in Hawaii and how are you addressing these issues in your NGO/NPO? The interview is expected to last for approximately 1 hour.

Contact details

If you have any questions, you can contact me at any time at:

Yuichi Tsuchibuchi

yuichi3aloha@gmail.com

(+46) 760351772

Appendix 3. Consent to participate in the project

I have received oral and/or written information about the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I agree to be interviewed in Yuichi's master's thesis research.

☐ I agree to the interview being recorded.

☐ I agree to the results of the interview to be used in Yuichi's thesis.

☐ I agree to give Yuichi a permission to use the name of my organization in his thesis.

☐ I agree to give Yuichi a permission to quote my statemenets directly in his thesis.

Place and date	Signature
	Name