

Statehood / Freedom

An Argumentation analysis of Hawaii and Puerto Rico's position as territories of the United States of America

Abstract:

In the context of former American colonies, statehood can for some be seen as either the end of colonization or the culmination of it. This paper will conduct an argumentation analysis to determine how the public debate surrounding the statehood question has been constructed and legitimized in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The argumentation analysis is constructed by using the model and theories by Evert Verdung of analysing a set of arguments made in relation to an issue. The public debate of two different eras in American politics are explored and explained, the 1940-50s and the 2010s. This is done by analysing various popular arguments stated by people in the public during these periods. By using the theories of Jurgen Habermas and Thomas Risse the result indicates that perhaps the way actors interact in the public debate are not especially consensus driven, but rather actors seek to maintain their viewpoints and protect their own interests.

Keywords: Statehood, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Argumentation Analysis, Validity Claims

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1.Introduction

In 1959 Hawaii became the 50th state of the Union after decades of claims from different advocates to give the citizens of the territory the same rights as the ones on the mainland. Before and since then, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico has maintained its status as a territory of the United States of America. Hawaii, once seen as a racially problematic territory whose population was deemed unassimilable, was by the 1960s praised as an example of racial harmony and an emblem of the New Frontier (Miller-Davenport, 2019, p.3). Unlike Hawaii the perception of Puerto Rico as an integrated part of the U.S is not as clear, revealed by a study by Morning Consult from 2017 showing that only 54% of American were aware that people born in Puerto Rico are US citizens (MorningConsult, 2017).

This thesis aims to answer how the former territory, Hawaii, and the current one, Puerto Rico, has had different trajectories in relation to their status against the mainland and how that has been legitimized by different actors. To attempt to answer that, I will analyse how the different sides *for* and *against* statehood were expressed in Hawaii during the 1940-1950s and in Puerto Rico in more recent years.

1.1 Thesis Statement, purpose, and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how arguments in favour and against statehood are expressed from both sides of the aisle, within the territories and over time. Furthermore, I will attempt to analyse if there are any similarities between the two territories despite their different history and culture.

The questions that I will construct this essay from and will attempt to answer are the following:

- How was the debate constructed when Hawaii received its statehood and how did the two sides legitimize their position?

- How is the current debate constructed surrounding Puerto Rico and how has the current status of Puerto Rico been legitimized?

Within these questions I will explore how the arguments that the different sides present are constructed in the public sphere. To make the analysis I will use theories produced and established by i.e., Jürgen Habermas and Thomas Risse, which will be explained in more detail in the theory section of the essay.

1.2 Material

To the extent that it is possible the essay at large and the argumentation analysis will rely on first-hand sources. The reason for this is to keep as much *authenticity* as possible and avoid any eventual distortion (Esaiasson and others 2017 p.282). In some instances, I will use “*Gateway State- Hawaii and the cultural transformation of American empire*” as the citing source for some of the part of the argumentation analysis, this is due to the original sources not being available. Gateway State will function as a building block in particular the sections regarding Hawaii. The book is written by Sarah Miller-Davenport a lecturer in U.S history at the University of Sheffield and published by Princeton University Press,

When citing some sources for the analysis in Puerto Rico I will rely on the translations made by Ballotpedia instead of the original transcripts, due to them being written in Spanish.

In relation to time, I will try and define myself to first-hand sources from the 1940-1950’s when analysing Hawaii and the 2010’s when analysing the public debate surrounding Puerto Rico. This is to keep with the basis of *simultaneity* and avoid later sources where the original source might selectively alter some statements made (Ibid, p.285).

2. Background and Context

To give a better understanding about the analysis and the debate regarding statehood this chapter aims to explore the background and context of the former and current territory as well as defining a few concepts. The first section will define and explain a few essential concepts relevant for the study. The second section will delve into the history of Hawaii and how they received its status as the 50th state of the United States of America. The third section will go over the history of Puerto Rico and relate it to the current status of the island.

2.1 Concepts and definitions

In this section I will present a few recurring terms and concepts that are used throughout the paper and present a definition with them.

Statehood: In this paper the term will be linked to the status of a political unit within a country and should not be confused with an independent autonomous recognised state, such as Sweden or the United States of America (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

Territory: In the context of this essay territory will be defined as an area that is considered as belonging to another country and with some local government but fewer rights than a province or a state (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Within the essay I will also differentiate between the term incorporated and unincorporated. The status as incorporated is regarded as a perpetual state where the full corpus of the constitution is applied, whereas an unincorporated territory only selects parts of the constitution apply (U.S Department of the Interior, 2020).

Commonwealth: The official status of Puerto Rico. Meaning that they have a more established and developed relationship with the federal government (U.S Department of the Interior, 2020).

2.2 Hawaii's history and road to statehood

The islands of Hawaii are believed to first have been populated around 1300 A.D by Polynesian settlers (Kirch, 1992). America's presence dates to 1820 when missionaries arrived. The descendants of these eventually overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 which later resulted in the annexation of the United States in 1898 (Miller-Davenport 2019, p.11). In contrast to other territories Hawaii was not imprinted with a colonial mark according to Miller-Davenport. It had no colonial bureaucracy and had relatively little influence from Washington. Despite this, the norms and culture of mainland USA had influenced Hawaii a great deal and when the first site of US military operations in the pacific- a navy coaling station that was set up in Honolulu in 1860, it cemented Hawaii's position as a strategically important American area.

In 1900 the U.S congress passed the Hawaiian Organic Act which established a government for the territory and in which way it would be governed. The highest office at the islands was constituted by the territorial governor, who was appointed by the president of the United States (1900, p.153). Besides from the governor the territory also had the right to elect a non-voting delegate to serve in the U.S Congress.

A few families descending from the missionaries had accumulated a considerable amount of power and wealth from controlling sugar plantations and cattle production. Although the white population, *Haoles* (the Hawaiian term for people who are not native Hawaiian or Polynesian), had a substantial amount of power they accumulated a clear minority in numbers with most of the population by the late 19th century and 20th century being of Asian descent (Department of commerce: bureau of the census, 1913). Despite the Caucasian population being a minority on the Islands, the presence of white settlers made Hawaii eligible for

statehood according to Miller-Davenport, through the Organic Act which gave territories acquired before the Spanish-American war, the title incorporated unlike those acquired after the war which were given the label “unincorporated”- like Puerto Rico.

The Haoles had for a long time been appeased with the status quo as a territory but this stance shifted with the implementation of the Sugar Act of 1934, which imposed quotas on imported sugar to the mainland (Literary Digest, 1934). This threatened not only their economic power but also their political influence on the Islands and as a result the Equal Rights Commission, later the Hawaii Statehood Commission, was founded in 1935 (2019, p.24). The same year a delegation from the House held hearings in Hawaii regarding the statehood question. The report adjourned any formal endorsement without further study and a 1937 delegation also recommended that a bill should be postponed citing concerns about the loyalty from the population of Japanese descent (2019, p. 24). Three times did a bill pass through the House (1947, 1950 and 1953) and in the Senate in 1954 until it finally passed in both in 1959 making Hawaii the 50th state in the U.S. Despite having support in both houses, with the use of procedural tactics, opponents were able to stall the status of statehood for Hawaii for more than a decade. How this came to be expressed will be analysed more in detail in chapter 5.1 and 5.2.

2.3 Puerto Rico’s history and current status

Secretary of State James Blaine had advised President Benjamin Harrison in 1891:” There are only three places that are of value enough to be taken, that are not continental. One is Hawaii and the others are Cuba and Puerto Rico” (Ayala and Bernabe, 2009, p.14). Seven years later Puerto Rico was established as a colony of the United States of America after the Spanish-American war (Ayala and Bernabe, 2009). With the rise of the United States of America as a global power and Puerto Rico seen as a key strategic place for the protection of a future canal through Central America, Puerto Rico functioned as the American outpost in the Caribbean. Seen by many Puerto Ricans at the time as a welcome break with the past, the following decades would unveil a more complex relationship between the newly acquired colony and the mainland government.

By the U.S congress passing the Jones Act in 1917, Puerto Ricans born on or after April 25 1898, were granted U.S. citizenship, linking the territory closer to the mainland. But by the Foraker Act of 1900 which established a civilian government for Puerto Rico but also determined the territory as unincorporated, indirectly defining them as not fully part of the United States- the territory and its citizens were pulled in two directions. Puerto Rico was a possession of America but not a part of it (2009, p.28). It took another 50 years for the federal government to recognize the territory's governance over internal matters, and the island adopted a constitution and republican form of government in 1952 (Ballotpedia, 2020). As an unincorporated territory Puerto Rico does not have a vote in the presidential election, nor pay federal income-tax. They have a non-voting member in congress called a Resident Commissioner.

Since 1900 Puerto Rico's relationship and status with the mainland USA has been up for discussion a multiple of times. The commonwealth has had six different referendums determining its status over the years. The first one in 1967 Puerto Ricans were given three options, the option to remain a commonwealth of the United States received 60.4 percent of the vote, while statehood received 39.0 percent and independence received 0.6 percent (Ballotpedia, 2020). The second one in 1993 resulted in 48.9 percent, favouring remaining as a commonwealth. Statehood received 46.6 percent of the vote, while independence received 4.5 percent (2020). In 1998 the options had increased to five different ones: territorial commonwealth, free association, statehood, independence, and none of the above. The option none of the above received the highest proportion of votes at 50.5 percent. Statehood received the next highest proportion of votes at 46.6 percent. Independence received 2.6 percent, and free association received 0.3 percent. Puerto Rico's status as a commonwealth received 0.1 percent of the vote.

The fourth vote was constructed by presenting the voters with two questions. The first one asked "Do you agree that Puerto Rico should continue to have its present form of territorial status?", 54.3 rejected the question. The remaining people that had answered the first question were asked about their preferred non-territorial status: statehood, free association, or independence. The option statehood received 61.2 of the votes whereas free association received 33.3 percent, and independence received 5.5 percent (2020). While 1,798,987 people voted on the first question, 1,363,854 people voted on the second question, meaning that almost a quarter of first-question voters cast blank ballots on the second question,

because of the different structure of the referendum itself criticized the outcome (2020). In 2017 voters were given the chance to make their voices heard again. This time the voters were given the options: keep the current status, statehood or free association/independence. The outcome showed a significant support for statehood, receiving 97 percent of the votes. The result showed a skewed picture of the actual will of the people, barely a quarter of the eligible voters at the time cast their ballot, because of The Popular Democratic Party, which had the second-largest caucus in the territorial Legislature boycotting it (2020).

On November 3, 2020, the citizens had the opportunity to cast their vote again and this time the turnout was significantly higher than last time with 54.7 percent showing up to the polls. The referendum only had two options, a “yes” to Puerto Rico seeking statehood or a “no” to the position of seeking statehood. 52.34 percent voted in favour of seeking statehood. Despite the result, critics do not see it as an indication of statehood for the island in any near future. Julio Ricardo Varela argues that the non-binding referendum itself is more of a political stunt from the pro-statehood Republican governor, Wanda Vázquez Garced, and her New Progressive Party (Washington Post, 2020)

The New Progressive Party and Puerto Rico in general have in recent years dealt with hurricanes, high poverty rates, fiscal crisis, earthquakes, and the global pandemic, which all have affected Puerto Rico and its citizens. Between 2017 and 2018 the population decreased by 142,000 (4.4%) from 3,337,000 to 3,195,000 (Glassman, 2019). From the territory to the mainland United States the number of movers increased by more than a third in 2018. About 133,500 people moved, up 36.9% from 97,500 movers the year before. Because of beneficial tax breaks for US companies implemented in 1976, a boom in manufacturing took place in Puerto Rico. But when those tax incentives came to end in 2006, the economy went into decline. By 2017 manufacturing employment had fallen by more than half from its 1996 peak to 73,200 (Smith, 2019).

An important aspect for the situation for Puerto Rico is how their status as unincorporated affects their possibilities of being granted statehood. As unincorporated, their future relies on the U.S congress to pass legislation to grant them statehood, and without that support the referendums themselves do not do anything more than indicating what the Puerto Rican population wants.

Within the USA the opinion on Puerto Rico has in more recent years become a bit of a more polarizing subject. Since 1965 the support for statehood amongst the public has been at around 65 percent and those who oppose it has gone from 18 to 27 in 2019 (Gallup, 2019). Between party lines the support is larger among Democrats, 83 percent, compared to Republicans where only 45 percent are in favour of statehood, but as stated the national support among American adults a clear majority favour statehood. The true divide is rather found in Washington D.C where republican politicians have in recent years shown a greater aversion towards the concept of statehood than earlier decades. The first referendum was sanctioned by congress and the following one in 1993 had the backing of the former Presidents George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald R. Ford all participated in the campaign for statehood (Ballotpedia, 2020). Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell is one that has expressed strong opposition against an eventual induction of Puerto Rico into the union, how these claims have been expressed will be analysed more in section 5.3 and 5.4.

2.4 Puerto Rico in relation to Hawaii

Finally, it is worth mentioning that despite Hawaii and Puerto Rico's similarities as briefly seen in these two sections, there exists some differences between the two that ultimately affects the way the statehood debate is constructed even to this day. After Hawaii's status as territory changed to state the question on whether Puerto Rico should be next in line or not rose in the public debate. Miller-Davenport poses the question as "why should Hawaii be a candidate for statehood when Puerto Rico was not? Legal technicalities aside, how were Puerto Rico's relationship to the mainland different from Hawaii's?" (2019, p.37). Miller-Davenport claims that those who opposed Hawaii's right to statehood argued that there was no difference between the two and therefore Hawaii should not be granted statehood. Miller-Davenport also argues that the lack of popular local support in Puerto Rico and how some statehood supporters for Hawaii constructed the debate in a way where Hawaii was framed as more deserving of statehood than Puerto Rico, can explain at least how the immediate prosperity for Puerto Rico to gain widespread support in the mainland did not happen.

3. Theory

In his article “*Let's Argue!*”: *Communicative Action in World Politics*” from 2003 Thomas Risse argues against the classical binary focus on public debates which has been characterized by “logic of consequentialism” theorized by rational choice approaches and the use of “logic of appropriateness” theorized mostly from a social constructivist approach.

Instead of fixating on these two approaches Risse introduces a third point of view, one that is based on reasoned consensus. Risse argues that actors do not have a fixed position in arguing, based on either utility-maximising action or rule guided behaviour, but instead are able to reach a reasoned consensus based on truth seeking and an idea of mutual understanding “When actors engage in a truth-seeking discourse, they must be prepared to change their own views of the world, their interests, and sometimes even their identities”(2003, p.2). In the analysis I will examine if it is possible to find tendencies of a consensus driven dialogue and cooperation between different actors in how they express their position, or if people to a greater extent are bound by their beliefs and motives.

The analysis will also incorporate the theories of validity claims from Jurgen Habermas into the framework. Risse summarizes the three different validity claims that Habermas has authored in several publications. Each validity claim can be used to challenge a discourse. In this context they will be applied to the public debate. The first which can be named the ‘truth claim’ concerns the factual truth of assertions made, that is, the conformity with perceived facts in the world (Risse, 2003). The second validity claim which is labeled as the ‘normative claim’ in this paper, concerns the moral rightness of the norms underlying different arguments. Risse exemplifies it by questioning whether it is justifiable to write an article on Habermas while innocent children die (2003, p.10), which is rather extreme but still provides an idea of how the claim can be used. The third validity claim concerns the sincerity and authenticity of the presenter of an argument. Does the person presenting an argument actually mean what they are presenting or are they simply trying to present themselves in a certain way? This will be labeled as the ‘sincerity claim’ in this paper. The sincerity claim is in particular evident when actors use their position or background to strengthen their argument and stance. The sincerity claim can only be challenged to some extent, the correlation between words and deeds, but ultimately relies on trust (2003, p.10).

Using these theories, I will in the argumentation analysis look at the arguments made in the public debate and how different interests and positions came to be expressed but also see if there were tendencies of cooperation and consensus between people with perhaps different backgrounds and interests.

4. Method

For this paper I will use an argumentation analysis to analyse and answer the research questions, *how was the debate constructed when Hawaii received its statehood and how did the two sides legitimize their position and How is the current debate constructed surrounding Puerto Rico and how has the current status of Puerto Rico been legitimized?* as well as functioning as the analytical framework for the study.

4.1 Structure of argumentation analysis

The analysis will be based on Evert Verdung's ideas cited in Boréus chapter "Argumentationsanalys" in *Textens mening och makt* (2018) of reconstructing a debate in the form of a certain model, for this paper I will use the 'issue model' which focuses on the subject matter of the debate. In this context the public debate that will be analyzed contains the arguments made by several people and organisations with different interests that characterized the arguments made in the public sphere. Within this structure there exists a prospect of certain arguments being neglected to some extent which is something I am aware of but will try to minimize by looking into as many sources and sides as possible.

The structure of the debate will instead of the classical pro et contra which consists of a table with the pro and against arguments following each other chronologically- be structured based on their content. Arguments will be listed under a title indicating the inherent premise of the argument, for example "*Arguments supporting the premise that Hawaii should be granted statehood*". After each argument the person that has made it will also be listed.

Furthermore, the arguments will have a letter and number connected to each argument taking inspiration from the 'pro et contra model' of Arne Naess. The pro arguments will be denoted with a P and the arguments against the thesis will be denoted with a C (Naess, 2005, p.79). The arguments will then in chronological order be structured like P1, P2, P3 and C1, C2, C3 etc. Unlike Naess there will not be multiple arguments standing in direct opposition to each other or multiple arguments supporting other arguments, i.e., there will not be a second order with P1P1 or C1C1 etc. The reason for this is to instead exhibit the variety of arguments made and that was prolific in the debate regarding Hawaii and the current ones regarding Puerto Rico. Structuring the debate with this method will hopefully make it easier to understand when each argument is discussed.

As mentioned in the theory section I will use Habermas's theories about validity claims in the structuring of the analysis. In relation to each title indicating the position of the argument, I will also classify the argument based on which validity claim they belong to. A further explanation of each argument and their position will be presented in the second and fourth section of the actual analysis.

4.2 Limitations in analysis

Due to both limitations in space and time, the structure of the debate can be perceived as skewed or not detailed enough. This is a disadvantage inherent with the argumentation analysis due to the different variations of structure that one can construct the analysis by (Boréus, 2018, p.124). Furthermore, there exists another problem with all types of analysis that aims to analyse ideas and ideologies through text. That is that the researcher imposes the material with the chosen model, so that the material is not allowed to speak for itself. Another risk is that the researcher instead ascribes the texts with ideas and interpretations that are not there (2018, p.166). These are concerns that I will try to navigate and mitigate as much as possible throughout the paper. Hopefully with the help of the theoretical framework that I have constructed the reliability and credibility of the analysis will be satisfactory.

5. Analysis

The analysis is structured in four sections, the first section presents the debate about statehood for Hawaii during the 1940-and 1950' and the second one will analyse each argument presented in the first section and will aim to answer the first thesis question. The third and fourth one will look at the modern one about Puerto Rico and answer the second thesis question. The analysis of the public debate surrounding Puerto Rico will incorporate a slightly different look than the one regarding Hawaii. This is due to some of the arguments that are made in relation to Puerto Rico's status as commonwealth contra statehood are not as easily divisible between a clear *against* or *for*.

5.1 Hawaii Debate

Arguments supporting the premise that Hawaii should be granted statehood

P1: “The territory has a legal right to become a state”- *Truth and sincerity:* Julius A. Krug, Secretary of the Interior (House Committee on Public Lands, 1947, p.39)

P2: “Taxation without representation”- *Truth and sincerity claim:* Julius A. Krug, (Ibid, 1947, p.39-40)

P3: “The territorial government has been left to take care of its own needs, without help from the parent government”- *Normative and sincerity claim* Victor S.K Houston, Congressional delegate for Hawaii (Ibid,1947, p.155)

P4: “The inclusion of Hawaii would show the U.S’s anti-colonial credentials to the world”- *Normative claim*: Joseph O’Mahoney, Wyoming Senator, (82nd congress 2nd session, cited in Gateway State p.37)

P5: “The granting of statehood for Hawaii would lead to a contribution in the fight against communism”- *Normative claim and sincerity claim*: Oscar Chapman Secretary of the Interior, (Senate Committee, 1950, p.68)

P6: “Not granting statehood for Hawaii would give proof to the “communist hatemongers” that the U.S is racist and anti-democratic”-*Normative claim* : Mike Masaoka, Washington representative of the Japanese American Citizens League, (Senate Committee, 1959, p.67)

Arguments against the premise that Hawaii should be granted statehood

C1: “The inclusion of Hawaii into the union will lead to bloc voting from the population with asian descent”- *Normative and sincerity claim*: Alice Kamokila Campbell Territorial Senator representing Maui (Congressional Hearing, 1946, p.484-485) and John Stokes former curator at Honolulu's Bishop Museum (1946, p.244)

C2:” The threat of communism in the Islands”- *Normative claim*: Hugh Butler, Nebraska Senator, (cited in 2019, p.34-35)

C3: “Politicians from Hawaii would face pressure from China and pose a threat to national security” - *Sincerity claim*: Ellis Zacharias, retired admiral, (2019, p.35)

C4: “The induction of Hawaii would lead to two senators supporting the Civil Rights Program”- *Truth claim and sincerity claim*: George Letheitner, New Orleans businessman and the Statehood Commission’s unofficial representative in the South, citing southern congressmen (letter from George Letheitner to Samuel King 1951, cited in 2019, p.32)

5.2 Argumentation analysis: Hawaii

The first argument, **P1**, is based on the Hawaiian Organic act from 1900 which outlined that the territory had a constitutional right to statehood (2019, p.24). Since it concerns the factual truth of the situation, Hawaii’s legal right to statehood, is it labelled as a truth claim. The second argument “Taxation without representation” is also presented by Julius A. Krug and was a common argument made by advocates for statehood. It is also based on an actual fact and is therefore labelled as a truth claim (1900, p.150). Since Krug was the secretary of the Interior and had an influential and integral position in the administration at the time, I would argue that this be an attempt to strengthen the arguments made and reflect the interests of the highest office in the U.S- that Hawaii should receive statehood.

Argument **P3** is presented by the territorial delegate for Hawaii at the time, Victor S.K Houston. The argument itself connects to the previous ones that Hawaii as a part of the U.S at the time did not have the same rights as other states or territories. In the full text he mentions how the “eskimos in Alaska, and the Filipinos in Philippines” had been “taken care” by the parent government, but not Hawaii. With the framing of the argument in this way I would claim that he wants to evoke a more emotional response by presenting the current status of Hawaii as unjust for the lawmakers that ultimately had the faith of Hawaii’s status in their hands. Because of this the argument is denoted with the label *normative claim*. Furthermore, I would argue that Houston's role as the congressional delegate and how in his presentation he presents himself as a citizen of Hawaii of 38 years, the claim would also be applicable as a sincerity claim.

P4 is formed as rebuttal on the notion that Hawaii is a symbol of the imperial and colonial sides of US international relations. Instead of perpetuating this notion of the U.S as an imperial power (especially in the context of the cold war), O'Mahoney argues that the recognition and inclusion of Hawaii as another state in the union, would display USA as a nation that supports freedom and self-government for people all over the world. Since this argument also aims to evoke an emotional response, I would claim that this also is a normative claim.

The argument which is labelled as **P5** also functions as a rebuttal to the stances made that Hawaii would function as a hotbed for communism and that the racially diverse community on the islands instead could work as an asset to the United States in their ideological fight against the Soviet Union. According to Chapman the Pacific would be a strategically important place in the fight against communism and the U.S should instead bind Hawaii and their citizens closer to the mainland. In doing this the U.S would send a powerful message to Asian nations that it was committed to racial equality and self-government. Essentially **P5** uses the same type of rhetoric as **P4**, evoking a sense of patriotism and pride by providing statehood to Hawaii and by using his position as the Secretary of the Interior I would also contend that the argument is a sincerity claim too.

P6 builds upon the two previous arguments but goes against the counterarguments of making Hawaii a state even further. Masoka argues that not granting statehood to Hawaii is in itself proof that the United States had racists and anti-democratic tendencies, just like the "Communist hatemongers" around the world claimed. **P6** is like **P4** and **P5** a mostly normative claim, not granting Hawaii statehood is morally wrong because keeping the status quo furthers the notion that the United States is a racially unjust and anti-democratic nation.

One of the most prevalent fears amongst statehood opponents was the fear that the population of Asian descent would "bloc vote" in elections. Meaning that citizens would vote as a homogenous group on a certain candidate that in some way represented them or their interests. In argument **C1** this thesis was presented by two people fearing what granting

Hawaii could lead to. Alice Kamokila Campbell was one of the most vocal opponents to statehood within Hawaii, a territorial senator hailing from a prominent and wealthy Hawaiian-Haole she used this position to make the claim in a 1946 congressional hearing that the children of Japanese immigrants were not assimilated enough. Kamokila Campbell even claimed that Shiotism was “still deeply impregnated into their very bloodstream”.

The threat from this section of the population according to Kamokila Campbell was framed as a national security issue and a matter of patriotism, granting statehood would even make the United States vulnerable to another Pearl Harbor (2019, p.31). Without providing any substantial evidence for these claims. Furthermore, she was worried that statehood would mean that native Hawaiians would be obliged to forfeit their birthright for the greed of alien desires and give up their traditional rights for a mere “thimbleful” of votes in Congress (1946, p.491).

By combining the underlying moral rightness of the arguments and the way in which she used her native Hawaiian roots to form the debate in her favour I would argue that both the normative and sincerity claim is applicable to the argument. Since they do not present any factual evidence for their claims the truth claim is not applicable.

Within **C1** I included John Stokes, another source in hearings from the time that expressed a great amount of fear of what statehood would result in. Essentially Stokes made the same claims as Kamokila Campbell and also used his position as a citizen with knowledge of the islands and their culture to elevate the argument, which was not based on factual assertions.

Another argument that was deployed by opponents at the time involved the fear of communist infiltration on the islands, **C2**. The Nebraska Senator Butler led an investigation in 1948 in Hawaii and which was followed by a visit by the House Un-American Activities Committee two years later. Neither concluded that there was any evidence of infiltration in Hawaii but according to Butler that the “oriental traditions” that influenced the entire culture

on the islands made people resistant to “any sound concept of American ideals” (2019, p.35). The claim that Butler presents rely on underlying normative notion, that the threat of communism (existing or not), poses a big enough threat to American values and ideals that granting them statehood should not be considered an option. Therefore, I contend that **C2** is a normative claim.

C3 is made by the retired admiral Zacharias who builds upon the xenophobic arguments made earlier but went even further with the idea that children from Chinese immigrants would “fall under the spell” of communist China but that politicians on the island would also face pressure from Asia in promoting “gambling and narcotics ring” (2019, p.35). By using his position, I would contend that he was able to express these types of groundless claims without facing the same oppositions as perhaps more private actors that held the same stance. Therefore, is the argument labeled as a sincerity claim.

The last argument against the premise of granting Hawaii statehood is the one concerning the political implications of the decision, **C4**. The actuality of statehood for Hawaii had intensified in the 1950’s and was more of a reality than in previous decades. The possibility of Hawaii having two Senators seated in the Senate were seen as a threat in particular for Southern Democrats. In the context of the the supreme court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, uplifting the racial segregation of public schools, and the more progressive candidates gaining support and power in Hawaii at the same time, it is understandable why the more conservative dixie democrats by the early 1950’s were worried about the development in Hawaii. Furthermore, it is logical that the senators coming from Hawaii would pose a threat to these legislatives ways of living to a greater extent by supporting more progressive policies. By this logic I would contend that there are some truth claims inherent in the argument, especially in hindsight since Hawaii has proven to be a democratic stronghold in both congress and the electoral election (270towin, 2020). The reason that I place it as a sincerity claim as well is because it ultimately is based on a second-hand source and not direct statements made from Southern Democrats at the time.

By analyzing transcripts and in general trying to form an understanding of the public debate at the time, I would contend that the side supporting statehood to a greater extent tried to legitimize their viewpoints through rationality and ‘truth claims’. As seen in the analysis the *supporting* side still used normative claims to try and gain emotional support but in contrast to the *against* side did not rely on speculation to push their agenda or in some cases actual misinformation.

To be able to answer if there was a broad consensus driven process in line with Risse’s theory, where both sides sought to legitimize their point of view through cooperation and empathy, I think one has to conduct a more quantitative study. In general, of the arguments that have been analyzed in this study I would argue that there were not many indications that there were a consensus and dialogue driven process where both sides were open to the idea of changing their mind.

In one way nevertheless I think there were some tendencies of an attempt of dialogue in the way the arguments changed over the years. During the 1950’s with voices like Chapman and O’Mahoney, the supporting side for statehood was able to shift the narrative of Hawaii as a racially diverse community being seen as a problem- to one of its strengths. In the context of the time, with more progressive attitudes influencing American politics and society, I think that the success of this shift in narrative is reasonable but could also be seen as an extension of the consensus driven process that in some ways influence all politics. By the time Hawaii’s statehood bill was pushed through congress in 1959, not even the strongest opponents could stand in the way (2019, p.46).

5.3 Puerto Rico Debate

Arguments supporting the premise that Puerto Rico should be granted statehood

P1: “The people know that we do not want the colony anymore, we want equality, especially political equality, because in a democracy what matters is the right to vote and the right to participate on equal terms in the bodies that govern the nation”- *Truth, normative and sincerity claim*: Carlos Romero Barceló, former governor NPP, (Cited in Ballotpedia, 2020)

P2: “The granting of statehood would increase the equality for Puerto Rico in relation to the other states in the union, in the form of support from Washington”- *Truth, normative and sincerity claim*: Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon, Resident Commissioner NPP (Cited in Ballotpedia, 2020)

P3: “Ending the colonial situation to focus on the well needed aid that Puerto Rico need”- *Normative claim*: Carlos Méndez, House Speaker NPP, (Cited in Ballotpedia, 2020)

Arguments against the premise that Puerto Rico should be granted Statehood

C1: “Granting Puerto Rico statehood would lead to two more democratic senators and full bore socialism on the march in the House and as long as I’m the majority leader of the Senate, none of that stuff is going anywhere” - Normative *claim and sincerity claim* : Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader (Cited in Stieb, 2020)

C2: “The granting of statehood for Puerto Rico would result in the federal government inherit the debt that Puerto Rico currently has” - *Truth claim:* Matthew Cohen, opinions fellow (The Stanford Daily, 2015)

Argument against the premise that congress should decide the faith for Puerto Rico’s citizens

C3: “Puerto Ricans are not willing to give up being what we are. To the plebiscite question, do you want to give up your Puerto Rican nationality? The resounding answer will be ‘No’” - *Normative and sincerity claim:* Juan Dalmau, Senator, Puerto Rican Independence Party, (Cited in Ballotpedia, 2020)

C4: “**For** true, legitimate change, Puerto Rico’s status must be resolved from the ground up. Plans for altering the Island’s relationship with the U.S. should not just garner the consent of the Puerto Rican people; they should originate with them. In fact, many in Puerto Rico would view Congress pushing statehood not as an end to colonization, but the culmination of it” - *Normative and sincerity claim:* Nydia Velázquez, U.S representative, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, U.S representative (NBC, 2020).

5.4 Argumentation analysis: Puerto Rico

The first argument for the granting of statehood for Puerto Rico is made by the former governor of Puerto Rico, Carlos Romero Barceló. The argument Romero Barceló presents is one that proponents from most sides agree with, that the democratic rights of a nation's citizens should be respected. Using the legislative circumstances that Puerto Rico is bound

by, the assessment that Romero Barceló makes I would argue constitutes it as a truth claim. Further he implies with the colonial sentiment that the people of Puerto Rico deserve more freedom and more democracy which I would contend makes the argument normative to some extent. Lastly by using his position as former governor and as a native of Puerto Rican the sincerity claim of the argument is also there. The arguments made by the current Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon in **P2** echoes the points made in **P1**, with the exception of bringing attention to the increased federal aid that statehood would result in, making the argument more normative. In Gonzales-Colon's full statement the emphasis on America's strength during crises is also more evident (Ballotpedia, 2020). **P3** is also more normative due to this reason.

C1 is made by Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell who brings up the future of Puerto Rico's status when discussing the future of the territory in relation to Washington DC's eventual future as a state as well as a potential 'stacking' of the Supreme Court. In all those scenarios he explains that they would result in democratic senators and increased power for the democratic party, claiming it would even lead to "full bore socialism". McConnell's rhetoric resembles the same expressed in connection to Hawaii's induction into the union and what two new senators from Hawaii would lead to for the country, only at that time it was the fear of communism that was deployed. Because of this I would denote the argument with a normative claim. Further it proves how fixed McConnelles beliefs are in the context of communicative situations and the public debate.

C2 relates to the economical situation of Puerto Rico and what the consequences making Puerto Rico the 51st state would mean for the federal government. If that were to happen Puerto Rico would become the poorest state in the union and the measures that the government would have to take to combat the situation that Puerto Rico currently is in would be significant (Setser in Council on Foreign Relations, 2017). Because of these facts I would label this argument with the truth claim.

Argument **C3** Juan Dalmau, Senator for the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) is also against the premise that Puerto Rico should not become a part of the United States of America, but not because of what it would mean for American party politics or for the federal budget. Instead Dalmau emphasizes the national identity of Puerto Rico and would rather prefer independence from the United States of America. With this in consideration I would claim that **C3** is predominantly based on a normative claim.

Argument **C4** is not inherently against the premise that Puerto Rico should become a state in the union, but against the way that the commonwealth is confined by doing it at this time. Velázquez and Ocasio-Cortez, both representatives in congress of Puerto Rican descent, present instead the Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act. “The act would prompt Puerto Rico’s Legislature to create a Status Convention whose delegates would be elected by Puerto Rican voters. This body would develop a long-term solution for Puerto Rico’s status, be that statehood, independence, free association or any option other than the current territorial arrangement. What the convention negotiates and puts forth would then be voted on in a referendum by the people of Puerto Rico before presentation to the U.S. Congress.” (NBC, 2020). The central theme of their argument is that the future of Puerto Rico should be determined *by* Puerto Ricans *for* Puerto Ricans. By emphasizing the cooperative and consensus driven process behind an eventual decision on the future of Puerto Rico I would contend that **C4** is the argument that echoes Risse’s theory. The ideas that Velázquez and Ocasio-Cortez presents are not fixed by any utility-maximising beliefs but aim to present a notion that would enable dialogue.

In general, all sides have in their own way quite strong arguments of why their point of view is correct. The *for* side has a bit more of a conflict to resolve, with both internal opposition and support just as on the mainland the decision depends on support from the congress, although the democratic majority of it at this time is in their advantage.

I think the reason that the status quo is still intact has a lot to do with the fact that after 3 referendums in the last 8 years there is still hard to definitely point to one side as having

majority backing from all of Puerto Rico. For real change to happen in any way there has to be a clearer way firstly for Puerto Rico to present a concise argument for the U.S congress to move forward with statehood or present a clearer way for Puerto Rico's inhabitants to move forward with the status they demand. Until that happens opponents can point to the economic situation as a reason not to induct them or eventual political implications that statehood would bring as another- and still have a legitimate argument.

6. Discussion

Lastly when summarizing the two argumentation analysis and comparing the two, one of the key differences I found was how much the public discourse actually has changed over the decades. The arguments and the public discourse surrounding Hawaii were to a large extent based on ideas of differences between people based on their background and descent- a discourse that feels impossible for elected politicians to perpetuate in today's climate. This inherent difference in perception of the world reflects itself by examining who actually gets the opportunity to present their standpoint. In Hawaii one of the few people of native descent was Kamokila Campbell whose critique towards U.S colonialism actually received attention making her in ways a symbol of native resistance, although her targeting of Japanese people complicates this image. In Puerto Rico the debate has been more diverse in this regard and the independence movement has also been able to make their voices heard.

In many ways the granting of statehood to Hawaii was inevitable. By the end of the 1950's the public support on the island and mainland combined with the strong bipartisan support in both chambers, there was essentially no reason for the territory to not receive statehood.

With Puerto Rico the history and the current debate indicates that the eventual journey to statehood is not as clear cut. The mixed support in Puerto Rico could indicate that any progress also might take some time. In general if both the *for* and *against* sides have more

incentives to either keep the status quo or change it, it could keep the conflict from resolving and will instead continue in a similar way as it has.

Since the for side in Puerto Rico only received majority support for the first time in 2012 one could argue that there has been quite some progress made in a short time since then with the new result in 2020 continuing that trend and in general more awareness surrounding Puerto Rico's situation. Especially considering it took 24 years from that the Hawaiian Statehood Commission was founded til Hawaii was granted statehood.

7. Conclusion

The thesis questions that this essay is based on were:

- How was the debate constructed when Hawaii received its statehood and how did the two sides legitimize their position?
- How is the current debate constructed surrounding Puerto Rico and how has the current status of Puerto Rico been legitimized?

By conducting an argumentation analysis and by constructing it in the way of trying to capture the public debate, I think that the questions were analyzed from a relatively new perspective.

For further research it would be interesting to analyse the continued debate surrounding Puerto Rico and how the changes in Washington D.C will affect the future of the territory, will we see progress in the statehood side with the change in the White House? Will the debate also take on a different tone and will new narratives be explored? The current debate surrounding the district of Columbia and eventually appointing the district the status of a state would also be interesting to explore and compare with the debate of Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

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