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Space of “Militourism”: Intimacies of U.S. and Japanese Empires and Indigenous Sovereignty in Okinawa

Ayano Ginoza*

Introduction

One of the popular and conventional approaches to highlighting the contemporary political structure of Okinawa in relation to Japan and the U.S. military bases is through an economic analysis of the so-called three *ks*: *kichi* (bases), *kōkyō kōji* (public works), and *kankō* (tourism) (Cooley & Marten, 2006; McCormack, 2007; Oshiro, 2001). The analysis of the three *ks* successfully reveals a structural dependency of Okinawa upon the Japanese nation-state. However, such analyses are based upon the assumption of the geopolitical category of Okinawa as a matter of fact, thus proving themselves problematic in examining the residual sovereignty of Japan over Okinawa as well as the status quo of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa as an outpost of the U.S. empire. In this article, I argue that the relationship between the U.S. and Japan after the Okinawa restoration in 1972 has been maintained precisely by transcending the territorial boundaries and sovereignty defined by geopolitical borders. I apply Teresia K. Teaiwa’s neologism, “militourism”—used to describe a phenomenon in which militarist and tourist industries organize islanders’ bodies to construct “nativeness”—to the intersectional spaces of militarism and tourism in Okinawa in order to uncover the ways in which the U.S. and Japan transcend the geopolitical boundaries and maintain Okinawa Island and the residents’ bodies as a colonized space.¹⁾

Herein, I unpack the structure of the three *ks* and conceptualize their place of interaction as a private or “intimate” space, rather than a simple economic structure wherein the local Okinawan people’s bodies are governed. My analysis is an effort to uncover the space of militourism as an interlocking cultural expression of the two empires and how the category of Okinawa and Okinawans is manufactured in that space. As colonial subjects, Okinawans relate to their own bodies, their own selves, and each other through a space that is mediated by colonization. This I undertake in three parts. First, I define empire and examine the relationship of U.S. and Japanese empires as expressed in private or intimate spaces of militarized Okinawa by using Ann Laura Stoler’s concept of “intimacies of

* Research scholar, University of California, Los Angeles

empire” (2006). Investing contemporary Okinawa as a space where intimacies of empire uses facades of sovereign states and cultural differences is helpful to uncover how the U.S. and Japan mask how they undermine political sovereignty itself. Second, by advancing “militourism,” I highlight the ways in which relations of empires mold the Okinawans into a particular kind of colonial subject, that particular kind of Native image forged by the State. Third, I conclude this article with a discussion of how Okinawan indigenities may be a useful political and analytical category to make visible this particular formation of empires as an entity that forms a space where Okinawans are displaced in their own native island in the sense that they are displaced from “indigenous” Okinawan space.

Intimacies of U.S. and Japanese Empires

In examining the current social and cultural structure of Okinawa, it is crucial to understand the interdependent relationship of the U.S. and Japan as an aspect of empire. In *Empire* (2000) Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri illuminate the concept of empire through a theoretical approach that addresses the reach of empires through a lack of firm nation-state boundaries, differentiated from traditional imperialism, whose power was in an extension of national sovereignty. According to Hardt and Negri, empire does not “present itself as a historical regime originating in conquest but rather as an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes the existing state of affairs for eternity” as well as “a regime with no temporal boundaries” (pp. xiv–xv). I argue that it is in this sense of lack of boundaries that the U.S. empire works with the Japanese state in an effort to benefit each other at the expense of Okinawa.

The term “empire” is used to understand the complementary agendas of the respective interlocking systems of the U.S. and Japanese empires as an ideological mechanism that manufactures identities of Okinawans as effective colonial subjects. Scholars have argued that the large presence of U.S. military bases worldwide constitutes a new form of empire that exceeds the boundary of sovereign nation states (Johnson, 2000; Enloe, 2004; Luth, 2009). Moreover, those military bases function as outposts of the U.S. empire; many meddle deeply into local economies.

In Okinawa, Okinawans comprise the majority of the workforce for the U.S. military—mostly as construction workers for the military bases and service workers on the bases. The source of the payment for those laborers for work related to and on the military bases is “host nation support,” which is the so-called *omoiyari yosan* (sympathy budget) from Japan. For example, the sum of *omoiyari yosan* allocated between 1972, when Okinawa was “returned” to the Japanese state, until 2005 was 13 trillion yen, over one hundred billion dollars, for maintenance and other base-related expenditures (Brasor, 2006).

Few works have examined the interdependencies of Japan and the U.S. as expressed in private spheres, which Ann Laura Stoler calls the empire’s “marrow” (2006). In a seminal anthology she edited, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (2006), Stoler explores how the U.S. empire expresses itself in intimate

relationships with its subjects. She argues that organizations based upon intimacies such as racial membership, sexual access, and colonial status are not microcosms related to the empire but instead are the empire's "marrow," where relations of power are "knotted and tightened, loosened and cut, tangled and undone." According to Stoler, such intimacies are articulated in spaces usually defined as private or "home": "[t]hese tense and tender ties played out in beds, kitchens, nurseries, and schoolrooms." My use of the word "intimacies" follows Stoler's model to explore the first level: sites of intimacies (or private spaces) as "critical sites for the consolidation of power" of the U.S. empire. At a second level, I use the word "intimacies" to unpack how intersection and maintenance of interests of the two empires—U.S. and Japanese—are articulated by the social effects imposed upon organizing intimate sites. On a third level, I use "intimacies" to illustrate how the mechanisms of the three *ks* operate together rather than independently from each other through the organizations of Okinawans into specific pools of labor.

The Intersections of the Three *Ks*: *Kichi*, *Kōkyō Kōji*, and *Kankō*

As a space where the intimacies of empires can be observed, the structure of the three *ks* (public works, tourism, and military bases) forms the architecture that manufactures Okinawan-ness at the three intimate levels. The system of the three *ks* articulates the relationship between the social, cultural, and political life of the Okinawan people. Many Okinawans have families and friends who are employed in the construction of schools, residential, and public facilities off- and on-base, as well as those who work in service industries with military clientèle on the bases and for tourist developments throughout the island. Because they constitute a large part of the labor force in tourist markets at shops and resort hotels, Okinawans are, thus, the pulse of the three *ks*' components, and their involvement often serves as the families' main economic lifeline. Other Okinawans who do not directly work for some aspect on the three *ks* are still affected indirectly. Some workers are government employees, and their supervisors are elected officials whose pro-base stance played a part in their appointment to duty and benefits their investments in the construction industry. Other Okinawans are wives and husbands, boyfriends and girlfriends, or daughters and sons of U.S. service members stationed in Okinawa.²⁾ Thus, almost everyone in Okinawa, directly or indirectly, is affected by the three *ks*.

The structure of the three *ks* perpetuates systemic structural dependency of Okinawa as a trusteeship of the Japanese government (Oshiro, 2001). I will *reanalyze* the way each of the three *ks* forms an interdependent structure. Doing so will highlight the intimacies of the U.S. and Japanese empires and organization of Okinawan space and people as subjects of empire.

***Kichi*, or U.S. Military Bases**

In Okinawa, U.S. military bases are a crucial spoke in the wheel of interlocking sys-

tems and intimacies of the empires. In addition to functioning as war and combat preparation sites, military bases are also conceptualized as industries and social institutions that organize people’s lives at global, societal, and personal levels (Enloe, 1990, 2000, 2004).

Catherine Lutz (2009) finds it useful to analyze the U.S. military bases as outposts of the U.S. empire.³⁾ Lutz (2002) shows how “base towns” (sites of war preparation) shaped American culture and politics throughout the twentieth century by organizing the consumption of cultural products supported by a political rhetoric of national security:

No matter where we live, we have raised war taxes at work, and future soldiers at home, lived with the cultural atmosphere of racism and belligerence that war mobilization often uses or creates, and nourished the public opinion that helps send soldiers off to war or prevents their going. All of us consume cultural products and political rhetoric influenced by what sociologist C. Wright Mills called “a military definition of the situation.” All experience the problems bred by war’s glorification of violent masculinity and the inequalities created by its redistribution of wealth to the already privileged. All live with the legacy and rhetoric of national security, a historically recent concept that has distorted the definition and possibilities for democratic citizenship, discrediting dissent and centralizing power even more in the hands of the federal and the corporate few. And we all have lived with the consequences of the reinvigorated idea that we rove and regenerate ourselves through violence. (p. 3)

Although Lutz’s focus here is on domestic military bases in the U.S., she offers a crucial argument: what sustains U.S. military bases is not just government funds and actual war combat but methods of controlling the civilians’ idea about the military, military bases, and war by nourishing public opinion about the military (i.e. ideological control).

By engaging the public as laborers in the military economy, the tactics and aims of the U.S. government in maintaining its overseas military bases are no different. This is particularly true in Okinawa, where there is a high percentage of active military bases that are highly manipulative of the local population’s perceptions of the bases as a crucial foundation for their existence. Okinawan military bases are not just spaces for war preparation but also act as spaces where militarization—the process that “spreads military values and structures into the mainstream of national economic and sociopolitical life” (Zwick, 1984, p. 2)—structures people’s lives by constructing dependence, acceptance of militarization as an ideology and practice into the culture, and eventual entrapment of the locals in economic dependency (Enloe, 2000).

Chalmers Johnson (2005) explains that this type of sociopolitical militarization process sustains the Japan–U.S. alliance by the public perception of base towns as “Rest and Recreation” (R&R) sites for U.S. military personal. Johnson argues that R&R bases in Okinawa function as systemic “outposts [that are] critical staging and logistics areas for the projection of American power onto the Asian mainland, as well as secure sanctuaries, invulnerable to attack by North Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Cambodian forces” (p. 39). R&R is justified by the new “invented threats” that require the reassuring presence of U.S. military bases and at the same time highlight their “goodwill and good neighborliness” (p. 40).

Rest and Recreation (R&R) is a militarized state-sanctioned tourism that situates U.S. servicemen as tourists who enjoy the exotic nature of the “other” while on a U.S. government-paid excursion. It is further noted that those U.S. service members who are sent to a long-term assignment in an R&R space can be thought of as lavish tourists experiencing their vacation at the cost of the Japanese government: the Japanese government, through its Status of Forces Agreement with the U.S. (SOFA), provides land for base housing free of charge (Johnson, 2005).

U.S. military bases in Okinawa influence the construction of ideas about Okinawa and Okinawan-ness in a private space as well, which Stoler calls a space of empires’ marrow. One woman describes her experience growing up in Okinawa:

Growing up here on Okinawa was a wonderful experience. It was unique to live in an environment surrounded by so many foreigners. As a child I remember thinking Americans were the greatest, that I was privileged to be from a place where so many of them resided The first time I ever dated an American was when I was in high school. I met him at the McDonald’s on *Kokusai Dori* [International Street] in Naha. That area of the city was always swarming with military guys who looked like Tom Cruise. I couldn’t distinguish one American from the other. I felt like I was on the set of a movie. I used to imagine all of these men were romantics, just like the ones in love scenes from American films. (Keyso, 2000, p. 113)

This statement illustrates that, for younger Okinawans, the presence of the U.S. military bases and the servicemen provides a means to sympathize and identify with an idealized “America.”⁴⁾ The interviewee also recalled that, as a junior high school student, she dreamed of having a baby with an American man. The militarized Okinawan landscape gives Okinawans the feeling that they are special, and that having the U.S. bases makes them favored over the rest of Japan.

Moreover, as the above quote demonstrates, the U.S. military bases are understood in gendered terms that often sexualize America and what is American: male/masculine, romantic objects who are potential future boyfriends or husbands to a female/feminine Okinawan. This shows that, at the personal level, the U.S. bases make Okinawan women feel a distancing from Japanese and an identity closer to Americans; this constructs a desire to eventually “become American” through a personal relationship with U.S. military personnel.

In Okinawa, U.S. military culture is intimately adopted and commodified in contemporary Okinawan people’s lives and in their social landscapes in order to facilitate the militarization of the island. This type of militarist structure constructs a socio-cultural space where Okinawan peoples’ bodies operate as a site for the production of racial and sexual inequalities.

***Kōkyō Kōji*, or Public Works**

Kōkyō jigyo is an important undertaking by the Japanese government wherein Okinawa is often landscaped, utilizing its own natural resources, and where Okinawans par-

ticipate as their own construction labor force. However, *kōkyō kōji* projects not only bring very little monetary gain to Okinawan communities but are also the result of inequality that can be seen in the preferential allocation of lucrative construction contracts to Japan’s construction companies. There are approximately 4,000 construction companies in Okinawa (Johnston, 2006). However, a number of small businesses in Okinawa feel that only a few big construction companies, such as Kokuba, gain from the construction projects in Okinawa (Johnston, 2006). This suggests that the system that devises and considers bids for public works is skewed to favor major companies in Japan with the net effect of continuously harnessing cheap Okinawan labor.

In this intimacies of empires space, most *kōkyō kōji* in Okinawa employ part-time, predominantly male daily laborers. Public works undertakings are sites where Japanese “pro-base” political interests are blatantly expressed under the justification of “job growth” and economic relief to the locals due to base-related public work demands. One example of the mingled involvement of the U.S. and Japanese empires is depicted in the following picture from an issue of the *Okinawa Times*, one of the major Okinawan newspapers. The picture shows a struggle between Japanese Department of Defense construction workers at the Henoko offshore base construction site and anti-militarist activist groups resisting the construction (Figure 1).



Figure 1. *Okinawa Times* (May 18, 2007)

The anti-militarist activists in the dinghies are shown blockading a local Okinawan fisherman’s boat, which is loaded with equipment meant to conduct environmental assessments that, once completed, will allow construction of the Henoko military site. The local fishermen were hired by the Japanese government to ship construction materials for between 50,000 yen to 80,000 yen (approximately \$470 to \$760) (Urashima, 2005).

Previously unemployed Okinawan people are hired as the main labor force in constructing the new U.S. military offshore base. The structure of the interdependent empires pits Okinawans, activists and local fishermen, against each other. As the confrontation ensued, Japanese Department of Defense employees in black rubber boats observed and videotaped the conflict. Thus, this image captures the tripartite relationship between the three institutions and the system of the militarized *kōkyō kōji* project.

Cooley and Marten discuss the ways in which the U.S., the Japanese government, and the Okinawan prefectural government together constitute “three distinct actors, each with separate identifiable interests,” whose political relationship they call “trilateral, as opposed to bilateral” (p. 572).⁵⁾ A trilateral political relationship, Cooley and Marten argue, “has allowed the American base presence to endure despite decades of protest, while other bases (such as those in the Philippines and Puerto Rico) have been shut down in the face of seemingly similar activism” (p. 579). A triangular relationship, however, assumes equal political and economic standing between the three political entities and ignores that Okinawa is maintained as a colonial space. Ichiro Tomiyama argues that after Okinawa lost its capital in the 1920s, an infestation called *sotetsu jigoku* or “cycad hell” caused a crash in the world sugar market, and Okinawan farm villages collapsed, eventually impacting the rest of the Okinawan economy (2011). At this time, Tomiyama argues, Okinawa and Okinawans became a “matter of no importance” to Japan, or *dōdemo ii sonzai*. This situation made Okinawans *ryū-min* (displaced people), a group without the state, which in turn led to a new colonialism through militarism.

Advancing Tomiyama, I argue that this new form of colonialism has been facilitated under the guise of a new form of capital, *kankō* (tourism), which promotes the subtropical nature as its resource, maintaining Okinawans’ cultural displacement in their own native land. *Kankō* is a cultural form that displays Okinawa and its people as exotic natives to Japan. In other words, *kankō* is a space of colonialism where Okinawa Island itself and its people become commodities to be consumed.

***Kankō*, or Tourism**

As the only subtropical region of Japan, Okinawa has become the most popular tourist destination for Japanese. Marketing the clear, emerald green ocean with its colorful coral reefs, the unique flora and fauna, deep blue skies, beautiful sunsets, and miles of white sandy beaches as natural resources, Okinawan tourism entertains over five million people annually—a number approximately three times larger than the population of Okinawa itself (Tourism Survey by Okinawan Prefectural Government, 2004). Ninety-eight percent of the annual visitors are Japanese from Japan.⁶⁾

Through the production and distribution of popular culture based on Okinawan identity—such as the show *Churasan* (“beauty” or “beautiful” in the Okinawan language), popular performers from Okinawa such as Orange-Range, Max, Kiroro, Speed, Da Pump, and Namie Amuro, to name a few—an “Okinawa boom” has arisen, a phenomenon which

commodifies Okinawan-ness through the Japanese media. For example, the founder and director of the Okinawa Actors School, Masayuki Makino, produced the aforementioned popular celebrities from Okinawa and is credited with starting the Okinawa boom phenomenon.⁷⁾ Makino once expressed his beliefs of Okinawan inferiority in a popular TV news program, *News 23*, saying that high school education [for his students] is worthless; he thinks that Okinawan kids do not have to go to school. If they have time for school, that time is better spent thinking of how to entertain audiences because that is their essential talent (Makino, 1996, pp. 33–34).⁸⁾

The popular show *Churasan* aired from 2001 to 2007 and drew a picture of the subtropical landscape of Okinawa as beautiful and identified Okinawans as having a “happy-go lucky,” “nurturing,” and “everything will be OK” attitude, as if these traits are central to the essence of Okinawan-ness. Such characterizations staged a welcoming for visitors from mainland Japan.⁹⁾ In fact, over time, such shows have aided in the “Okinawa boom,” which in turn, has increased the number of visitors to Okinawa from Japan and has also contributed to a large domestic population shift from Japan to Okinawa. In 2004, 25,046 Japanese migrated to Okinawa, the fourth highest migration in Japan.¹⁰⁾

Mathew Allen, in *Identity and Resistance in Okinawa* (2002), argues that the “Okinawan boom” functions as a performative act of developing regional discourse, which takes place in the form of local festivals and popular rock music by Okinawan artists who incorporate Okinawan language in their lyrics about Okinawan uniqueness. Allen argues that this popular Okinawan fever often relies on, and is legitimized by, “essentialist representations of ‘Okinawanness,’ as distinguished from mainland Japanese: Okinawa is represented as peaceful, linguistically unique, a marine paradise, culturally distinct from mainland Japan, an excellent investment choice, an ‘international’ community, the home of karate, and so on” (p. 11). The “essentialist representations” of Okinawan cultural heritage and traditions are multi-directional practices. This fantastical representation of Okinawa stages the Okinawan landscape as an exotic “Native” to be consumed by the tourist from Japan and also continues this construct of fantasy of Okinawans as exotic “Natives” for the tourist gaze.

To many Okinawans living through the “Okinawan boom,” the increased number of tourists on the islands and the construction of new shopping malls, roads, hotels, and tourist facilities all seem to be a sign of economic prosperity. This facade eschews economic realities. The Okinawan unemployment rate of 7.4 percent, which is significantly higher than the Japanese average of 3.9 percent (Japanese Ministry of International Affairs and Communications, 2007), shows that booms of tourism in Okinawa have done little to bring *kōkyō kōji* (construction works) or made progress in creating employment longevity for Okinawans.

In fact, following the revenue generated from U.S. military bases since the formal occupation of the U.S. ended in 1972, Japanese tourism is the most successful business in Okinawa. However, this success fails to benefit Okinawans. A close examination of tourism in Okinawa illustrates that, rather than acting as a boost to the local economy, tourism

systematically increases the dependency of Okinawan economic interests on Japan's economic conditions.¹¹⁾ Over 80 percent of the major resort hotels in Okinawa are owned by Japanese interests, and construction work for tourist developments involves Okinawan local firms only as sub- or third-party subcontractors. Even in Onna Village, where the majority of tourist hotels are concentrated, only 12 percent of hotel employees are local Okinawans.

Construction of Intimacies in the Space of 'Militourism'

In *Militarism, Tourism and the Native* (2001), Teresia K. Teaiwa explores these three concepts as an interrelated system that affects Native peoples' everyday life, which she calls "militourism." Teaiwa understands militarism and tourism "not as discrete institutions or industries, but as complex ensembles: they constitute ambivalent joints between the Native and others, sometimes requiring the Native to become Other and at other times demanding that the Native become more native—not colonizer, traveler, etc." Teaiwa argues that "[M]ilitarism and tourism exceed the boundaries of institutions/industries, implicating the Native in multiple ways; but the Native is not only an effect; she/he also shapes and determines the characteristics of militarism and tourism in Oceania." Thus, militarism and tourism are as much an ideological axis of analyses as they are descriptors of physical processes.

Cynthia Enloe argues that the naturalization of militarism in a social landscape has the significant effect of keeping people uncurious about another's political purpose or political power structure (2004). The idea of "militourism," thus, can be expanded as an ideology that naturalizes the operations of militarism and imperialist political economies and constructs and defines the Native's social landscape and living experiences; this, in turn, naturalizes the Native's active participation in sustaining the political economy of "militourism" as laborers, consumers, and exotic indigenous objects.

Many scholars argue that Okinawan tourism began with the Okinawa Ocean Exposition in 1975, three years after Okinawa's reversion from U.S. military rule to Japanese rule. This marked the first and largest tourist event sponsored by the Japanese government in Okinawa (Oshiro, 2001; Taji, 2004). However, Suzuyo Takazato, a co-chair of the first Okinawan anti-militarist feminist group, Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence (OWAAMV), explains that Okinawan tourism developed in relation to prostitution established for U.S. servicemen during the military occupation. Takazato (1996) lists three reasons for the link between Okinawan tourism and prostitution: 1) the presence of the U.S. forces stationed in Okinawa since 1945; 2) a sixteen-year delay in legislating the Anti-Prostitution Law, which was equivalent to a 1956 law enacted in Japan and which would have protected Okinawan women; and 3) extreme Okinawan poverty during the period of U.S. military occupation of Okinawa. Takazato's analysis of the infrastructure of "militourism" remains relevant and makes the key point that militarism and tourism not only function interdependently but are also dependent on gendered systems. This sug-

gests that the construction of extreme poverty and unemployment for Okinawans is not circumstantial.

A study conducted by OWAAMV shows that during the twenty-seven years of U.S. military occupation (1945–1972), many Okinawan women were compelled to work as prostitutes to support their families. Takazato (1996) points out that the desires of Okinawan officials to retain income from prostitution and to prevent rapes and assaults by U.S. soldiers against local people were the main reasons for delaying the Anti-Prostitution Law. Although the increased value of the yen against the dollar has weakened the prostitution business catering to U.S. soldiers, the red-light districts remain. Recently, Filipina women have been trafficked from their homeland to work cheaply and have, by-and-large, replaced Okinawan women in the sex trade business.

I advance Teaiwa's neologism, "militourism," to highlight the relationships of Okinawan labor to Japanese and U.S. military personnel within the construction of intimacies of empires. The militarism is a system that provides jobs to construction workers for military bases, construction workers and employees for entertainment venues such as Americanized pubs, bars, dance clubs, and markets, and finally, workers as prostitutes around U.S. military bases in Okinawa. By effectively maintaining and naturalizing this militarized space, Japan keeps Okinawa as an internally colonized space. The politically strategic imposition of U.S. military bases is a Japanese state-sanctioned societal institution that has the effect of exploiting Okinawans as laborers dependent on the U.S. military.

The space of "militourism" is an analytic vocabulary for the interpretation of signifying phenomena and hegemonic technologies as they filter into the microstructures and organization of the everyday lives of Okinawan people who consume, define, and defy Okinawan-ness. The "militourist" space (re)produces "Okinawans" as active participants in the imperialist regime. Specifically, the "militourist" space exists as a space where Okinawans associate the military with tourism and security as necessitating the presence of the U.S. military bases. This conscription of consciousness is accomplished through Okinawan participation in the intertwined structure of military-related jobs and the tourist industry. Japanese-sponsored state tourism constantly idealizes and commodifies the images of Okinawa, in gendered terms, as a land of healing, relaxation, and longevity, and of exotic food prepared from indigenous vegetables and fruits. On the other hand, the presence of the U.S. military bases is often presented as representing strength and power.

Seungsook Moon (2005) discusses how the militarization of the modern state operates by transforming its citizens into integral participants in the global economy. Moon delineates this process by developing a concept of militarized modernity as a gendered procedure. Moon explains the ways in which the modernization of South Korea was influenced by Japanese colonial rule followed by postcolonial U.S. regimes in order to transform Korean citizens into "useful and docile members of the nation through 'discipline' and physical force, and the integration of military service into the organization of industrializing economy" (p. 18). Moon defines militarized modernity as "an integral part of

modern nation building” and uses this analysis to “capture the peculiar combination of Foucauldian discipline and militarized violence that permeated Korean society in the process of building a modern nation in the context of the Cold War” (p. 7).

Moon also argues that militarized modernity and citizenship was a way of organizing and controlling the empires’ citizens under the name of modernizing projects while transforming them into a workforce to sustain the militarized economy. Similarly, the Japanese government established its nation state under the name of public works projects after the reversion of Okinawa to Japan. In addition, in the space of “militourism,” labor is largely organized by gender, with male construction workers and female tourist workers. There is a large amount of money for projects under the “Okinawan Developmental Plan.” Such economic sectors have totaled nine hundred billion yen since Okinawa’s reversion to Japanese administration in 1972, more than the combined annual value of Okinawa’s two major economic sources—tourism and direct military base revenues (Cooley & Marten, 2006; Military Base Affairs Office of the Prefecture of Okinawa, 2004). Other public works projects include national highway construction, harbors, airports, telecommunication, museums, public libraries, and especially the last *k*, *kankō*, or tourism development.

Sturken also offers a key to understanding tourism in relation to modernity and indigenous people: “[T]ourism is a central activity in the experience of modernity, in which leisure practices are a crucial counterpart to the world of industrial and postindustrial work” (p. 10). Sturken argues that in modern society the role of the tourist is a crucial identity and involves a parallel construction of the “native.” Dean MacCannell explains that the victory of modernity through the tourist industry is in “its artificial preservation and reconstruction” of Native culture, which in turn obscures the process of the destruction of indigenous history and culture. Much work has been done on this subject in other regions, which have strong parallels to the situation in Okinawa.

Adria L. Imada’s analysis of the commodification of hula in the context of Hawai‘i informs complexities of modernization of Okinawa as a tourist site and the construction of Okinawan-ness, that is, making Okinawans more “native” as a cultural production in association with imperialism:

Some haole [white people] considered Hawaiian cultural practices their own heritage and, by extension, their profitable property. This is not to say that they did not feel genuinely attached to Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. Yet this eulogizing of a “purer” hula was a form of “imperialist nostalgia,” the mourning of colonizers of what they have transformed. This nostalgia discursively erases the complicity of those who contributed to that change. Hawaiian cultural practitioners were caught in this contradictory logic. For Hawaiian practices to remain authentic, they could not afford to be tainted by market relations, but this “pristine” culture was in turn eagerly appropriated and commodified by the tourist industry. Hawaiians found themselves trying to ensure cultural reproduction while participating in capitalist markets.¹²⁾

Imada’s analysis of cultural production of Hawaiian “authenticity” through tourism suggests the ways in which the indigenous peoples of Hawai‘i actively participated in and are incorporated into the treadmill of the production system. At the same time, Imada’s

analysis observes how indigenous Hawaiian people have contradictory feelings about their culture being appropriated and commodified. Thus, the objectification of an indigenous culture can be produced under tourist regimes.

The presence of U.S. military bases and personnel make the existence of tourist modernity more complex for the Okinawans. Cynthia Enloe’s study of the relationship between tourist and militarist industries in Okinawa reveals that tourist modernity in Okinawa functions with the active participation of Japanese women and U.S. military personnel in constructing a gendered relationship:

At the same time that the declining value of the dollar against the yen was keeping visits to local bars and discos too expensive for the lowest paid American military personnel, Japanese young women from the main islands were developing internationalized consumer tastes and new ideas about adventure. Some came to Okinawa to have an “experience” with an American man. The American sailors and marines, in turn, seemed to undergo a reconceptualization of themselves; they made adjustments now to appear not just as commercial patrons but as potential boyfriends. (Enloe, 2000, p. 122)

Enloe’s study illustrates that tourism is not just an innocent mode of leisure but a system that creates gendered and intimate relationships between Japanese women and U.S. service members who stay temporarily in Okinawa. Tourism makes U.S. service members active participants in the construction of the tourist landscape in Okinawa.

Also, tourism can be understood as a mechanism that makes Okinawans into tourists. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines tourist rather simply as: “one that makes a tour for pleasure or culture.” In this definition, everyone, whether local or non-local, can be a tourist. Marita Sturken argues that the construction of tourist sites is a mode that encourages the local people to experience their own place as the subjects of history “through consumerism, media images, souvenirs, popular culture, and museum and architectural reenactments” (p. 9). In Sturken’s definition of tourists, Okinawans can be conceptualized as tourists in their own locale and participants in consuming images of Okinawa and Okinawans, as they understand and re-learn their own history and reconceptualize the architecture that constitutes the “Okinawan” landscape. Especially for those who were born after World War II and the U.S. military occupation, the landscape of the entire island of Okinawa is a “militourist” space for them to learn, experience, feel, and enjoy their history and who they are. As tourists in their own land, Okinawans reformulate what it means to be Okinawan. That is to say, as visitors in their own land, younger generations of Okinawans born after the establishment of the Occupation are conceptually displaced natives although they are in their own land. Furthermore, in the “militourist” space, Okinawans’ bodies are removed from their history and traditional landscape and re-placed in a staged exotic and commercialized subtropical “indigenous” island.

Discussion and Conclusion

Both U.S. militarism and Japanese imperialism in Okinawa combine to regulate most

aspects of the infrastructure on the island. As interlocked systems, both construct militarized masculinity as natural and desired and Okinawan land as the gendered identity of a woman's body as violable and commodified. The two industries work together to define and control local labor. More specifically, a gendered and colonized labor force is necessary to serve the space of "militourism," which affects and is affected by an intimate relationship between U.S. service members (especially male soldiers) and Okinawan women as their girlfriends, wives, and laborers. In this intimate regime, Okinawan women's bodies are constructed as exotic and are sexually objectified as potential wives, girlfriends, and prostitutes for U.S. soldiers. In this context, Okinawa Island itself serves as an object under control. Okinawan land is politically, culturally, and socially constructed as nurturing, exotic, healing, and entertaining.¹³⁾

The structural economic dependency of the Okinawan people on military base income, tourist income, or income from construction projects such as that of the Henoko offshore helipad base produces a citizenry under the imposed hegemonic control of intertwined U.S. and Japanese empires. There is a tendency to discuss militarism and tourism as separate areas of study. However, in a highly militarized region of indigenous peoples in the Pacific, for instance as in Hawai'i, Guam, or the Philippines, to name a few, and particularly in Okinawa, one can observe the repeated pattern of the co-existence between tourist industries and military complexes and their dependency on gendered relationships with indigenous peoples.

I have shown the workings of the U.S. and Japanese empires at the intimate levels where the three *ks* intersect and the ways in which both empires transcend territorial borders as well as the sovereignty defined by international boundaries. The question remains, how can we come to understand Okinawan sovereignty?

An Okinawan poet and scholar, Ben Takara, explains his insistence on claiming the indigenous rights of Okinawans as a way to achieve spiritual revolution "to regain our [Okinawan] history, [my] story, and rights to self-determination, and to nurture pride and self-respect for Okinawans in order to resist the state-sanctioned system that attempts to obliterate Okinawan culture and history" (Takara, 2003, p. 238). What Takara applies here is the framework of sovereignty and Okinawan people's indigenous rights.

In *The Politics of Indigeneity* (2005), Maaka and Fleras affirm that in order to account for differently understood indigenous rights in various indigenous nations and communities, it is important to theorize indigeneity not necessarily as a form of claiming independence or succession but as a political ideology and social movement by which a politicized awareness of original occupancy provides a principled basis for making claims against the state (p. 53). It is through this framework that Okinawan indigeneity is articulated, not as a fixed identity category, but as a political discourse that helps to transform U.S. militarism and neocolonialism in Okinawa.

Joanne Barker, in *For Whom Sovereignty Matters* (2005), invites a more complex and flexible understanding of the articulation of indigenous sovereignty in order to encompass different political subjects:

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Sovereignty is historically contingent. What it has meant and what it currently means belong to the political subjects who have deployed and are deploying it to do the work of defining their relationships with one another, their political agendas, and their strategies for decolonization and social justice. Therefore to understand how it matters and for whom, sovereignty must be situated in the historical and cultural relationship in which it is articulated. (p. 26)

Barker suggests that indigenous peoples’ sovereignty should be situated in the historical and cultural formations as well as within the specific social conditions that produce its meanings (p. 26). From this framework, the term sovereignty has a political meaning that addresses the independence of indigenous peoples from a nation-state but that does not necessarily need to mean complete autonomy. Thus, the framework of indigeneity poses a possibility of redefining the sovereignty of Okinawa beyond territorial sovereignty in addressing the contemporary colonial state of Okinawa under U.S. militarism. In this way, elaborating the rights of indigeneity has become an effective political strategy of resistance and cultural resilience for anti-militarist Okinawans.

Notes

- 1) I chose to use the term “space” instead of place, as in Foucault’s “milieu,” to understand contemporary Okinawa’s situation as colonial as well as to argue how empire transcends territorial boundaries and severity. Foucault defines “milieu” as “a field of intervention in which, instead of affecting individuals as a set of legal subjects capable of voluntary actions—which would be the case of sovereignty . . . one tries to affect, precisely a population. I mean a multiplicity of individuals who are and fundamentally and essentially only exist biologically bound to the materiality within which they live” (Foucault 2007: 20–21). Annmaria Shimabuku delineates the term in the context of miscegenation in Okinawa from 1945 to 1952.
- 2) In addressing the military violence resulting from the three *ks* experienced daily by Okinawans, these family members have a difficult time articulating their opposition in the public sphere, such as through public elections, in addition to expressing these concerns in their own private space because such a conversation could make family members uncomfortable towards each other, if not outright antagonistic.
- 3) U.S. military bases are located in all 50 American states and maintain a massive presence globally. The 2007 Department of Defense Base Structure Report revealed that the U.S. sustained more than 190,000 soldiers and 115,000 civilian employees in 909 military bases and structures throughout 46 countries and U.S. territories (Lutz, 2009, p. 1). The majority of these bases are located in Germany and in Japan (130) (DOD Base Structure Report 2007). Among the U.S. military bases that Japan hosts, 75 percent of the land exclusively used by the U.S. military is located in Okinawa (p. 287). See also *U.S. Military Issues in Okinawa* (2004) published by the Okinawa Prefecture.
- 4) I have written on the idealized “America” in a base town known as the American Village. See Ginoza, A. (2007). “The American Village in Okinawa: Redefining Security in a ‘Militourist’ Landscape.” *The Journal of Social Science* 60.
- 5) At the national level, the empires guarantee their interdependency to each other on the premise that the United States provides Japan with military security under the provisions of the pacifist Article Nine of the Japanese constitution, which limits Japan’s military spending. In return, the Japanese government agrees to pay more than fifty-seven percent of the annual direct stationing costs of the United States Forces Japan (USFJ) (Cooley and Marten, 2006).
- 6) The index of Okinawan tourism for 2003 shows that 98 percent of the 5,080,000 tourists that year were from Japan. The level of Okinawa’s financial dependency on tourism was 16.1 percent in 2001, trailing revenue from outside the prefecture (56.1 percent) and followed by military base revenues (8.0 percent) (Tourism Survey by Okinawan Prefectural Government, 2004).

- 7) Okinawa Actors School. http://www.actor-s.org/?page_id=172
- 8) In the Japanese education system, high school education is not mandatory. Some young girls upon their graduation from middle school (9th year) chose to go to the Actors School instead of receiving a higher education.
- 9) This commodification of Okinawanness is reinforced by scholars from Okinawa. Kuniko Gushiken, for example, reasons that one of the socio-cultural reasons for Okinawa having the highest birth rate in all of Japan is due to this Okinawan optimistic and happy-go-lucky attitude. Gushiken argues that a distinct element of this optimism is an Okinawan family support system that accepts a high number of “unplanned” births. However, this “happy-go-lucky nature” of Okinawans needs to be examined as a complex cultural form that Okinawans developed as a survival skill, rather than an essence, to overcome ongoing oppression and social inequality as well as to appear more accommodating to a tourist economy through depicting themselves as “natives” with a “happy-go-lucky” character.
- 10) In 2004, 25,046 Japanese migrated to Okinawa, the fourth highest migration in Japan following rates of migration to the metropolitan area Tokyo and its suburbs of Kanagawa and Chiba
- 11) The statistics relating to Okinawa’s tourist industry for 2003 shows that 98 percent of the 5,080,000 tourists that year were from Japan. The level of Okinawa’s financial dependency on tourism was 16.1 percent in 2001, trailing revenue from outside the prefecture (56.1 percent) and followed by military base revenues (8.0 percent) (Tourism Survey by Okinawan Prefectural Government 2004).
- 12) See Adria L. Imada in Renato Rosaldo’s *Culture and Truth* (1993). The concept “imperialist nostalgia” is Rosaldo’s concept quoted in Imada. Rosaldo employs this concept to examine the colonial Philippines. Yet Imada considers this concept useful in analyzing the Hawaiian context.
- 13) Many scholars in the field of Pacific studies, such as Vicente Diaz, Teresia K. Teaiwa, Haunani-Kay Trask, Vernadette Gonzalez, and Kehaulani Kauanui, began to address this intersecting system of tourism and militarism. Although issues of tourism and/or militarism in Okinawa have been seldom considered part of Pacific studies, my area of study of tourism and militarism can be located within the lineage of those Pacific studies scholars.

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