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米国留学への動機：
米国占領下の沖縄におけるガリオア留学制度と留学生のライフストーリー

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【研究論文】

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“Studying in the US was the Only Hope”:
Life Stories of GARIOA Students from Okinawa under US Military Occupation

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Abstract

The US Occupation of Okinawa from 1945 to 1972 has most often been discussed in terms of US–Japan relations at the macro level. However, both academics and the public also have recognized the importance of micro-level understanding of how the US military occupation and its ongoing presence have affected the lives of Okinawans. The life stories of Okinawans provide a deeper understanding of how different structural environments created the complicated and multi-layered experiences of individuals under the Occupation. By focusing on the life stories of Okinawans who studied in the United States under the GARIOA study abroad program, this article demonstrates how these Okinawans, who had direct contact with American society and culture through studying in the United States, experienced the Occupation. Their life stories not only illustrate how the unique situational contexts of postwar Okinawa were conducive to the different ways in which they conceived the idea of studying in the United States but also demonstrate how they engaged in what Ann Swidler called “a new strategy of action” during a period of upheaval.

Introduction

The Battle of Okinawa in 1945, one of the last ground battles of the Asia-Pacific War, led to the devastation of the Okinawan islands and a substantial number of civilian casualties. When the Asia-Pacific War ended with Japan’s surrender, Okinawa came under US military control and was separated from the rest of Japan. Okinawa was subsequently called “Ryukyu,” its name prior to its annexation by Japan in 1879. Although the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 ended the US Occupation of mainland Japan in 1952, Okinawans remained “stateless people, neither Japanese nor American citizens” under direct US military government rule, until Okinawa reverted to Japanese administration in 1972 (Johnson 6). In 1949, the US military government

in the Ryukyu Islands launched US study abroad programs that provided Okinawans with the opportunity, financed by scholarships, to study at American universities and colleges. The program received US Army funding, first from the Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) and later from the Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (ARIA) and the Ryukyu Command (RYCOM). Between 1949 and 1970, at least 1,045 Okinawans received scholarships.¹ On their return to occupied Okinawa, many of the study abroad participants became influential leaders in various fields, including higher education, business, and politics. They came to be known collectively as the *beiryu gumi*, or the “study in the US group.” Approaching the US study abroad program as a central site of postwar Okinawan leadership formation, I analyze the experiences of the program participants. Based on my interview research with the former study abroad program participants, this article pays particular attention to the processes by which these Okinawan students came to decide on studying in the United States, when not so long ago the United States had been an enemy nation and was still the current occupier.

The 27-year-long US Occupation of Okinawa—and its separation from mainland Japan—has sometimes been characterized as “a product of US-Japan collaboration” (Ota 285). Scholars who have examined the occupation of Japan, such as John W. Dower (1979) and Michael S. Molasky (1999), note that both the United States and Japan thought of the Occupation of Okinawa as a means to achieve their own ends. For the United States, Okinawa was a means to maximize the success of its occupation policies in mainland Japan, which included demilitarization and democratization, while indefinitely maintaining its military presence. For Japan, Okinawa was traded away “in exchange for an early end to the Occupation in the rest of Japan” (Dower qtd in Molasky 20–21). Although Okinawa officially “reverted” to Japanese administration in 1972, about 75 percent of all US military bases in Japan remain located in Okinawa, “occupying” about 20 percent of the area, even though Okinawa makes up less than one percent of the total land area of Japan. The US Occupation of Okinawa and continuing military presence there have most often been discussed in terms of US–Japan relations at the macro level. However, both academics and the public also have recognized the importance of micro-level understanding of how the US military occupation and its ongoing presence have affected the lives of Okinawans. The life stories of Okinawans provide a deeper understanding of how different structural environments created the complicated and multi-layered experiences of individuals under the Occupation.

By focusing on the life stories of Okinawans who studied abroad under the GARIOA program, this article demonstrates how these Okinawans, who had direct contact with American society and culture through studying in the United States, experienced the Occupation. Life stories of *beiryu gumi* demonstrate how the unique situational contexts of postwar Okinawa were conducive to the different ways in which they conceived the idea of studying in the United States. This article also shows how local Okinawans engaged in what Swidler (1986, 2001) called “a new strategy of action” to create alternative lives during a period of upheaval.² The

interviewees' narratives reveal the specific framings that explain their motivation and choices to study in the United States, which differed depending on their individual structural environments.

1. Cultural and Educational Exchange Programs during the Cold War Period

The establishment of cultural and educational exchange programs during the Cold War period played a crucial role in the US policy toward Asia, promoting American values of freedom and democracy and working to create what Christina Klein (23) has called a “global imaginary of integration” among politically allied societies during the period. Such ideals of international integration worked to represent idealized images of the United States as a racially tolerant nation and to win the “hearts and minds” of people worldwide. Natalia Tsvetkova’s work describes both US and USSR study abroad programs for students from their allied countries as a strategic way to “establish and maintain friendly political regimes in foreign states” (199) during the Cold War period. In postwar Japan under the allied occupation, the United States emphasized the importance of educational and cultural exchange. Naoko Shibusawa (2006) examines the story of former kamikaze pilots being brought to the US to be educated in the immediate postwar years. By presenting good models of Japanese citizens to Americans, the US justified the politics of building a new relationship with Japan serving as the US’s ally in East Asia. Shibusawa argues that the US government sponsored study abroad programs, such as the GARIOA scholarships, to present Japanese students as “junior allies in the Far East” or “students of democracy needing US guidance and mentoring” (176), which helped to engender public support for American policies regarding postwar Japan.

Scholars on cultural relations between the United States and Asia during the Cold War period have also explored the impact of US-initiated education and cultural exchange programs on peoples and societies under its occupation. Takeshi Matsuda (2007) reveals that enormous amounts of public funds were spent for cultural foreign policy purposes, and shows how Japanese academics, especially those pursuing the establishment of American studies in Japan, were financially aided by the United States through research grants and scholarships. Matsuda argues that this created “an abiding dependency on American generosity” among Japanese intellectual elites, whom he characterizes as “pathetically weak before authority and lamentably deficient in independence in thought and behavior” (248). In her study on the exchange program in postwar Okinawa under military occupation, Mire Koikari (2015) points out that actions of female Okinawan academics in the field of home economics helped to support the role of the US and its Cold War integrationist politics. Koikari claims that these Okinawan women, by engaging in women’s club activities, promoted “cultivating and sustaining mutual affinity and affiliation between the occupiers and the occupied” (9).

Whereas these studies illuminate the view of the United States toward postwar Japan and Okinawa, investigating the view of the occupied toward the United States as the occupier is also

crucial. As Miyagi Etsujiro's (1982) work suggests, postwar Okinawa is not only a site where the American view was projected upon Okinawa, but is also a site where Americans, Japanese, and Okinawans viewed each other and built their self-images based on the gazes of the others. This article pays close attention to the voices and stories of Okinawan study abroad participants. It examines how they made sense of their lives under military occupation and how their life stories contain their views of America, Japan, and Okinawa as well as their views of themselves. As Ikue Kina (2016) has described, to local Okinawans "America" means "the process of Okinawa's search for self-identity, particularly in its colonial encounters with America and Americanness" (444). In this sense, the life story method is crucial in this research because it allows us to understand how the former study abroad program participants express their perceptions of the program as well as their view of their own lives under US military occupation. According to Daniel Bertaux (7–9), the life story method examines a life, or a life as told. Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame (1981) points out that examining the ways in which people tell their life stories allows us to understand the ways storytellers make meaning of their own lives.

2. GARIOA Study Abroad Program under US Military Occupation

The US study abroad program was an integral part of the US strategy for the Occupation of Okinawa. The GARIOA fund was initially established by the US Congress in 1946 and enacted in the following year. According to the *Annual Report of Stateside Activities Supporting the Reorientation Program in Japan and the Ryukyu Islands*, which was prepared by the Reorientation Branch Office of the Secretary of the Army in 1950, the establishment of the US study abroad program was part of a project aimed at bringing "people of the occupied areas into the mainstream of democratic life." In 1950, the first year of the program, 50 Japanese and two Okinawan students were taken to the United States to study at colleges and universities, followed by 283 Japanese and 52 Okinawans in 1951. Japanese students stopped participating in the GARIOA study abroad program after Japan resumed independence in 1952, but continued to study in the United States through the Fulbright scholarship program. However, the Fulbright scholarship was not launched in Okinawa until 1972; therefore, during the occupation, the GARIOA study abroad program created a relatively high level of interest and competition among the youth in Okinawa who wanted to study at American colleges and universities, receiving approximately 200 applications each year. For example, for the 1962–63 program, there were 207 applicants, of whom 35 were selected (Golden Gate Club 1963).

The existing studies on the US Occupation of Okinawa such as Miyagi's (1982) have noted that the most important aspect of US cultural policies was treating Okinawans as if they belonged to a separate "racial" group from mainland Japanese. US military research undertaken prior to the Occupation constructed knowledge of a "racial difference" between Okinawans and people in mainland Japan; this research was published in the *Civil Affairs Handbook, Ryukyu Island*

and a document entitled “The Okinawans of the Loochoo [Ryukyu] Islands: A Minority Group in Japan,” both published in 1944. The latter publication, in particular, refers to the physical characteristics of Okinawans and reports that “in general terms, the inhabitants are shorter in stature than the people of the north and the body is more stocky. There is a more prominent nose, a higher forehead and less well-developed cheek bones than those of the Naichijin [mainland Japanese]. The skin-color is darker” (26). The report also contains photos of the facial features of ten Okinawan men and five Okinawan women. Furthermore, highlighting a view of Okinawans as a minority group within Japan who were often looked down on by other Japanese because of their poor social and economic status, as well as the differences in histories, languages, and cultures, the US military used the idea of “cleavage” between Okinawans and people in mainland Japan in psychological warfare against the Japanese on the mainland and in Okinawa (Ota 286). This campaign targeted the upper classes in particular, for a reason implied in “The Okinawans of the Loochoo [Ryukyu] Islands: A Minority Group in Japan”:

In a military administration and in post-war stabilization, the upper class Okinawans, who seldom share the feeling of inferiority of the common farmer or laborer type, could undoubtedly play an important part. It is among this higher group that pride in an Okinawan origin is often openly expressed. (123)

During the US Occupation, the distinction between Okinawans and Japanese was emphasized. (Miyagi 1982). Traditional Okinawan arts and cultural practices were promoted in the media such as radio and magazines. An Asian studies scholar, Steve Rabson (145), describes this strategy as “the American campaign for ‘dissimilation’” of Okinawans from Japanese, which the US Occupation authorities ran to convince Okinawans that they were not Japanese. As a way to support this campaign, the US Army funded the research and writing of histories that emphasized Satsuma’s invasion and exploitation of the Ryukyu Kingdom and discriminatory policies imposed on Okinawa by the Japanese government after Okinawa became a prefecture of Japan (Rabson 145). The Okinawan language was also promoted through radio programs. This was a distinct change from the time under the Japanese administrative rule, when Okinawan culture and language were devalued. Thus, differentiating their own rule from that of the Japanese, the US attempted to create pro-American attitudes among the Okinawans.

During the Occupation, US authorities strategically planned to use the US-educated Okinawans as idealized leaders to promote the American way of life, and to convince the people of Okinawa that US military presence was beneficial to them and the future of Okinawa. The US study abroad participants received widespread attention in Okinawan media. For instance, Japanese-language magazines published by the US Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands such as *Shurei no Hikari* and *Konnichi no Ryukyu*, which were distributed throughout Okinawa,

would often print stories about the students' experiences learning about American society and culture. These study abroad students were represented as pro-American leaders of postwar Okinawa who could build bridges between locals and Americans. Such images led to the creation among the general public in Okinawa of a negative perception toward those who studied in the United States as "the bodyguards of the US military"(GARIOA 16).

3. Narratives of *beiryu gumi*

I conducted open-ended and in-depth interviews with 38 former study abroad participants, ten women and 28 men, who currently reside in Okinawa. I interviewed 27 Okinawans who studied on the US mainland and another 11 who studied in Hawai'i. The participants' ages ranged between 66 and 86 years old, and they were born between 1929 and 1946. They stayed in the United States from two to six years between 1952 and 1973, and their ages at that time ranged from 19 to 34. During the interviews, I asked about their reasons for studying in the United States, experiences in the United States, and experiences after they returned to Okinawa. In this article, I present stories depicting the factors that motivated their study in the US. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the participants' names are not used in this article.

3-1: Studying in the US was "the Only Hope" in Devastated Postwar Okinawa

Early study program participants gave reasons that functioned as "push" factors—the things that motivated them to leave Okinawa. Ten of my interviewees studied in the United States from 1949 to 1955. Ranging between 78 and 86 years old at the time of the interviews, they were born between 1925 and 1933. Most of the participants who studied in the United States in the early 1950s emphasized that the conditions left by the war that devastated Okinawa were factors that pushed them to study in the United States. Because of the destruction of the island's infrastructure due to the Battle of Okinawa, the material situation in Okinawa was extremely dire. Most of these early participants described the study abroad program as "the only hope" to get out of their situation, emphasizing the limited opportunities available in postwar Okinawa.

The lack of opportunity to receive higher education in postwar Okinawa was also one of the major factors motivating these earlier program participants to study in the United States. Okinawa did not have a university prior to the Asia-Pacific War. It was not until 1952 that the University of the Ryukyus was established by the American military government. Prior to the war, Okinawans went to mainland Japan to receive higher education; however, once it began they had to cease their education and return to Okinawa. During US occupation, the Japan Study Abroad Program was also launched but during the early postwar period, there was more competition to attend Japanese universities in the program, and only limited fields such as medicine were available for Okinawan participants. The early study abroad program participants emphasized that they appreciated the opportunity to access higher education in the United States.

Moreover, the restricted travel and mobility between Okinawa and mainland Japan was another motivating factor to apply for the US study abroad program. Residents of the Okinawan islands were not allowed to travel to other places within Japan or elsewhere during the US Occupation, and there were limited numbers of books that students could read in local schools. Thus, many felt that participating in the US study abroad program was the only way they could gain mobility.

Push factors played a major role for the Okinawan students who studied in the United States in the earlier period. Rather than seeing the United States as a former enemy nation of the Asia-Pacific War, they felt that the United States was a place that could provide them with opportunities to escape their current difficult situation and step forward to create their own alternative future. This future-oriented trajectory of action reflects how their situational environment did not allow them much capacity to negotiate, leading them to invest in the future-oriented ideology of “hope” that framed their decision to study in the United States.

3-2: Surviving the Battle, Creating Alternative Lives

Experiences of the Battle of Okinawa

The experience of the Battle of Okinawa was also an important factor in their decision to study abroad. Many of the participants mentioned that the war was the most difficult part of their lives, and they felt that what they went through during the war encouraged them to study in the United States. The Battle of Okinawa took place from March to June in 1945. Some interviewees fought in the Battle alongside Japanese soldiers. Others experienced it as young children. Prior to the Battle, some of them had evacuated to the northern part of the main island of Okinawa or even to the southern part of Japan, and some experienced the war in other places such as Saipan, Korea, and Taiwan because their parents had migrated to these places before the war. These children returned to Okinawa as repatriates (*hikiagesha*) after the war ended with Japan’s defeat.

Those who fought in the Battle of Okinawa as Japanese soldiers felt that they owed something to those who did not survive, so they felt compelled to do their best; for many, that meant taking a step forward by studying in the United States. Mr. 1, who participated in the study abroad program in 1950, was 16 years old when he was drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army as a member of the Iron and Blood Student Corps or *Tekketsu Kinnōtai*. During my interview, Mr. 1 emphasized that all he wanted to do when the war ended was to go back to school and study. He felt that he needed to study hard for those young lives whose futures were taken away because of the war. Mr. 1 felt that studying was also a hopeful action that expressed a desire for continued survival. Other interviewees who experienced the war as Japanese soldiers, such as Mr. 6 and Mr. 2, emphasized similar feelings of wanting to do their best “for the sake of our friends who died in the Battle.”

Other participants were much younger during the Battle of Okinawa. Their war experiences as young children did not engender a feeling of hatred toward Americans; they often had

better images of Americans in comparison with Japanese soldiers. Having witnessed the cruelty of Japanese soldiers, these war survivors found the American soldiers less cruel. Mr. 25 experienced the war as a child of eight. He recalled that during the Battle of Okinawa, he was in the mountains hiding with his family. Mr. 25 remembers that he was not sure whether Japan or the United States was the enemy because he was afraid of both Japanese and American soldiers. However, he felt that he was more afraid of Japanese soldiers, seeing them as more rigid; they would give strict orders all the time and heavily punish those who did not follow the orders or who broke something (Interview 25, 2011). He often heard negative stories about these soldiers from his father, who worked for the Food Organization or *Shokuryo Eidan*, a military organization that assisted Japanese soldiers in Okinawa by providing them with food. Mr. 25 said, "Choosing to go to the US for a study abroad destination over Japan was a natural choice for me." Mr. 25 participated in the study abroad program in 1964.

Mr. 26, who also participated in the US study abroad program in 1964, shared a similar viewpoint as Mr. 25. He was seven years old when he experienced the Battle of Okinawa in Miyako Island. His family was safe; however, as a young child, he saw his house being bombarded and burning, and he remembers being very frightened. He recalled that "as a young child, I was not sure who was on our side or our enemy. These things were not clear to me" (Interview 26, 2011). His parents let Japanese army soldiers stay at his house. He remembers that he and his family paid much attention to these soldiers, making sure to take good care of them.

Some witnessed inhumane acts by American soldiers during the war. Mr. 7 was fourteen years old when the Battle of Okinawa started. He knew that Japan was fighting the war against the United States, and he believed that Japan would win the war. He grew up with his mother and he was the oldest of three brothers. His mother decided to evacuate from Itoman in the south to the northern part of Okinawa. He evacuated in a group of ten or so, including a couple of young women. On the way north, his group encountered some American soldiers and he remembers that these young women were taken away by the American soldiers. Even at his age, he knew what was happening to these women. After the war ended and he returned to Itoman, he was shocked to see that nothing could be identified in his home city because the whole city was so devastated. He still remembers the feeling of emptiness. However, soon after that, a school opened that was organized by an Okinawan emigrant to Hawai'i who had returned and started teaching English. Mr. 7 attended the school and studied English for the first time. He felt very grateful to have a school to attend. He still remembers his feeling of happiness when his English was praised by the teacher. That was the main reason why he began to be interested in English. He remembers that he saw America as a place of hope, in comparison with the Japanese militarism that had brought about the war and the resulting devastation of Okinawa and loss of many lives. He participated in the study abroad program from 1955 to 1957.

War experiences outside Okinawa

Within the half year prior to the American military forces' invasion of Okinawa, approximately 60,000 people from the main island of Okinawa evacuated to Kyushu, the southern island of mainland Japan, and approximately 20,000 from the neighboring islands of Okinawa evacuated to Taiwan.

Mr. 5 was fourteen years old when he went with his family to Kyushu. It was difficult for his parents to decide whether they should evacuate because they knew that many evacuee ships were attacked and sunk by American Navy submarines. Tsushima Maru, which was one of the ships attacked, sank with more than 1,470 school children on board. His family decided to evacuate when his father was drafted into a security force. Because of his father's official government status, the other members of his family were able to take the last ship to Kyushu, only one month prior to the invasion of the American military forces on April 1. Mr. 5 and his brother stayed in a Buddhist temple in Oita prefecture in Kyushu. His mother became sick and later passed away. He felt helpless about his future because he had lost his dream of going to a military school and becoming a military cadet. However, there were many books at the temple, and the chief priest told Mr. 5 that he could read as many as he wanted. Mr. 5 spent most of the day reading, and he felt that reading became the only way to heal his desperate heart. He remembers reading the autobiography of Nitobe Inazo, who was one of the first Japanese who studied in the United States. While reading it, he dreamed about studying abroad even though he knew that it was not realistic at that time. He was also able to listen to the radio every day. He especially liked the English program where a native speaker of English gave an English lesson.

At that time, there was no such thing as radio in Okinawa. Even in mainland Japan, radio was not common. Because I stayed in a temple, I was able to listen to the radio. Even as a young child, the English that I listened to on the radio then was so real, which was different from what we learned at school in Okinawa. My interest in English and literature began then. I felt that I wanted to immerse myself in the English language as much as possible. (Interview 5, 2010)

He developed strong interest in using "real" English, and often talked to native speakers of English, such as American soldiers that he saw at the nearby train station. His war story demonstrates how the loss of his dream of becoming a Japanese military cadet and his experience during his evacuation to Kyushu changed his intended life course, after which he continued studying English and pursued his dream of studying abroad. Mr. 5 participated in the study abroad program in 1952.

Those who were born in the former Japanese territories, such as Taiwan and Saipan,

experienced wartime there. Mr. 12 lived in Taiwan until he was seven years old. His father worked for Shoka Bank. When the war ended with Japan's defeat, his whole family had to return to Japan as repatriates from the colonies. Because they could not return to Okinawa directly at that time, his family first went to Nara where his aunt lived. He remembers being very poor and not having anything to eat. He also remembers always stumbling along when he walked because he felt half dead from hunger, so his friends called him *yurei*, or ghost. One day, he saw American soldiers throwing chocolates and candies toward the street. His classmates were picking them up, but since Mr. 12 was too hungry to even stand up straight, he could not pick up any. He mentioned that his life got better when his family went to Okinawa because everybody was poor there, and people there still received rations from the US military. He recalls that receiving rations from American soldiers in Okinawa as a young child made those who grew up in that period have a less negative perception of America or Americans. He emphasized that his war experience made him think that he wanted to do anything to earn money because he did not want to ever again experience what he went through in wartime. Mr. 12 studied in the United States for four years from 1959 to 1963.

3-3: Longing for America: The “Cultural–Ideological Link” between Okinawa and America

In contrast to the early study abroad participants, who were motivated by their war experiences and the structural constraints of postwar Okinawa to leave and study abroad, those who went between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s had lives were less impacted by the war and tended to give reasons for their decision relating to “pull” factors—what attracted them to studying in the US. Nineteen of my interviewees studied in the United States between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s. Some students went for graduate schools in the US after completing their college education in Okinawa. These interviewees, ages 72–82 years old, were born between 1923 and 1933. Most of these interviewees also emphasized their *akogare*, or longing for American culture.

Ryukyu-America Cultural Centers, which were established in 1951, were places where students could gain information about the United States and related study abroad programs.³ Mr. 13, who studied in the United States from 1960 to 1963, spent much of his free time as a high school student at the cultural center, where he enjoyed reading magazines in English and looking at the photographs. Mrs. 33, who studied from 1965 to 1967, told me that going to the cultural center near her house and listening to classical music and jazz was her favorite thing to do when she was a high school student. She said that she preferred American music to Japanese traditional music like Enka, and felt that consuming American culture was a way of gaining higher social status. Mr. 17, who studied from 1961 to 1963, wanted to study in the United States because he loved English so much. Based on his experiences, the cultural center constructed positive images

of a possible destination for studying abroad. Mr. 13 stated that “from culture and education to the economy in the United States, everything looked gorgeous and rich, especially to people like us who grew up in war-devastated Okinawa as young children” (Interviewee 13, 2010).

The concept of the cultural–ideological link provides a way to understand how these Okinawan study abroad program participants originally decided to study in the United States. Sassen (1988) shows how the movement of manufacturing and agriculture from highly industrialized countries to the Third World creates what she calls “cultural–ideological and objective links” (19). Sassen’s concept of ideological links is helpful for understanding migrants’ subjective perspectives of migration causality. The particular images and knowledge produced about the United States during the US Occupation of Okinawa helped to shape Okinawans’ decisions to study in the United States.

For example, Mr. 25, who studied mechanical engineering in Detroit from 1964 to 1965, recalled that his interest in mechanics began when he was in elementary school, through his material connection with the American military base near his house. He grew up in Nago, located in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa, where American military bases were easily accessible to local Okinawans. This was in contrast to those in the middle of Okinawa, which were larger and often surrounded with wire fences, preventing casual entry. In Nago, however, these bases were often part of the grounds of elementary or junior high schools; therefore, local Okinawans in Nago could easily sneak into these facilities and pick up broken equipment such as refrigerators, which they fixed and sold. Watching the adults fixing these cast-offs, Mr. 25 learned about and developed an interest in mechanics. During the interview, he observed:

Compared with the made-in-Japan machinery such as the engines of automobiles, the made-in-the-USA ones were much better quality; even a young kid like me could notice the differences. (Interview 25, 2011)

The material linkage between Okinawa and the United States enhanced his feeling of *akogare* for America. Mr. 25 also recalled that he developed interest in English because of his interactions with American soldiers. He remembers that the children in the Genka area in Nago could play basketball and speak English very well because they played with American soldiers.

Mr. 26, who studied in the United States between 1964 and 1966, also noticed the material differences between Okinawa and the United States. He and his friends often said when they ate something that did not taste good, “I wonder if Americans could eat this kind of food” (Interview 26, 2011). In 1950s and -60s Okinawa, the economic and material differences between Okinawa and the United States were obvious. He recalls that he knew about such differences through watching local Okinawan women who married American GIs, because their dresses and make-up were different from those of other Okinawans. They also remember that when they were young

children there were more rations for local Okinawans provided for free by the military. The US military had sufficient food and supplies for their initial wartime plan to attack mainland Japan, and that food was later distributed to the Okinawan civilians.

Mr. 24, who studied in the United States in 1963, shared a similar episode. He worked as a garden boy at the home of an American military officer to earn his living and his tuition for the University of the Ryukyus. He was very surprised to see the affluence of the American family. He still remembers how shocking it was to see the flush toilet. Recalling that time, he told me:

In those days, we Okinawan locals even picked up the cigarettes that Americans threw away. We were that poor. Seeing the affluence of the American family while working as a gardener made me feel that I also wanted to live in such an environment. (Interview 24, 2010)

Personal contact with American families while in Okinawa made these Okinawans desire to go to the United States, and the study abroad program provided this opportunity.

The motivation of some Okinawan students who chose to study in the United States came from their connections with relatives and family members who had migrated there prior to the war. The students also had a positive image of the United States through their consumption of American culture circulated by the US military government in Okinawa. Narratives in Okinawa about the promise of studying in the United States created by both the military government and the student returnees came to form part of what Catherine Ceniza Choy (2003) has called a “culture of migration,” which allowed going to the United States to be seen as a viable option among the study abroad program participants.

Conversely, those who studied from around the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s witnessed the severe political situation in Okinawa and increasing tension between local Okinawans and Americans. In 1953, massive protests against the US Occupation began throughout Okinawa. Those former participants recalled how the military’s censorship made them conscious about what they said and what they did in public. Most of the former study abroad participants who studied between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s remember that if they were seen participating in any anti-US protests, they would not be allowed a chance to study in the United States, so they strategically avoided any political activity to remain eligible for the US study abroad program.

After 1958, the study abroad program was for graduate education only. Most of those who studied in the United States in the late 1960s already had jobs and their main reason for studying abroad was to improve their professional skills. For example, Mrs. 38, who studied between 1970 and 1972, explained that “to continue to be an English teacher, I needed to acquire better English language ability” (Interview 38, 2011). Mrs. 32 stated that her reasons for studying abroad were simply because she liked English and she wanted to earn more money. Those who studied in

the late 1960s felt that there would not be any opportunity to study abroad with scholarships after the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese control in 1972, and therefore they applied for the program while it was still available. Compared with the study abroad participants from earlier periods, participants who studied in this later period did not necessarily have strong ideological motivations for going to the United States. In other words, they did not have to justify their desire to study abroad because by the time they went, studying in the United States was not a unique option.

Conclusion

The narratives of GARIOA study abroad students from Okinawa under US Occupation show that they used different framings to make sense of their decisions to study abroad in the context of the socio-political structural conditions in which they were situated. Those who experienced the Battle of Okinawa saw the opportunity to study abroad or to study English as an alternative strategy to move forward from devastated circumstances. For many of the participants who studied in the United States in the early 1950s, push factors motivated them. Rather than seeing the United States primarily as a former enemy nation, they saw it as a place of hope and an opportunity for them to change their personal circumstances. For students who went between the late 1950s and early 1960s and whose lives were less impacted by the war, pull factors were more salient. Their longing for America, which was strengthened through the ideological links between Okinawa and the United States that were constructed during the US Occupation of Okinawa, played an important role in projecting positive images of the United States and shaping Okinawan students' desire to study there. The last group of students, who studied in the United States in the late 1960s, emphasized instrumental motives, pointing out that they did not want to miss out on an opportunity that would end with Okinawa's reversion to Japan. These clear differences in students' motivations demonstrate that it is important to recognize differences in the timing and structural context of their decisions.

The individual experiences of the US study abroad program participants cannot be summarized into one linear narrative. Each person's story and experience is unique; however, their narratives allow us to understand how unique situational contexts of postwar Okinawa were conducive to the different ways in which they conceived the idea of studying in the United States. Although this article focused on their experiences prior to studying abroad, their experiences in the United States were also uniquely informed by their status as both the former enemy of the United States but also the current colonized subjects. Their experience abroad affected their identity formation and negotiation (Yamazato 2012). Upon their return to Okinawa, some of the program participants stood up against the continued American military presence. Today, most of the study abroad participants continue to use their experiences and knowledge that they acquired through studying in the United States to contribute to the society in which they are now situated. In-

depth analysis of their life stories allows for a micro-level understanding of how the US military occupation and its ongoing presence affected and still affects the lives of Okinawans.

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Notes

¹ Of the 1,045 Okinawans who received scholarships to study in the United States, 200 students, about 20 percent, studied in Hawai'i. Program participants earned 28 doctorates, 262 master's degrees, and 155 bachelor degrees (Okinawa GARIOA Alumni Association 15).

² Ann Swidler's concept of "culture as toolkit" was very helpful: people take various pieces of cultural elements and use them to construct strategies of action ("Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies" 277). During unsettled historical periods, she argues, people engage in "new styles of strategies of action," as expressed in ideologies, to seek future alternatives to a difficult present (278). This helps us to explore how the study abroad program participants related to certain ideologies during the unsettled times of postwar Okinawa and whether these ideologies were a driving factor in decisions to study in the United States. Emirbayer and Mische (1006) expand on Swidler's concept and emphasize the importance of time in understanding people's agentic orientation of their actions. They argue that it is important to consider how different structural environments are conducive to people's perceptions of time and people's engagement with actions.

³ Scholars such as Alvah (2007) and Koikari (2015) also note that the cultural centers were maintained by the US government to disseminate positive images of US society and culture to the general public in Okinawa. There were six of them, including three on the main island of Okinawa, in Naha, Ishikawa, and Nago, and three on other islands, including in Hirata in the Miyako Islands, Ishigaki in the Yaeyama Islands, and Naze in the Amami Islands. They had popular programs that included English classes, exhibitions, and movies. Many of my interviewees who left for the United States in the 1960s stated that they became familiar with American culture and the English language through attending programs at the Ryukyu-America Cultural Centers.

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