

Gendered Security: Learning from Being and Feeling Safe on the Island of Guåhan/ Guam

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This paper tells a feminist story about militarization, security, and feeling safe in Guam. Gender plays an important role in this narrative because of how militarization and colonization construct and maintain masculinities and gender hierarchies based on power, strength, and the need for military protection. The paper presents conversations with Chamoru residents and their responses to a questionnaire about U.S. military bases and feelings of safety. The first section of the paper challenges gendered hierarchal and binary understandings of security, stressing the need to pay attention to both being and feeling safe. The second introduces Guam as a highly militarized space and as a colony of the United States, and the third introduces some conversations and questionnaire responses regarding the bases and being/feeling safe. The paper finds that while the U.S. military presence makes the island a target, many people say it makes them feel safe. This reimagines the myth of the need for protection and notions of security based on militarism and militarization, highlighting the idea that without decolonization and demilitarization, Guam can be “safe” only through unsafe ways.

Keywords

gender, Guåhan/Guam, security, colonization, militarization

In the spring and summer of 2017, Japanese people watched a show of public frenzy as North Korea conducted its missile tests. The national television station NHK cancelled regular programming, and “J-alert” warning sirens sounded in regions over which the missiles flew. Although

the missiles were not aimed at Japan, they flew through Japanese airspace, and the public’s reaction made it *feel* as if an attack was imminent. Moreover, the Japanese government successfully invoked the North Korean missile tests to garner support for changing Article 9 of the Japanese

Constitution and increasing the level and scope of Japan's military preparedness.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe responded to the hateful dialogue between U.S. president Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, which focused on the capability of North Korea's missiles to drop nuclear bombs on Guam and the mainland United States. The U.S. bases on Guåhan/Guam¹ fall within range of North Korea's Hwsang-12 missiles as well as China's "Guam killer" (Dong-Feng 26) intermediate-range ballistic missiles, so a nuclear attack on the island is not impossible (Gibbons-Neff, 2016). Guam, which American military strategists call the "tip of the U.S. spear" in the Pacific, houses large navy and air force bases, as well as one of the world's largest ammunition storage sites, and it is quite possible that

there are nuclear weapons on the island.² It is therefore not surprising that enemies of the United States see the island as a meaningful target.

While people in Guam understand this notion, questioning the U.S. military presence requires much effort. People strongly support the military, as it is one of the island's top two employers (the other being tourism), and most people in Guam have U.S. citizenship.³ Because citizenship was awarded through a unilateral decision by the U.S. Congress, the island's indigenous Chamoru⁴ residents have not had an opportunity to engage in the process of decolonization. A political status plebiscite has been called, but it remains unclear if or when the plebiscite will actually happen and who will be allowed to participate in it.⁵ Currently, educational activities in

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- 1 Guåhan is the indigenous name for the U.S. colony of Guam. Here I will use the term 'Guam' to emphasize the colonized status, except where Guåhan is used in the original.
 - 2 Although the United States does not disclose the location of its nuclear weapons deployments, Guam hosts a major munitions stockpile (Hicks 2014). Declassified reports and other research confirm that nuclear weapons were at Andersen Air Force Base at least until 1999, and they might well still be there or elsewhere on the island. In November, 2016, the situation in the north Pacific prompted resumption of nuclear deployments in the Pacific, including the first port visit to Guam by a nuclear-armed submarine since the late 1980's (Starr and Lendon 2016).
 - 3 U.S. citizenship was granted to Chamorus on Guam under the Organic Act of Guam in 1950. This was a unilateral act of Congress and did not involve self-determination. U.S. citizens on Guam do not have the right to vote for president, and have only a non-voting representative in the U.S. Congress. This means that although almost 40% of the island is taken for military purposes and the U.S. military is one of the two top employers on the island, people on Guam do not have an institutionalized way to voice their opinion about military policy or vote for the Commander in Chief of the U.S. military forces (See Na'Puti and Bevacqua 2015; Alexander, 2016a; Mercer, 2014).
 - 4 Naming is an important part of identity. The indigenous people of Guåhan are the Chamoru people. Alternative spellings include Chamorro (the more common, but frequently associated with the colonizer version) and CHamoru. See for example Taitano, 2014.
 - 5 The plebiscite is scheduled for 2018, but will most likely be delayed due to questions over who has the right to participate, e.g. only those defined as Chamorus under the Organic Act of Guam and their descendants, or other residents as well, and when the required voter registry will be completed.

Guam are underway based on three choices—*independence, free association with the United States, or statehood*—but the removal of U.S. bases is not a condition or stated goal for any of these, and until recently, the issue has not even been substantially discussed.

In 2006, the Roadmap Decision between Japan and the United States laid out plans for the transfer of U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam and an expansion of military facilities in the latter. When I began research on this military build-up in Guam in 2010, there was little talk about the bases, but people were very interested in identity—Chamoru and American. An environmental impact statement issued in conjunction with the build-up underscored differences between Chamoru and American values, and people were angry at the military's disregard toward land and water resources (Alexander, 2013).

Through a feminist lens, this paper looks at how people perceive the bases with regard to their own security. It presents multiple conversations with Chamoru and other residents between 2010 and 2018 and student responses to a questionnaire about feelings of safety, which were collected in 2015 and 2017. Some of the conversations lasted only 15 or 20 minutes while some interviews went on for several hours. This study does not portray these conversations as a single objective story that reveals the truth but rather as an understanding of politics that can be achieved only when we listen to multiple voices and pay attention to what people feel and what they say.

The paper is composed of three sections. The first discusses the idea of security, examining how state-centric approaches are gendered and are based on the myth of the need for protection. It suggests the need for alternative approaches that take individuals seriously and focus on their emotions, including what “feeling safe” means for them. The second section focuses on Guam as a colonial militarized space, and the third shows some conversations and questionnaire responses regarding the military bases as well as being and feeling safe. The paper concludes by suggesting that the gendered myth of the need for protection is being reproduced in Guam along with masculinities based on power, strength, and toughness, as well as feminized discourses of safety/security involving protection through militaristic means.

Thinking about security

The traditional understanding of international relations (IR) considers states as the referent object for security, and militarism lies at the center of what it means to be secure. State-centric approaches identify war as the main threat to security and military superiority as the solution. Feminist scholars have challenged the masculine and/or patriarchal bias in IR as well as its binary heteronormativity. They have also reconceptualized perceptions of security to “encompass myriad political, economic, and social relationships, as well as processes and practices” (Khalid, 2019, 39). Also see Reardon 1986, Enloe 2007, Tickner 1992, Wibbick 2011, Weber 2010, Ag-

athangelou and Ling 2009, Sylvester 2002, Shepherd 2013).

Feminist criticism has identified the importance of the personal in the international and of questioning the meta-narratives of the state, security, and politics. Feminist IR scholar Cynthia Enloe, for example, urges us to turn our feminist curiosity toward that which is taken for granted or assumed to be “natural.” This involves not only identifying where women are located but also looking at how meanings are masculinized and feminized. Enloe suggests that militarism, a “compilation of assumptions, values and beliefs,” and militarization, a “multi-stranded process by which the roots of militarism are driven deep down into the soil of a society” (2014:9, 2010), serve to reinforce masculine privileging. Applying such feminist curiosity to Guam, we can find a place where, until recently, even those seeking independence did not notice the military bases or recognize that they might be a problem (L.N., personal communication, 2010.5).

Feminist IR scholars have also shown how security is linked to the so-called need for protection based on the “belief that men can and should protect women” (Åse, 2019, 273). Feminist theorists argue that this associates femininity with vulnerability and weakness and masculinity with safety and control, which in turn justifies gender hierarchies and inequality. Higate (2019, 71), for example, states that “webs of masculinized social relations and the logics that shape them inhere with the power to influence access to economic and

political resources for subordinate others in the case of women or marginal men.” Among the various types of masculinities, militarized masculinity is particularly destructive and “especially likely to be imagined as requiring a feminine complement that excludes women from full and assertive participation in . . . public life” (Enloe 2014, 11). As an ideology, militarism rests on stereotypical dichotomies associated with masculinity and femininity. Eichler discusses “gendered militarism” as constructing “feminized populations in need of masculinized protection” (2019, 160). It is gendered in its reliance on, and reproduction of, hierarchal gender norms and relations, creating a dichotomous politics of protection based on masculinized protectors opposite feminized nations (Eichler 2019, 162, Enloe 2000, Runyan 1990).

Postcolonial scholars have also criticized the myth of protection. Colonization is violent process in which a civilized, rational, educated, and armed colonizer denigrates a chaotic, barbaric, feminized “other.” These gendered notions of exclusion and violence are “embedded in the imaginary of the state itself” (Parashar, 2017, 373). Militarism, militarization, and military bases have played an important role in furthering this colonial violence, exclusion, and expansion. They remain real and imagined symbols of military strength that depend on articulations of insecurity to which violence is seen to be the most effective response, thus perpetuating a militarized version of the “need for

protection” myth. The presence of military bases helps construct and reinforce securitized and gendered understandings of what is safe and unsafe and to normalize military solutions, making them seem the only and/or most reasonable choice. Where military bases are present, the attitudes of those who work at them and live in the surrounding communities become militarized, an ongoing process that brings the military into a range of social relations otherwise unrelated to war and/or war-making, making them seem “natural” or “normal.” As minds and bodies are colonized, so are understandings of what it means to be and feel safe. This synergy between forces of colonization and of militarization is particularly strong in colonies such as Guam, which were established primarily for strategic rather than economic purposes. Because militarization relies on gendered binaries of danger and safety predicated on power measured in terms of physical strength, more strength is therefore understood to mean more safety. In other words, higher levels of militarization become synonymous with higher levels of safety.

Feminist and postcolonial interventions have resulted in new understandings of the meaning of security and have helped recognize the importance of challenging established security narratives and developing new methodologies. Wibben (2011, 44), for example, suggests that the form of security narratives needs to be changed to challenge “violent practices that insist on the imposition of meanings that privilege

state-centered, military forms of security.” Agathangelou and Ling (2009) offer worldism as a way to recognize multiple worlds. Wibbin (2011) also discusses the importance of feelings of insecurity, yet it is only recently that emotion has entered the IR discussion (see for example Lutz and Abu-Lughod, 2008; Crawford, 2000; 2014; Bleiker and Hutchison, 2008, 2014; Mercer, 2014, Ahmed, 2014). Also, as Sylvester reminds us, even when emotions are addressed, “it is usual for feminists in international relations to keep their emotions to themselves and sometimes even the emotions of their subjects out of the picture” (2011, 687, 2011b).

Hutchison and Bleiker (2008, 2014) have shown that emotion, specifically fear, has never been absent from IR. Crawford (2000, 2014) and Mercer (2014) offer interventions as to the importance of emotions to politics and how the denial of such importance reproduces existing power relations. However, in mainstream IR, emotion becomes part of a masculine/feminine dichotomy where masculinized security, which involves rational, objective thinking and assertive action, is said to keep us safe while irrational, impulsive, or feminine ways of knowing are dangerous. Regardless of gender, in the institutionalized willingness to sacrifice their lives to protect others, soldiers become important symbols of how the military understands security and safety, which is rooted in rationality, physical strength, and cool toughness. Military masculinities are important in how they shape men’s understandings

of war and what it means to be a soldier (Enloe 2007). Nevertheless, emotions are clearly an important and increasingly acknowledged part of identity, culture, and politics. Like identities, emotions may be multiple, conflicting, and inconsistent.

Ling (2014, 579) argues that the field of IR “rarely theorizes emotion as a concept, theory, or method—until now.” Following Nandy (1988), Ling discusses how the “undeveloped heart” of British imperialism and colonialism was linked to psychological and cultural factors as well as to political and economic ones (580). This led to the rise of hyper-rational and hypermasculine states that “denigrate anything smacking of the feminine, including a sense of welfare and compassion for all, natives and aliens alike” (580). Ling uses a “worldist model of dialogics” to suggest the need to appreciate the multiplicity of emotions and concludes that “taking emotions seriously involves decolonizing our minds and our world politics” and steers us away from a single, hypermasculine model of the state (2014, 582).

In an extension of the myth of protection, masculinized states and militarism equate safety with protection, but being safe and feeling safe are not necessarily the same. We know that on a personal level, it is possible to be safe but not feel that way and to feel safe without necessarily being so. If we are to take emotion seriously, we also need to challenge understandings of

security that confuse being safe with feeling safe.⁶ Examining how militarization affects communities and identities is one way to make this conflation visible and to illustrate ways in which they do not necessarily go together.

Guam as a militarized and masculinized space

When thinking about issues of safety and security, feminist curiosity is useful in Guam because it requires a discussion of what should be protected by whom and in what ways. Like many small islands, Guam is a site of multiple and overlapping complexities. It is a site for both military bases and destination tourism, and its colonial political status is complicated. Geographically, it is the southernmost and largest of the Mariana Islands but since 1898 has been separated from the rest of the archipelago. It is a living illustration of the meaning of challenges to coloring-book understandings of borders by feminist, critical, and poststructuralist IR scholars who understand social relations not as dichotomous and impermeable but rather as multiple and mutually constitutive.

Guam also represents the discussion among Pacific scholars about the meaning of “islandness” and the relation between islands and oceanic spaces. For example, Epeli Hau’ofa (1994) challenges the focus on island land masses and suggested the term “Oceania,” stressing the islands’ oce-

6 The language of being and feeling safe is difficult. While often “safety” is used to refer to personal safety as opposed to national “security”, here “being safe” refers to the state of physical safety/security while “feeling safe” refers to the emotion of feeling safe/secure.

anic connections. Similarly, Teresia Teiwa uses “s/pacific n/oceans” in her discussion of the need to “erode the generic constructions on which both the military and tourist industries depend” (103) and her understanding of the fluidity of the Pacific (Teiwa and Slatter, 2013, 449). Guam illustrates the meaning of this challenge, as it is both enmeshed in the global network of American military facilities and is simultaneously seen and treated as an isolated, romanticized, and sexualized “paradise” that is politically unimportant and unable to manage its own affairs. Guam is a territory with an ambiguous status that has been exploited to legitimize, normalize, and perpetuate colonial practices. This includes its use for military bases and war fighting and its potential expendability when the United States faces certain threats (Davis 2015). In thinking about multiplicities of emotion, identifying and honoring Pacific Islanders’ experiences and how they are affected by (neo)colonialism can help deepen our understanding of security and boundaries, national or otherwise.⁷

In colonies such as Guam, military power and sophistication are a clearly tangible proof of colonial “superiority,” with military bases and their modern technology becoming living symbols of difference, domination, and desire. While Guam is depicted in tourist brochures as having

beautiful beaches and tropical motifs, it is one of the most militarized places in the world. In Guam, strategic significance and “expendability” resulted in Japanese occupation during WWII. This experience of lacking “protection” from the United States has helped perpetuate understandings of militarization as contributing to safety and security maintenance, as represented by the military bases, which is problematic since security is strongly tied to identity. Shepherd explains that “[t]he problem is then not merely that national security mobilizes a whole series of dichotomies that make it meaningful (security/insecurity, self/other, nation/world, male/female, war/peace and so on) but that the nation-state is secured against, as at the expense of, various internal and external *others*, whose security may be violated as a necessity” (2013, 85).

Guam was ceded to the United States in 1898 under the Treaty of Paris, which marked the end of the Spanish–American War. Placed under the jurisdiction of the navy, Guam was from the beginning used by the United States to protect its growing colonial interests in the Pacific. The island was occupied by Japan between 1941 and 1944, and both the occupation and retaking of Guam brought intense suffering to the island and its people. After the war, the United States continued to maintain military bases in Guam, taking

7 In this context, critiques of feminism as a Western and colonizing project by African and other scholars are also important. It is particularly meaningful to recognize the importance of diversities and tensions within the concept of feminism (See for example Kolawole, 2002; Sylvester, 2002).

land at will, often without remuneration. The 1950 Organic Act of Guam made the island an unincorporated, organized U.S. territory and put civilian rule into place, but the island remains highly militarized, with more than 30% of its land reserved for the military. Although the environmental impact of military expansion on the island has been discussed, for the most part militarization has been so normalized that such conversations are virtually invisible.⁸

Many people remain intensely loyal to, and unquestioning of, the United States military and its presence on their island. Some explain this as a discourse of “responsibility” going back to the “liberation” of Guam from the Japanese in 1944 and the cultural duty of the Chamoru to repay that “debt” (see Diaz, 2001; Perez, 2002). According to one veteran, “Joining the military is a rite of passage, a way to prove yourself as an adult. But the reality is that people from Guam are looked down on in the military because they are from a colony. They have to defend themselves and do better than anyone else . . . I was a patriotic GI from a colonial land, but now I’m back and watching the military build-up happen. It makes me worried” (BB, 2018.5). Guam tops the list for military recruitment. Like other places, the military provides jobs, but in Guam, the

narrative of liberation and indebtedness has helped make the military an obvious career choice. Most families in the island have a history of military service of which they claim to be proud.

According to the navy, overseas bases including those in Guam are necessary to “engage promptly a hostile threat to the security of U.S. interests or allies” and allow for flexible response to crises, reassure allies, and deter enemies (Department of the Navy, 1978). While overseas bases cannot be maintained without the approval of the host government, many bases are highly contested and strongly opposed by local populations. Base agreements consume time and resources and often come with restrictions. Host governments accept bases as part of alliance agreements with the United States, but while bases may enable the United States to project its strength and access foreign markets and resources, they do not necessarily provide the same benefits for the hosts (Vine, 2015). Moreover, as much as they may provide military defense, in so doing they also become targets and thus increase their risk of getting attacked despite being prepared to retaliate.

Guam is important for the United States because the people and the local government cannot refuse. Because it is an American territory, status of forces agreements

8 In the usual understanding of overseas or foreign military bases, the citizenship of the local community is different from that of the country with which the base is affiliated. Because Guam is a U.S. territory, from the U.S. perspective the military bases on Guam are not foreign bases. What complicates the situation is that although the island is not an integral part of the U.S. and the indigenous Chamoru have a distinct culture and language, most of the local population has U.S. citizenship.

or negotiations with a foreign government are not necessary. Moreover, because Guam's citizens do not have the right to vote for president or a voting representative in Congress, the U.S. government does not really need to worry about what the people think. In the words of one Pacific Air Forces commander, "Guam, first of all, is U.S. territory . . . I don't need overflight rights. I don't need landing rights. I always have permission to go to Guam. It might as well be California or New Jersey" (Brooke, 2004).

In Guam, the military is everywhere. Uniformed soldiers are a common sight in tourist resorts and shopping centers, local television has military channels, and local stores carry "military-style" goods for purchase by, among others, foreign tourists. The airport displays a row of photographs of soldiers who have been killed in U.S. wars, and its bookstore carries counting books featuring each military branch, enabling children to learn their numbers by counting guns and tanks. Expensive military housing complexes replace local homes and neighborhoods. Finally, both seen and so obvious as to be hidden are U.S. military bases and facilities, self-contained mini-cities that spill out into the local community in countless ways. The presence of these bases puts Guam on the frontline of U.S. military activities in the Asia-Pacific region; at the same time, the island is the home front for the many island soldiers serving in the U.S. military at home and overseas (see Cohler 2017, Frain 2017).

At the same time, while being a relatively small island, Guam has many faces, and many people call it home. Indigenous Chamoru and other local people enjoy majestic ocean views, extended family parties on the beach, mom-and-pop stores, and American fast food. Tourists seek out flashy hotels, designer boutiques, shopping malls, beaches, and various tourist attractions. World War II veterans and their families, American and Japanese, remember Guam as a site of fierce battles; about 1 in every 14 Chamoru were killed during the Japanese occupation (2018.8.6. MB). Guam's most widely spoken language is English, the language of colonization and domination, but its residents come from a range of backgrounds: Chamoru, Filipino, Chuukese and other Pacific Islanders, Korean, Japanese, Russian, U.S. mainland, and more. Many are Americans, others have come wanting to become American, and some want to be independent but not necessarily lose their affiliation with the United States.

In recent years, Guam's dissatisfaction with its inferior political status has led to a growing demand for self-determination. However, wanting the same rights as other Americans does not necessarily mean questioning the U.S. presence or intending to separate themselves from the United States. The words of one activist are revealing: "We are neither fish nor fowl, and have no political framework to change that. The tragedy is that so many Guam people are so normalized that they don't think anything is wrong. The U.S. has

managed to convince them that they have the best deal, and that dignity, identity and culture don't really matter" (V. interview, 2010.5.8).

Some people in Guam do think about the bases and oppose them or at least want to start a conversation about them, but many feel safer with the bases there (Alexander, 2016b; Nagashima, 2015, 2018). For some, the legacy of the war is still important. For example, one woman explained that while she knew the bases are a threat, "In 1941 the Japanese came because they knew the U.S. wasn't there to protect us" (C. conversation, 2016.5). Even many high school students explain that if it were not for the bases, Guam would be occupied by North Korea or China or perhaps some other power (Southern High School, 2017.9). In 2016, I asked two adult friends whether they thought the bases made them safer. One assured me that it was safer because of the military presence. She said they would help in the event of a disaster or an attack, asking "How can we protect ourselves if North Korea or China drop bombs on us?" (A. conversation, 2016.5). Her friend, B, took the opposite position. "The military cares about their own safety, not ours" (B. conversation, 2016.5).

Some find it impossible to imagine what Guam might look like without the bases. One young woman shared that her family had always been on Guam and expected that her children would be, too. When I asked her about her vision for the future, she said she wanted it to be a peaceful place. When asked if that meant with-

out military bases, she told me she had "never experienced Guam without bases so it is hard to imagine" (F. conversation, 2016.5.28). After some consideration, she added that she thought "[i]t would be good to try without them and then compare" (F. 2016.5.28). This view was echoed by many others who said they either had never thought of Guam without the bases or could not imagine how it might be. Many others agreed with R. (conversation, 2016.5.28), who told me, "I'm an American but I'm also an indigenous Chamoru." He thinks that while it is good to talk about decolonization, the United States is vital to Guam's economy and security, referring to military attacks by North Korea, an economic takeover by China, or some unidentified terrorist threat.

Students' perspectives on safety

Working under the premise that the military bases represent an idea of security that privileges the need for protection, I created a simple questionnaire to determine people's attitudes toward the bases. In 2015, my colleagues in Guam distributed it to 65 of their students. I used the questionnaire again with 58 university and high school students in Guam in September 2017, when North Korea was conducting nuclear-capable missile tests and claiming to be targeting Guam. The questionnaire did not seek to paint a complete picture and/or generalize young people's opinions about the U.S. bases; rather, it aimed to see how students did or did not express their feelings and concerns. Most of the univer-

sity students studied Chamoru language, and many supported independence. I wondered whether they would reiterate American understandings of security or present something different.

Characterizing Guam

The questionnaire first provided a list of words and asked respondents to choose those that they thought described their image of the island.⁹ The most frequently chosen option was “A place I love” followed by “A place I want to protect.” This is true for both the original (2015) and the second questionnaires (2017) regardless of the respondent’s attitude toward the bases and security. When asked why, many participants from both groups said things like “Because it is my birth place and my culture is dying within the American presence” (G2-01, 2016) or “This is my home. The Chamorro island is unique and if this island was ever to vanish, there wouldn’t be anything left like us” (UGO9_2018), emphasizing their love for Guam as their home and its importance to the Chamoru culture. Fewer respondents in both groups characterized it as a peaceful place, as a military base, and/or as the center of Chamoru culture. Some in the 2015 group, and fewer in the 2017 group, said they wanted to leave Guam and see the world and gain experience, and a very small number in both groups said it was a dangerous place.

As to the reasons for such sentiments, the 2015 participants highlighted environmental threats from the bases while the 2017 respondents identified military threats from North Korea and/or China (2018: SHP4-4; UOG_14; SHP4).

Do the bases make you safe?

In 2015, most students stated that the U.S. bases both made them safe and made them feel safe although most did not distinguish between the two. “They protect us from any invaders” (G1-16), “[t]hey are to house military personnel which would in turn provide safety from terrorists/harmful military groups” (G2-10), and “because it (Guam) is positioned strategically” (G1-09). At the same time, some thought the bases made them unsafe. For example, they said the bases were an “[i]nvitation for war” (G1-03) that would make them “[t]argeted by other countries” (G1-23); “[b]ecause of the bases, it puts U.S. as a target to others. For instance, what North Korea threatened to do (e.g. attack Guam) was because Guam had missiles located on bases here” (G2-28).

Many students from the 2017 group cited the strength of the U.S. military. For example, “[the] U.S. military is the strongest in the world; no other country can match its personnel strength and technological capability” (2017: UOG4). They also stressed the military’s ability to pro-

9 Questionnaire choices for ways to describe Guam: Island resort; Military base; U.S. colony; Center of Chamoru culture; An island necessary for U.S. defense; U.S. possession; A place I love; A dangerous place; A place I want to leave; A place I want to protect; A peaceful place; Other.

tect them from threats: “We are protected from anything that may threaten us” (2017: SH4_20). A few students mentioned North Korea and/or China by name, but most referred to general “threats” or “attacks.” While most people in both groups said that the bases made them safe, many of the 2017 respondents also said that they were unsure whether the bases made them feel safe or that they did not *feel* safe. For example, they stated that the goal of the United States “isn’t to protect Guam” (2017: UOG14).

Some students in both groups expressed ambivalence: “They make me feel like we are protected = safe. But I also feel unsafe at the same time because they are targets” (2015: G1-01). Some expressed ambiguity: “I feel like even though we are targeted because of our bases, we are better prepared for attacks because of them” (2017: UOG5), or “I do feel safe but at the same time I feel like they are using us” (2017: SH16). These responses underscore the contradictions represented by the bases: while many students believe that there is strength and safety in numbers and firepower, they also wonder whether the United States is really interested in protecting them or is just using them as a shield to protect itself. Many see the bases as a kind of insurance—it is better to have them just in case something bad happens—but only a few were able to express exactly what “something bad” would look like.

To briefly summarize, most respondents said that the bases made them safe and many—more from the first group than the

second—also said the bases made them feel safe. Their reasons had to do with protection from threats and attacks, as well as Guam’s strategic location, which reflects the continuing discourse of indebtedness to the United States for returning to “rescue” Guam in 1944. Many of these responses invoked a typically gender-stereotypical view of the military as strong, masculine, and tough and therefore able to protect them. They also reflect the understanding of security as protection.

In 2017, a student workshop at Southern High School discussed the assertion that people both are and feel safe. While stating over and over that the United States has the strongest military in the world, therefore making them safe, the participants’ written notes from group discussions revealed their concerns in statements such as “Nobody is taking the North Korean threat seriously or trying hard to put a stop to it,” or “The North Korean ‘threat’ has affected us dramatically because due to the threat Japanese school exchanges cancelled out on us” (2017, Southern High School WS). One student told me that her family had a boat ready in case they needed to escape, and another said that she does not like thinking about the threat because Guam does not have an evacuation plan, and therefore, everyone would probably die (2017.9 Southern High School).

Obligation to contribute to security

The questionnaires contain a few questions about whether and why respondents do or do not feel obligated to contribute

to the security of the United States and, for those who do, what such contributions might entail. The theoretical basis for including these questions is the associations among citizenship, military service, and gender. I was interested to see whether people in Guam felt that giving one's life in defense of the United States was a necessary part of being a citizen.

In 2015, several people said they were currently or had previously been in and/or affiliated with the military, and that was how they fulfilled their responsibility. Others felt compelled because they live in a U.S. territory (G2-29) or because “[t]he U.S. protects Guam” (G2-25). Others felt that “I just don’t really feel like it is/would be appreciated” (G1-24) or that “I don’t feel like I’m even a part of America” (G1-26). One person captured the ambivalence of both being and not being American: “Again I grew up with a weird dichotomy of nationality. I am told the best way to contribute to safety and peace is to enlist in the military but I am also told to aspire toward the American dream of chasing my dreams” (G2-33).

While some respondents in the 2017 group said they felt such a responsibility, most either denied having that feeling or indicated they felt powerless as citizens or were questioning such feelings. For example, “Guam doesn’t have much say in what goes on in the U.S., ex., we don’t vote for the president” (2017: UOG19), or “in my opinion, the U.S., as the strongest nation in the world, should already have enough to sustain themselves” (2017: UOG 18). As to

what they might do as responsible citizens, one student reiterated a frequent response, saying, “I’m not sure; we don’t really have a vote . . . probably just to join the military” (2017:SH4_18).

Where do you feel safe?

The final set of questions asked the respondents when/where they felt peace and when/where they felt and/or were safe. Most respondents from both groups, as well as most people with whom I conversed, said they felt most safe and peaceful at home or with their families. The second most frequent response was feeling safest in military bases. A typical response from the 2015 group was “I feel peaceful and safe at home, church and on military installations on island” (G1-25). Several people also said they felt peace (and also safe) when with friends. The responses were similar for the 2017 group although some said that they do not ever feel safe. Others said that being at the beach or in nature made them feel peaceful, and some said they felt safe in school.

Conclusion: Gender, militarization, and being safe in Guam

This paper has attempted to tell a feminist story about militarization, security, and feeling safe in Guam. Gender is a crucial element here because of the ways militarization and colonization construct and maintain masculinities based on power, strength, and the need for protection through militaristic means. This is evident in how people either talk or keep silent

about feeling and being safe on the island, particularly the unquestioning faith in the power of the U.S. military and its ability to make them safe. This paper also shows the respondents' tendency to equate being safe with feeling safe, reflecting a masculinized view of security. At the same time, some people did express feeling ambivalent; while the bases make Guam a target and therefore less safe, the military firepower on the island makes them feel safe. This redefines notions of security based on militarism and militarization.

Overall, the questionnaire responses and conversations conveyed support for the military and did not challenge the underlying gendered and dichotomous views in security policy. While both women and men saw the military as necessary for protection, women tended to use much more powerful and emotional language when expressing their desire to protect their home. Both men and women saw the military as a way of gaining new experience and performing their duty as American citizens, although military service was more clearly expressed by men than women. Women generally articulated anger or frustration more clearly than men: "The Chamoru people will never be a priority to the U.S. We are just a highly valued place, not a necessity" (SH4_11). Despite saying that the bases offered protection, certainly more people in the 2017 group than the 2015 group said they thought that the United States does not really care about Guam and is just using it.

Guam is a good example of how a milita-

rized and colonized society adopts its colonizer's perspective of security, including the acceptance of the myth of protection as normal. Most respondents cited the United States's military strength and firepower as a reason for their safety. Postcolonial and neocolonial societies have been oppressed, their cultures, lands, and languages desecrated and taken away. They have suffered attacks on their pride and joy in themselves and their culture, and over time, the ways of the colonizer have become incorporated into their own culture and behavior. Part of this process is the reproduction of the myth of protection, replete with gendered hierarchies and binaries.

"Guam is an example of 'successful' colonization of the worst kind" (L. interview, 2013.9). Years of having to "be American" on the island has led to the incorporation of many American cultural aspects into everyday life. A significant part of "being American" has included militarization and the understanding that being safe means having and/or needing military protection. The questionnaire responses illustrate this through the respondents' inability to imagine life without the bases and their belief that the bases are necessary for protection, even as they struggle to recreate the Chamoru worldview that has been taken from them. For many, the affirmation of indigenous culture and need to protect the land and environment to feel safe is accompanied by the desire to depend on the military for protection to be safe.

The questionnaire responses and conversations also reflect the reproduction

of military masculinities and American military understandings of safety. Many people seemed proud of Guam's strategic importance to the United States, and only a few seemed to question being placed in the line of fire. They also applauded the strength of the U.S. military. When the 2017 group explained why they felt the U.S. military presence made them safe and/or feel safe, nobody made any reference to, or expressed concern about, what might happen if the United States did in fact shoot down North Korean missiles and if Japan or other islands happened to get caught in the crossfire. In other words, people in Guam reiterated American understandings of security rather than expressing alternative ways of creating/protecting their own vernacular community. The pervasive normalization of military solutions as natural and successful indicates the high level of militarization on the island. At the same time, in contrast to this masculinized view, most people feel safest in their homes with their families. This is a good example of gender as a regulatory process, as it essentially reproduces the public/private gender divide.

If Guam did not have U.S. bases, there would probably be no reason for North Korea or any other country to attack it and no need to defend against malicious terrorists or armies. However, many people say they feel safer knowing the military is there even though some also acknowledged that the U.S. military presence was the cause

of the problem. This collective emotion of feeling unsafe has somehow become entwined with an understanding of masculinized military power as ensuring peace and security, leading to the belief that people would feel even less safe without the bases. This is one way in which overseas military bases reproduce a masculinized discourse of insecurity and the need for protection, which allows for their continued, if contested, existence.

Decolonization is an essential step that would enable people in Guam to imagine security that is not based on insecurity, but this would require their ability to imagine their island without military bases. They need to challenge meta-narratives of security and look toward worldism or other ways of incorporating multiple worldviews. This would entail affirming the region's fluidarity and reimagining their borders and interconnections with people on other Pacific islands. The pursuit of safety must begin with an endogenous process of decolonization and demilitarization that comes from individual and collective bodies and includes a recreation of gendered relations. Such a pursuit must also challenge meta-narratives of security that rely on gendered hierarchies and the assumed need for protection. Finally, it must value the importance of feeling safe as well as being safe and enable people to develop ways to establish living places, spaces, and styles based on their own narratives of being and feeling safe.

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要旨

ジェンダー化された安全——グアハン／グアム島における安全安心から学ぶ

ロニー・アレキサンダー

米軍の駐留によって、グアム島は安全になるのか？本稿では、フェミニストの視点からグアムにおける軍事化、安全そして安心について論ずる。この議論には「ジェンダー」が欠かせない。軍事化や植民地化は、ジェンダーヒエラルキーや権力・力・軍事力を強調するマスキュリニティを構築し再生産するからである。本稿ではまず、ジェンダーヒエラルキーや二分法的な考え方に基づく安全保障を批判的に分析し、安全安心にも注目する必要性を提示する。次に、植民地化かつ軍事化された空間としてのグアム島を概観し、軍事基地について住民と行った対話やアンケート調査の結果を示す。基地の存在によってグアム島が標的にされるとわかっていながら、米軍の駐留によって安心できる、と考える住民が多いことがわかった。そこで、グアム島を真に安全な島にするためには、既存の男性性やジェンダーヒエラルキーに基づく植民地化や軍事化を脱することが先決条件だと結論付けた。

キーワード

ジェンダー、グアハン／グアム、安全、植民地化、軍事化