
Colonial Debt, Resistance to U.S. Military Presence, Trustworthiness of Pro-U.S. Military Information Sources, and Support for the Military Buildup on Guam

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In this exploratory study, a representative community survey of 319 registered voters was conducted in the island of Guam to analyse the relationships between colonial debt (an internalised acceptance of colonisation), resistance to U.S. military presence, support for an impending U.S. military buildup in the island, and the perceived trustworthiness of information sources supportive of the buildup — that is, U.S. officials and the *Pacific Daily News*, a local newspaper. Results suggest that colonial debt was associated with less resistance to U.S. military presence, more support for the military buildup, and higher trustworthiness of two information sources supportive of the buildup. Resistance to U.S. military presence was linked with less support for the buildup and less trustworthiness of the two information sources. Implications and limitations are discussed.

Keywords: colonialism, attitudes, U.S. military, trustworthiness, persuasion, Guam

The local residents of a number of Pacific Islands share common historical and contemporary psychological experiences with U.S. colonialism, and a growing body of research extends examinations of these colonial and post-colonial experiences to analyses of U.S. militarisation (e.g., Davis, 2011; Rapadas, 2007; Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010). Although there is extant research that informs scholarly understanding about Pacific Island residents' stances toward the U.S. military (e.g., Simbulan, 2008; Ueunten, 2010), there is a theoretical gap in the psychological literature regarding the relationships between variables relevant to the Pacific — namely, internalised colonialism and resistance to U.S. military presence — and the potential relationships these variables have with attitudes toward, and the perceived trustworthiness of information sources supportive of the U.S. military. The present study attempts to narrow this gap in research by analysing data from a community survey conducted in the Western Pacific Island of Guam. This study explores the relationships between colonial debt (an indicator of internalised colonialism), resistance to U.S. military presence, support for a U.S. military buildup on Guam, and the perceived trustworthiness of information sources supportive

of this buildup. While a more thorough definition of colonial debt is provided below, it can be briefly defined as an acceptance of colonisation manifested through a sense of obligation toward colonisers.

From a practical standpoint, this study is important because internalised colonialism is likely a salient component of the identities of colonised groups in the Pacific at an everyday level (David & Okazaki, 2006). Also, recent plans to increase the presence of the U.S. military in the Pacific region (e.g., Fuentes, 2012) make it timely to understand the cultural factors that could be linked with Pacific Island residents' support for, or resistance to military presence. The U.S. militarisation in Guam, in particular, is poised to continue with plans for the relocation of a large number of U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guam. This impending military buildup would bring in an estimated 4,500 U.S. Marines to an island spanning less than 33 miles long and 12 miles wide, or about 210 square miles (544 sq km), or 134,314 acres. The additional military personnel would increase Guam's population, which according to the U.S. Census (2010) has seen a growth of about 3% since 2000. The island has a current population of close to 160,000 residents.

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Colonial Debt

Postcolonial scholars have documented the ways in which colonised groups internalise their experiences with colonialism (e.g., Fanon, 1965; Freire, 1970). The ideas of these scholars served as the foundation for David's (2011) conceptualisation of colonial mentality (David & Okazaki, 2006). David's research indicated that colonial mentality is experienced by Filipino Americans, and is characterised by a perception of cultural inferiority. One subcomponent of colonial mentality is colonial debt (David, 2011; David & Okazaki, 2006). Colonial debt refers to an internalised acceptance and tolerance of oppression that colonised individuals hold toward their colonisers. The assumption is that colonised groups feel fortunate for having been colonised, and they hold a sense of obligation toward their colonisers (David, 2011).

While David's research focused on colonial debt experienced by Filipino Americans, scholars have also documented this aspect among other groups originating from other places in the Pacific region (e.g., Ueunten, 2010). In Guam, colonial debt among the island's people can be equated to a sense of loyalty to the United States, which was a component of American assimilation (Camacho & Monning, 2011; Underwood, 1984). For instance, during the occupation of Guam by the Japanese, the indigenous population of the island, the Chamorros, remained loyal to the United States and longed for the return of the Americans (Rogers, 1995). Scholars have suggested that the U.S. liberation of Guam cultivated the island's people with a mentality of reciprocity and a sense of obligation to the United States (Dalisay, 2013; Perez, 2002; Rapadas, 2007; Souder, 1991). Thus, based on the literature reviewed, it is expected that higher levels of colonial debt will be positively associated with support for U.S. interests, and particularly, the U.S. military buildup. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Colonial debt will be associated with greater support for the U.S. military buildup.

Resistance to U.S. Military Presence

Resistance to U.S. militarisation can be considered a rejection of U.S. colonialism. Throughout the Pacific, vigorous anti-colonial/anti-U.S. military resistance movements have been organised in areas where the U.S. military have been present, including Okinawa (Ueunten, 2010), the Philippines (Simbulan, 2009), and Hawaii (Kajihiro, 2008). In Guam, resistance to U.S. military presence has been documented as occurring on the island as early as 1901 (Camacho & Monning, 2010). From the 1950s through the 1970s, Guam's leaders began proposing strategies toward self-determination (Camacho & Monning, 2010). This continued through the 1980s and 1990s, when activist groups such as *Nasion Chamoru* (Chamorro Nation) pushed for the removal of U.S. military personnel from the island and the return of ancestral lands (Rogers,

1995). Currently, a resurgence of activist groups has publicly opposed the military buildup. In sum, it is likely that greater resistance to U.S. military presence on Guam is associated with lesser support of the U.S. military buildup. Also, as colonial debt is posited to be positively associated with pro-U.S. military and pro-buildup stances, then logically it may be associated with less resistance to U.S. militarisation. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Resistance to U.S. military presence will be inversely associated with support for the buildup.

H3: Colonial debt will be inversely associated with resistance to U.S. military presence.

Trustworthiness of Pro-U.S. Military Information Sources

Research suggests that predispositions such as one's ideologies can affect the extent to which one perceives information sources as trustworthy (e.g., Gunther, 1988; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Tormala & Clarkson, 2008). In this vein, the present study proposes that colonial debt and resistance to U.S. military presence are two predispositions that are linked with Guam residents' perceived trustworthiness of information sources that support the U.S. military buildup. Specifically, colonial debt is posited to be positively associated with trust of sources supportive of the military buildup. On the other hand, resistance may result in a form of mistrust of the coloniser. As David (2011) explained, this notion is derived from the concept of cultural mistrust, which is 'a general distrust of dominant peoples and the institutions they control' (Terrell & Terrell, 1981, p. 86) stemming from past negative experiences with such peoples. In this case, resistance to U.S. military presence may be linked with less trust of pro-U.S. military sources.

As previously noted, this study focuses on examining evaluations of the perceived trustworthiness of two information sources supportive of the U.S. military buildup: U.S. officials and the *Pacific Daily News*. U.S. military officials and U.S. mainland politicians serving in Washington DC (both henceforth referred to as U.S. officials) will likely communicate support for U.S. interests and the U.S. military buildup. It is also expected that Guam's local newspaper, the *Pacific Daily News* (*PDN*), will be inclined to support the buildup. Previous research suggests that the *PDN* reinforces pro-American sentiments (Dalisay, 2009). Indeed, a recent content analysis of military buildup-related news items appearing in the *PDN* in 2009 suggested the newspaper endorsed the buildup by devoting more coverage to its economic benefits (Dalisay & Yamamoto, 2012). These issues were covered more frequently than environmental risks posed by the buildup (i.e., overcrowding, negative impacts on the natural environment, and increase in crime). In sum, it is likely that colonial debt among Guam's local residents would be related to greater trust of U.S. officials and the *PDN* as

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Scores, and Factor Structure From a Principle Component Analysis for the Items Measuring Colonial Debt and Resistance to the U.S. Military Presence

Item	Mean (SD)	Colonial debt	Resistance to U.S. Military Presence
Guam's residents should be thankful to the United States for transforming Guam's way of life into an American way of life.	4.46 (1.72)	.85	-.09
The people of Guam should feel privileged and honored for being a part of the United States.	5.43 (1.68)	.77	-.16
Guam's residents should praise the United States for liberating the island from the Japanese occupation of World War II.	5.37 (1.71)	.71	-.17
The colonization of Guam by the United States produced very little damage to Guam's culture.	3.87 (1.96)	.66	-.04
The American ways of living or the American culture is generally more admirable, desirable, or better than Guam's culture.	3.40 (1.90)	.63	.11
The United States is highly responsible for improving Guam's way of life.	4.89 (1.83)	.54	.05
Non-local U.S. military personnel on Guam in general lack respect for locals.	3.71 (1.79)	-.12	.83
Non-local U.S. military personnel on Guam in general are arrogant.	3.67 (1.79)	.07	.77
Non-local U.S. military personnel on Guam should go back where they came from.	2.38 (1.66)	-.09	.67
The U.S. military has taken advantage of Guam.	4.27 (2.08)	-.40	.59
Eigenvalues		$\alpha = .79$	$\alpha = .70$
Variance explained (%)		32.19%	20.11%

Note: Bolded values indicate the items loading on the two respective factors.

information sources to stay informed about the buildup. On the other hand, higher resistance to U.S. military presence would be linked with less trust of U.S. officials and the PDN. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Colonial debt will be positively associated with trustworthiness of (a) U.S. officials and (b) the PDN as sources to learn about the buildup.

H5: Resistance to U.S. military presence will be inversely associated with trustworthiness of (a) U.S. officials and (b) the PDN as sources to learn about the buildup.

Method

Data Collection

This study used a representative sample of 319 registered voters of Guam, with 56% ($n = 177$) of the respondents being female, 43% ($n = 137$) being male, and five respondents not identifying their gender. The ages of respondents ranged from 25 to 88, and the mean age was 48 ($SD = 15.97$). A majority reported completing 'some college, no degree' ($n = 87$, 27.4%), while 23% ($n = 73$) of the respondents reported having a college degree. The median income was between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The two ethnicities most represented in the sample were Chamorro ($n = 169$, 53.3%) and Filipino ($n = 99$, 31.2%), which corresponds with the two largest ethnic groups living in Guam (United States Census Bureau, 2000).

Using strategies from Dillman, Smith, and Christian's (2009) Tailored Design Method for survey research, a self-administered mail survey of a representative sample of registered Guam voters was conducted from June to July 2009. Names and postal addresses of registered voters were obtained from the Guam Election Commission (GEC). Using systematic random sampling, a sampling frame of

1,100 respondents was generated from the list of registered voters. A survey mailer was first sent to respondents during the first week of June 2009. Inside the mailer was a cover letter; the questionnaire; a self-addressed, stamped return envelope; and a \$1 token incentive. A week after the survey mailer was sent, respondents were mailed a thank you/reminder postcard. The sampling frame was reduced to 927 because 173 survey packets were not deliverable (i.e., the address did not exist, or the respondent had relocated or no longer received mail in the address). Total response rate was 34.4%, as calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's (2009) response rate 2. Data collection ended on July 3, 2009.

Measures

David and Okazaki's (2006) colonial debt subscale was used to measure colonial debt. Six items of the subscale shown in Table 1 were adapted to be relevant to Guam's local residents. Responses to the items were measured along a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Four items were used to measure resistance to U.S. military presence on Guam (see Table 1). Responses to the items were measured along a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A principle component analysis with varimax rotation on these items resulted in the emergence of two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which in total explained 52.30% of the variance (Table 1). The first factor consisted of items measuring colonial debt, which were combined to form a single index ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.25$, $\alpha = .79$). The second factor consisted of items measuring resistance, which were combined to form a single index ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.33$, $\alpha = .70$).

Support for the buildup was measured with three indexes. The first index was a single item asking respondents

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Scores, and Factor Structure From a Principle Component Analysis for the Attitude Items Measuring Economic Benefits and Environmental Risks Regarding the Military Buildup

Item	Mean (SD)	Economic benefits	Environmental risks
The buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam.	5.59 (1.71)	.89	.26
The buildup will improve Guam's economy.	5.62 (1.59)	.89	.39
The buildup will bring in much needed federal funds to Guam.	5.73 (1.52)	.88	.29
The buildup will make Guam overcrowded.	3.00 (1.86)	.33	.84
The buildup will harm Guam's environment.	3.62 (1.90)	.29	.84
The buildup will increase Guam's crime rate.	3.45 (1.85)	.25	.80
		$\alpha = .86$	$\alpha = .77$
Eigenvalues		2.99	1.43
Variance explained (%)		49.89%	23.77%

Note: Bolded values indicate the items loading on the two respective factors.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix for Zero-Order Correlations Between Key Variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Colonial debt	1						
2. Resistance to U.S. military presence	-.18**	1					
3. Support for the U.S. military buildup — personal support	.47***	-.26***	1				
4. Support for the U.S. military buildup — economic benefits	.60***	-.28***	.66***	1			
5. Support for the U.S. military buildup — environmental risks	.26***	-.56***	.47***	.33***	1		
6. Trustworthiness of U.S. officials	.45**	-.18**	.55***	.50***	.27***	1	
7. Trustworthiness of the <i>Pacific Daily News</i>	.37***	-.15**	.40***	.43***	.16**	.60***	1

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I support the buildup' (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The mean of this item was 5.11 ($SD = 1.96$). Three items were also developed to measure 'economic benefits' attitudes and three items were developed to measure 'environmental risks' related attitudes, with responses measured along a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Responses to the items measuring environmental risks were reverse-coded. Results from a principle component analysis with varimax rotation shown in Table 2 reveal two factors that had eigenvalues greater than 1. In total, these two factors explained 73.66% of the variance. As Table 2 shows, the items measuring economic benefits loaded along one factor; these items were combined to form a single index ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.44$). The items measuring environmental risks loaded along the other factor, and were also combined into one index ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.54$; see Table 2).

Respondents were asked to rate how trustworthy are (a) U.S. military officials and (b) U.S. mainland politicians as information sources to learn about the buildup. Responses to these two items were measured along a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not very trustworthy*, 7 = *very trustworthy*). The two items were formed into a single index of trustworthiness of U.S. officials ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.75$). Respondents were also asked how trustworthy is the PDN as an information source to learn about the buildup along a 7-point scale Likert scale (1 = *not very trustworthy*, 7 = *very trustworthy*; $M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.61$).

Finally, age, gender, income, education level, ethnicity, and level of interest regarding the military buildup (1 = *not at all interested*, 7 = *very interested*; $M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.70$) were also measured. These items were entered as control variables in the regression models described below. For descriptive purposes, respondents were also asked about whether they agreed or disagreed that the PDN supports the military buildup. The mean score for this item was above the mid-point of 4 ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.83$), indicating that residents perceived the PDN to be supportive of the buildup, a key assumption of hypotheses 4 and 5.

Results

The zero-order correlations reported in Table 3 show that colonial debt was positively related with all three indicators of support for the buildup and perceived trustworthiness of the two information sources, but inversely related with resistance. Resistance was inversely related with all three indicators of support and perceived trustworthiness of the two information sources. Also, colonial debt was inversely related with resistance ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$).

As shown in the regression results in Tables 4 and 5, all five hypotheses were supported. Colonial debt was positively associated with all three indexes of support (personal support: $\beta = .42$, $p < .001$; economic benefits: $\beta = .55$, $p < .001$; environmental risks: $\beta = .23$, $p < .001$). Resistance was inversely associated with all three indexes of support (personal support: $\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$; economic

Table 4Regression Results (Standardised Coefficients) for Colonial Debt as a Predictor of Trustworthiness of U.S. Officials, Trustworthiness of the *Pacific Daily News*, and Resistance to U.S. Military Presence

	Resistance to U.S. military presence	Support for the U.S. military buildup — personal support	Support for the U.S. military buildup — economic benefits	Support for the U.S. military buildup — environmental risks	Trustworthiness of U.S. officials	Trustworthiness of the <i>Pacific Daily News</i>
	β	β	β	β	β	β
Age	-.05	.06	-.01	.05	.01	-.00
Gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male)	.01	-.02	-.02	.03	-.02	.00
Income	-.12*	.12*	.05	.05	.02	.06
Education	-.02	.02	.07	.02	.07	-.04
Ethnicity (1 = non-Chamorro, 2 = Chamorro)	-.18**	.11*	.10*	.11*	.10*	.12*
Interest on the U.S. military buildup	.04	.10*	.12*	-.01	.20***	.24***
Colonial debt	-.16**	.42***	.55***	.23***	.39***	.31***
	$R^2 = .08^{**}$	$R^2 = .26^{***}$	$R^2 = .38^{***}$	$R^2 = .09^{***}$	$R^2 = .26^{***}$	$R^2 = .22^{***}$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Entries are standardised regression coefficients.**Table 5**Regression Results (Standardised Coefficients) for Resistance to U.S. Military as a Predictor of Trustworthiness of U.S. Officials, Trustworthiness of the *Pacific Daily News*, and Colonial Debt

	Colonial debt	Support for the U.S. military buildup — personal support	Support for the U.S. military buildup — economic benefits	Support for the U.S. military buildup — environmental risks	Trustworthiness of U.S. officials	Trustworthiness of the <i>Pacific Daily News</i>
	β	β	β	β	β	β
Age	.21***	.13*	.09#	.05	.08	.06
Gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male)	-.02	-.03	-.03	.04	-.02	-.00
Income	-.10#	.06	-.02	-.03	-.02	.03
Education	-.08	-.01	.02	-.04	.03	-.06
Ethnicity (1 = non-Chamorro, 2 = Chamorro)	.12*	.12*	.13*	.04	.13*	.15*
Interest on the U.S. military buildup	.21***	.19**	.23***	.05	.28***	.30***
Resistance to U.S. military presence	-.14*	-.23***	-.25***	-.54***	-.13*	-.11*
	$R^2 = .17^{***}$	$R^2 = .15^{***}$	$R^2 = .17^{***}$	$R^2 = .32^{***}$	$R^2 = .14^{***}$	$R^2 = .15^{***}$

Note: # $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Entries are standardised regression coefficients.

benefits: $\beta = -.25$, $p < .001$; environmental risks: $\beta = -.54$, $p < .001$). Colonial debt was inversely associated with resistance (Table 4: $\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$; Table 5: $\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$), yet colonial debt was positively associated with trustworthiness of U.S. officials ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$) and the PDN ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$). Finally, as Table 5 shows, resistance was inversely associated with trustworthiness of U.S. officials ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$) and the PDN ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

This study helps contribute to the current understanding of the psychological effects of colonialism and militarisation in Guam and the Pacific in several ways. First, results indicated that colonial debt was associated with greater support for the U.S. military buildup. Specifically, higher levels of colonial debt were associated with greater personal support for the buildup, and greater endorsement for the stances that the buildup will be economically beneficial to Guam and will not pose environmental risks to the island. In addition, this study's findings show that colonial

debt was related to less resistance to U.S. military presence. As noted, colonial debt is an acceptance of oppression; it is the tendency among members of colonised groups to feel fortunate for having been colonised (David, 2011). The present study provides evidence that at least in the case of Guam's residents, their sense of debt toward the U.S. as a coloniser could be linked with their willingness to endorse U.S. military interests.

Second, the present study suggests that higher resistance to U.S. military presence was associated with less personal support for the buildup and less endorsement for the stances that the buildup will be economically beneficial to Guam, and will not pose environmental risks to the island. These results were not surprising as resistance to U.S. military presence was expected to be inversely associated with support for the buildup.

Third, it was expected that U.S. officials and the PDN would be promoting support for the buildup. As such, residents who had higher colonial debt were more likely to rate U.S. officials and the PDN as trustworthy sources to learn about the military buildup. On the other hand, residents who had higher levels of resistance to

U.S. military presence were more likely to rate the two information sources as less trustworthy. Similarly, David's (2011) work is partly based on the assumption that internalised colonialism leads to less cultural mistrust, or a general distrust of dominant peoples or colonisers. Extending this work, the present study's findings also imply that people from colonised backgrounds in the Pacific who have higher rather than lower levels of colonial debt may be more likely to trust information sources perceived to represent the coloniser.

A few limitations of this study should be noted. First, because causality cannot be established in the use of cross-sectional data such as the approach adopted in the present study, experiments need to be conducted to test the causal claims made above. Second, the sample for this study only included registered voters, lacking adequate coverage and representation of the entire adult population on Guam. This demands that future research analyse data from both registered and non-registered voters. Along similar lines, one may ask whether the findings of this study can apply to other cultures, such as those of other islands (e.g., Puerto Rico, American Samoa) that have also experienced long histories of American colonialism. Thus, researchers could test whether the findings of this study can be generalised across other areas around the world. Finally, one could argue that the present study's focus on colonial debt and resistance to U.S. military presence may be too simplistic, as this focus fails to capture the complex, multi-dimensional, and ambivalent nature of attitudes toward U.S. military presence. In particular, for the four items measuring resistance to U.S. military presence, as these items were couched in negative terms, there is a potential that it may have caused response bias (e.g., respondents skipped the question). Thus, these items could have been couched in both positive and negative terms. Therefore, more research is warranted with a focus on the development of multi-dimensional measures that capture the ambivalent and complex nature of attitudes toward U.S. military presence on Guam.

In spite of these limitations, the present study has some implications. On a theoretical level, the present study's findings imply that both colonial debt and resistance could influence Guam residents' support of the presence of the U.S. military on their island and their ratings of the trustworthiness of information sources supportive of military presence. More sophisticated theoretical models can be developed that incorporate the influence of these two variables on other types of attitudes and ratings of perceived trustworthiness of other information sources—notably, those that may be less supportive of the buildup. In light of recent plans to increase the presence of the U.S. military in the Pacific region, the knowledge produced by this study may be generalised to other places where similar military buildups might occur in the coming years (e.g., the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands [see Eugenio, 2013]) and other islands where the U.S. military has historically been present (e.g., Hawaii). For instance,

the knowledge produced by this study may help increase cultural understanding about the social and political impact of colonial debt and resistance for residents affected by these military buildups and U.S. militarisation.

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