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An Examination of the Relationships Between Attention to Information Sources, Colonial Debt, and Attitudes Toward a U.S. Military Buildup in the Pacific: The Case of Guam

Francis Dalisay

The case of the U.S. military buildup on the Western Pacific Island of Guam is used to examine whether (1) attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests is associated with positive attitudes toward U.S. military presence, (2) attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests is positively associated with colonial debt, a dimension of internalized colonialism, and (3) colonial debt mediates the proposed relationship between attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests and attitudes toward U.S. military presence. Findings from a representative survey of 319 registered voters on Guam showed that higher attention to U.S. officials and a local newspaper, the Pacific Daily News (PDN), and higher levels of colonial debt were associated with positive attitudes toward the military buildup. Attention to U.S. officials and the PDN was positively associated with levels of colonial debt. Moreover, attention to the two information sources had indirect effects with attitudes toward the buildup through their prior effects on colonial debt.

Keywords: Colonialism; Guam; U.S. Military; Pacific Islands

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been mixed (Pew Research Center, 2003, 2004, 2009). Because previous research suggests that attitudes are influenced by information sources (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), it is logical to propose that they play a key role in the formation and reinforcement of overseas residents’ attitudes toward U.S. military presence. Interestingly, although the U.S. military is present in a number of colonial/post-colonial areas of the world, few empirical studies have systematically examined internalized colonialism’s implications on the formation and reinforcement of overseas residents’ attitudes toward U.S. military presence. Moreover, limited systemic research has examined the effects of information sources on internalized colonialism. These gaps in research are worth noting since recent empirical studies suggest internalized colonialism is prevalent as a form of oppression among colonized groups, and is linked with lower personal self-esteem and higher depression levels (David, 2011; David & Okazaki, 2006).

The present case study contributes to the existing intercultural communication literature by positing that internalized colonialism is an important factor to consider when examining the impact of information sources supportive of U.S. interests on colonized groups’ support for U.S. military presence on their homelands. Specifically, this study uses the case of the U.S. military buildup in the Western Pacific Island of Guam to test three propositions. First, this study tests whether attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests is associated with positive attitudes toward U.S. military presence. Second, this study tests whether attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests is positively associated with colonial debt, a dimension of internalized colonialism. Third, this study tests whether colonial debt mediates the proposed relationship between attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests and attitudes toward U.S. military presence.

Previous research shows that information sources such as the media can influence overseas residents’ stereotypes and perceptions of Americans (Tan, Zhang, Zhang, & Dalisay, 2009) and the American government (Defluer & Defleur, 2003). Previous research also shows that information sources play an important role in the acculturation process for minority groups (Kim, 1978). Moreover, research reveals that one’s identity could impact the extent to which information sources have an effect on intergroup attitudes (Fujioka, 2005). Given the potential that internalized colonialism is a salient aspect among the identities of colonized groups (David & Okazaki, 2006), such as Guam’s local residents (Perez, 2002), we might expect this variable to impact the extent to which information sources supportive of U.S. interests influence the acceptance of U.S. military presence.

Before proceeding further, it is important to emphasize first that this study focuses on the case of attention to two information sources—U.S. officials and the Pacific Daily News, an influential Guam newspaper that has a local circulation size of more than 20,000 (PDN administrator, personal communication, December 22, 2008). These two sources were chosen exclusively based on the expectation that they support U.S. interests and Guam’s military buildup. Second, it is commonly assumed that colonized groups hold ambivalent stances that are either accepting of, or resistant to, colonialism—in particular, American colonialism/neo-colonialism (David &
Okazaki; Perez, 2005) and militarization (Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010; Simbulan, 2008). The present study focuses on colonial debt as a manifestation of the acceptance of colonialism. Finally, it should be noted that this study is not sponsored by an administrative element that may have an interest in knowing what factors facilitate support for military presence.

In order to contextualize this research, information about Guam and the military buildup are first provided prior to reviewing relevant literature and proposing hypotheses.

**Guam and the Military Buildup**

Guam is an island located roughly 2,000 miles north of the tip of Australia, 3,700 miles west of Hawaii, and 1,500 miles east of the Philippines. Although Guam spans just about 30 miles in length and 12 miles in width, it is the largest island in Micronesia. Guam’s indigenous residents are known as Chamorros. The island is populated by about 160,000 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2011). According to the 2000 U.S. Census (see CIA World Factbook, 2012), a majority of Guam’s population at that time comprised Chamorros (37.1%), Filipinos (26.3%), and other Pacific Islanders (11.3%). Also, the official language and language of public discourse of Guam is English.

The history of Guam can be narrated along close to five centuries of its experiences with colonial powers. The explorer Ferdinand Magellan was sailing under the Spanish flag when on March 6, 1521, he became the first Westerner to step foot on Guam. Consequently, the island became a Spanish colony for more than 300 years. In 1898, as a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States annexed Guam. A series of appointed U.S. Naval governors then controlled the island for more than 40 years. In 1941, the Japanese invaded and took control of Guam, occupying it through the duration of World War II. On July 21, 1944, the Americans returned and recaptured the island. Guam’s local residents understand this event as the American liberation of their island (e.g., Perez, 2002; Rogers, 1995). Yet after the war, the island was once again under absolute control by the U.S. Navy. Chamorros’ animosity toward subjugation by the U.S. military government intensified at that time, and this led to a confrontation between Guam’s local leaders and a U.S. naval governor (Perez, 2002). This prompted U.S. President Harry S. Truman to sign the Organic Act of Guam in 1950. The Organic Act granted the island the status of an unincorporated American territory, and gave its Chamorro population U.S. citizenship. It also shifted administrative control of Guam from the U.S. Navy to the Department of the Interior, and led to the appointment of the island’s first local civilian governor (Perez, 2002). To protect and promote local interests, Guam has a three-branch democratic government system, with a governor and lieutenant governor, a legislature with 15 senators, and a judicial branch.

Throughout the post-war years, Guam has served as a strategic site for bases of the U.S. Air Force and Navy. The large U.S. military presence plays an important role in
sustaining the island’s economy. Guam has also relied on a tourism industry, which in the past decade has seen a sharp decline in visitor arrivals, resulting in an economic downturn. This slowdown in tourism is attributed to a sharp decline in the number of Japanese tourists visiting the island, due to Japan’s economic circumstances, such as a recession in the late 1990s through early 2000s and an economic slowdown attributed to natural disasters. According to most recent estimates from Guam’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), the island’s unemployment rate is 13.3%.

The U.S. Department of Defense plans to relocate Marine Corps personnel from the 3rd Expeditionary Force, currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan, to Guam. This move, which is expected to concur on 2015, would potentially bring in an estimated 5,000 U.S. Marines and more than 1,300 of their dependents (Kelmen, 2012). Although a few of Guam’s residents have expressed concerns about the U.S. military buildup’s potential negative impact on their island’s environment and culture (Democracy Now, 2009; Harden, 2010), many residents (e.g., Murphy, 2008) and local leaders (Hart, 2011; Quintanilla, 2012), including the governor of Guam (e.g., Office of Governor Eddie Baza Calvo, 2011), have supported the buildup and anticipate it would bring economic growth. A 2009 poll found that 70% of the island supported the buildup, and 82% felt that it would bring in more jobs and revenues (Tamondong, 2009). A more recent poll conducted in 2011 found that 60% of the island supported the buildup, while only 16% were against it (Hart, 2011). These stances can be contrasted with the anti-American military sentiments expressed by Okinawa’s people and its local media. Indeed, in Okinawa, there have been significant incidents that have contributed to a deterioration of relationships between the U.S. military and local people. One incidence is the 1995 raping of an Okinawan girl by U.S. Marines, which fueled Okinawans’ disfavor toward the Marines. Additionally, Okinawans and their local media have publicly voiced concerns over the environmental problems caused by U.S. military presence, such as noise resulting from live firing exercises conducted by U.S. combat operations (e.g., Akibayashi & Takazato, 2008). On the other hand, on Guam there have not been any such incidents, and therefore they are not likely to appear in Guam’s local media.

Literature Review

Attitudes

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined an attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Attitudes comprise three components, which include the affective (emotional like-dislike component), behavioral (overt behavior attached to attitudes), and cognitive (a storage component, where individuals organize information about an attitude object) (Allport, 1935). Attitudes are formed and organized through experience (Allport, 1935; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005), and recent research has examined culture-related variables as antecedents of attitudes (e.g., Berry, 2006; Griffiths & Nesdale, 2006; Leong & Ward, 2006). It is in this
vein that the present study analyzes the impact of attention to information sources and internalized colonialism on attitudes toward the military buildup on Guam.

Attention to Information Sources Supportive of U.S. Interests and Attitudes

As noted above, information sources play a key role in influencing attitudes. Yet the extent to which one’s attitudes are influenced by an information source largely depends upon the extent to which one pays attention to the source (Cheng & Riffe, 2008; Slater, Goodall, & Hayes, 2009). Chafee and Schleuder (1986), for instance, demonstrated that attention rather than mere exposure to sources of news is a consistent individual difference that accounts for substantial variation in effects. Theoretically, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) explains that attention facilitates greater cognitive involvement with, and elaboration of, the messages communicated by information sources; this increases the probability of influence.

It is reasonable to expect that attention to information sources supporting U.S. interests is associated with favorable attitudes toward U.S. military presence. U.S. military officials and U.S. mainland politicians serving in Washington D.C. (both henceforth, referred to U.S. officials) will likely communicate support for U.S. interests, particularly with regard to the presence of the U.S. military in overseas areas of the world, and the military buildup on Guam. As Guam’s residents pay greater attention to U.S. officials, this could lead to favorable attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Higher attention to U.S. officials will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup.

The present study also examines the influence of attention to a local newspaper on attitudes toward the military buildup. Case studies show that countries politically and economically dependent on the United States are also likely to have mainstream newspapers that frequently cover and support U.S. interests (Lee, 2005; Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006). As such, these newspapers may also provide a substantial amount of coverage of U.S. officials. Guam is not a foreign country. However, it is an unincorporated American territory that is economically dependent on the United States. Its local newspaper, the Pacific Daily News, may therefore be inclined to support U.S. interests.2

In 1947, the PDN started as a military publication called the Navy News (Rogers, 1995). The newspaper’s name was subsequently changed to the Guam Daily News. In 1971, the newspaper’s name was changed once again to the Pacific Daily News, and sold to the Gannett Company, its current owner. Gannett is a U.S. corporation. Furthermore, like all other businesses on Guam, the PDN’s operation is dependent financially on the presence of the U.S. military on the island. These factors could lead the newspaper to publish news items that endorse U.S. interests, and in particular, the presence of the U.S. military.
For instance, a study examining news items printed in the PDN between 1994 and 2004, which covered Guam’s annual observance of its liberation, found that most of the news items advocated adherence to pro-American ideological stances (Dalisay, 2009). Specifically, a majority of the news items expressed gratitude to the U.S. Marines who liberated Guam, and reaffirmed Guam residents’ loyalty to the United States. The newspaper provided less coverage of anti-American sentiments, which included portrayals of the United States as an inconsiderate colonial power. In another study, which was a content analysis of 165 military buildup-related news items published in the PDN within a six-month-period in 2009, the PDN was found to endorse the buildup through highlighting its economic benefits and downplaying its environmental risks (Dalisay & Yamamoto, 2011). The study found that the proportion of reports of economic benefits published in the PDN, which comprised 37.0% of the news items analyzed, was far greater than that of environmental risks, which comprised 3.6% of the items. Of the news items analyzed, 21% covered the potential increase in jobs, 17% covered general improvements in the economy, and 11% covered the increase in federal funding. These issues were covered more frequently than environmental risks posed by the buildup, such as overcrowding (which comprised 4% of the news items), negative impacts on the natural environment (2%), and increases in crime (2%).

Although the PDN may also report on antithetical stances toward the buildup, because the proportion of reports of its economic benefits far outweighs that of its reports for environmental risks, this might increase the probability that paying attention to it leads to greater endorsement of the military buildup. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

\[H2: \text{Higher attention to the Pacific Daily News will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup.}\]

**Colonial Debt and Attitudes**

Scholars have noted that the effects of colonialism can be internalized (David, 2011; Fanon, 1965). David (2011) summarized the works of postcolonial scholars (e.g., Fanon, 1965; Freire, 1970; Memmi, 1965; Rimonte, 1997) and explained that internalized colonialism can take three forms: (a) acceptance of one’s inferiority and the colonizers’ superiority, (b) separating oneself from the perceived inferiority of one’s own group and emulating colonizers, and (c) regarding colonialism as necessary for progress and civilization. David and Okazaki’s (2006) research focuses on internalized colonialism experienced by Filipino-Americans. They proposed that this ethnic group holds a level of colonial mentality that is passed from generation to generation through socialization processes. Colonial mentality of Filipino-Americans is characterized by a perception of cultural inferiority and is a consequence of centuries of colonization from Spain and the United States. According to David and Okazaki (2006), CM [colonial mentality] among Filipino-Americans involves an
“automatic and uncritical rejection of anything Filipino and an automatic and uncritical preference for anything American” (p. 241).

One manifestation of colonial mentality is colonial debt (David, 2011; David & Okazaki, 2006). Colonial debt refers to the notion that colonized groups become tolerant of the historical and contemporary oppression they have experienced from their colonizers. This tolerance results in an acceptance of oppression “as the appropriate cost of civilization” (David & Okazaki, 2006, p. 242). As one begins to adopt the belief of the superiority of their colonizers and emulating them, one begins to perceive their colonizers as “well-intentioned, civilizing, liberating, or noble heroes” (David & Okazaki, 2006, p. 242). For instance, Filipino-Americans internalize colonial debt toward Spain and the United States for “civilizing” the Philippines with Western standards and improving the country’s way-of-life.

Given Guam’s long history with colonialism, it is reasonable to expect the island’s local residents to internalize colonial debt. Guam shares a similar history with the Philippines, having also been colonized by both Spain and the United States. Regarding U.S. colonialism, Guam’s residents understand that the United States liberated their island from the Japanese occupation of World War II. Scholars from Guam have held that after this liberation, the island’s indigenous population developed pro-American attitudes (e.g., Perez, 2002; Rapadas, Balajadia, & Rubinstein, 2005; Rogers, 1995; Souder, 1991). Consequently, the establishment of the American education system and the U.S. mass media on Guam resulted in indigenous values such as interdependence being replaced with American and individualistic norms (Perez, 2002; Underwood, 1984). Souder (1991) suggested that the Americanization of Guam had instilled the island’s people with a reliance on the United States, cultivating a mentality of reciprocity among the island’s people (see also Perez, 2002). In essence, Guam’s people feel that they “owe” the United States for defeating the Japanese, and ending the island’s struggle during World War II. Colonial debt is evident on Guam each year on July 21 when the island observes Liberation Day. During this holiday, residents express gratitude to the U.S. Marines who helped liberate Guam through festivities such as a parade.

In sum, the literature reviewed above suggests that colonial debt would be associated with a greater willingness to endorse U.S. interests. It is thus plausible that colonial debt is positively associated with Guam residents’ favorable attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

\[ H3: \text{Higher levels of colonial debt will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup}. \]

**Attention to Information Sources Supportive of U.S. Interests and Colonial Debt**

As noted previously, the American education system and the U.S. mass media facilitated the Americanization of Guam (Underwood, 1984). With the process of Americanization continuing on to contemporary times (Perez, 2002), along with the
assumption that internalized colonialism is passed through socialization processes (David & Okazaki, 2006), and the notion that communication serves as a primary vehicle through which minority groups become accultured to American society (Kim, 1978), information sources that communicate support for U.S. interests may serve an acculturating role by reinforcing or maintaining internalized colonialism. In the case of Guam, because it is expected that U.S. officials and the PDN are likely to endorse U.S. interests and the military buildup, attention to these sources could be positively associated with colonial debt. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

**H4:** Higher attention to U.S. officials will be associated with higher levels of colonial debt.

**H5:** Higher attention to the PDN will be associated with higher levels of colonial debt.

### The Mediating Role of Colonial Debt

Finally, colonial debt is proposed to mediate the association between attention to the two information sources and attitudes toward the military buildup. This proposition is based on recent experiments revealing that internalized colonialism could be implicitly activated through the priming of feelings of inferiority (David, 2010; David & Okazaki, 2010). Along these lines, previous communication effects research on priming suggests that cues present in communication messages can implicitly activate individuals' existing cognitions, such as their stereotypes (Valentino, 1999) and political ideologies (Domke, 2001). When these cognitions are primed, they can then affect attitudes toward political issues.

A mediation model explicates the process by which a presumed independent variable is associated with a subsequent outcome via a third explanatory, mediating variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The hypotheses proposed above provide the conceptual framework for a mediation model. Specifically, it was proposed that attention to the two information sources supportive of U.S. interests—U.S. officials and the PDN—is associated with positive attitudes toward the buildup (H1, H2) and colonial debt (H4, H5). It was also proposed that colonial debt is positively associated with attitudes toward the buildup (H3). Based on these propositions, it is possible that there could be an indirect effect of attention to the messages communicated by U.S. officials and the PDN on attitudes toward the buildup through colonial debt. In essence, colonial debt explains the relationship between attention to the two information sources and attitudes toward the military buildup. The following mediation-based hypotheses are thus proposed:

**H6:** Colonial debt will serve as a mediator of the association between attention to U.S. officials and attitudes toward the military buildup, with attention to U.S. officials leading to higher levels of colonial debt and more positive attitudes toward the buildup.

**H7:** Colonial debt will serve as a mediator of the association between attention to the PDN and attitudes toward the military buildup, with attention to the PDN...
leading to higher levels of colonial debt and more positive attitudes toward the buildup.

Method

Sample and Procedure

A representative sample of 319 registered voters of Guam comprised the final sample. Fifty-six per cent \((n = 177)\) of the respondents were female, 43\% \((n = 137)\) were male, and five respondents did not identify their gender. The mean age of respondents was 48 \((SD = 15.97)\), with ages ranging from 25 to 88. Median income was between $25,000 and $50,000, most respondents reported completing “some college, no degree” \((n = 87, 27.4\%)\), and 23\% \((n = 73)\) of the respondents reported having a college degree. The two ethnicities most represented in the sample were Chamorro \((n = 169, 53.3\%)\) and Filipino \((n = 99, 31.2\%)\).

The principal investigator (PI) traveled to Guam in the summer of 2009, and collected data through a self-administered mail survey of a representative sample of registered voters on the island. Prior to this, the PI also conducted focus groups on Guam in 2006 and 2008, and a pilot survey in the summer of 2008. Names and postal addresses of registered voters on Guam were obtained from the Guam Election Commission (GEC). According to the GEC director, there are roughly 52,000 registered voters on Guam (Personal communication, March 7, 2009). Systematic random sampling was used to generate a sampling frame of 1,100 respondents from the list of registered voters. Strategies from Dillman, Smyth, and Christian’s (2009) Tailored Design Method were adopted to implement the mail survey. Respondents were first sent a survey mailer during the first week of June 2009. The mailer included a cover letter, the questionnaire, a stamped return envelope, and a $1 token incentive. The cover letter was personalized, and assured respondents that their answers would remain confidential. Respondents were mailed a thank you postcard a week after the survey mailer was sent, which also served as a reminder to complete and return the survey.

The sampling frame was reduced to 927 because 173 of the survey packets could not be delivered (i.e., the address did not exist, the respondent had relocated or no longer received mail in the address, the respondent was deceased). As calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research’s (2009) response rate 2 formula, total response rate was 34.4\%. Data collection ended in July 3, 2009.

Measures

Attitudes toward the military buildup. Attitudes toward the military buildup were measured by three indices. The first index was a single item asking respondents about the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement, “I support the buildup” \((1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)\). The mean of support was 5.11 \((SD = 1.96)\). The two other indices of attitudes toward the military buildup included
items that were developed through the results of focus groups of Guam residents conducted in the summers of 2006 and 2008. When probed about their general stances toward the buildup, the most salient topics discussed by focus group respondents centered on the buildup’s economic benefits and environmental risks. Therefore, three items were developed to measure “economic benefits” attitudes (“The buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam,” “The buildup will improve Guam’s economy,” “The buildup will bring in much needed federal funds to Guam”) and three items were developed to measure “environmental risks” related attitudes (“The buildup will make Guam overcrowded,” “The buildup will harm Guam’s environment,” “The buildup will increase Guam’s crime rate”) (see Table 1). This can be aligned with previous literature suggesting that economic benefits and environmental risks are often the most salient issues that concern the residents of places being occupied by the U.S. military (see Akibayashi & Takazato, 2008; Gerson, 2008; Simbulan, 2008). Responses were measured along a seven-point Likert scale \((1 = \text{strongly disagree}, 7 = \text{strongly agree})\). Responses to the items measuring environmental risks attitudes were reverse-coded so that a lower score indicated greater agreement. The items were submitted to an exploratory factor analysis within a confirmatory factor analytical framework (see Brown, 2006) using the Mplus Version 5 structural equation modeling program (Muthen & Muthen, 2007). Maximum likelihood estimation and quartimin rotation were used to obtain a final solution. Results of this EFA within a CFA framework showed that the two-factor model fitted the data best \((\chi^2 = 6.17, \, df = 4, \, p > .10; \, CFI = .99; \, SRMR = .01; \, RMSEA = .04)\). As Table 1 shows, the items for economic benefits loaded along one factor \((\alpha = .86, \, M = 5.63, \, SD = 1.44)\), and the items for environmental risks loaded along the other factor \((\alpha = .77, \, M = 4.65, \, SD = 1.54)\).

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Scores, Factor Structure, and Fit Indices from an Exploratory Factor Analysis Within a Confirmatory Factor Analytical Framework for the Attitude Items Measuring Economic Benefits and Environmental Risks Regarding the Military Buildup.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Factor 1: Economic Benefits</th>
<th>Factor 2: Environmental Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam.</td>
<td>5.59 (1.71)</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will improve Guam’s economy.</td>
<td>5.62 (1.59)</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will bring in much needed federal funds to Guam.</td>
<td>5.73 (1.52)</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will make Guam overcrowded.</td>
<td>3.00 (1.86)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will harm Guam’s environment.</td>
<td>3.62 (1.90)</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buildup will increase Guam’s crime rate.</td>
<td>3.45 (1.85)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit indices for two-factor model:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Factor 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\chi^2 = 6.17, , df = 4, , p &gt; .10;)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(\alpha = .86)</td>
<td>(\alpha = .77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI = .99; SRMR = .01; RMSEA = .04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colonial debt. Six items from David and Okazaki’s (2006) colonial debt (CD) subscale were adapted to measure colonial debt (see Table 2 for items). Items from the original scale were modified to focus specifically on U.S. colonialism and to be relevant to Guam’s local residents (“The colonization of Guam by the United States produced very little damage to Guam’s culture,” “The United States is highly responsible for civilizing Guam and improving the island’s ways of life,” “The people of Guam should feel privileged and honored for being a part of the United States,” “The American ways of living or the American culture is generally more admirable, desirable, or better than Guam’s culture,” “Guam’s residents should praise the United States for liberating the island from the Japanese occupation of World War II,” “Guam’s residents should be thankful to the United States for transforming Guam’s way of life into an American way of life”). Responses to these six items were measured along a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), and were combined to form a single index (α = .79, M = 4.58, SD = 1.25). Results of a CFA for a one-factor model for this scale showed acceptable fit (χ² = 22.08, df = 9, p < .01; CFI = .97; SRMR = .04; RMSEA = .07).

Attention to U.S. officials. Respondents were asked “how much attention do you pay to the following sources to learn about the buildup”: (a) U.S. military officials and (b) U.S. mainland politicians3 (1 = not much attention, 7 = lots of attention). These items were combined to form a single index of attention to U.S. officials (r = .68, p < .001; M = 4.22, SD = 1.88).

Attention to the Pacific Daily News. Respondents were asked “how much attention do you pay to the PDN as a source to learn about the buildup” (1 = not much attention, 7 = lots of attention, M = 5.33, SD = 1.66).

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Scores, and Fit Indices from a Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Items Measuring Colonial Debt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The colonization of Guam by the United States produced very little damage to Guam’s culture.</td>
<td>3.87 (1.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The United States is highly responsible for improving Guam’s way of life.</td>
<td>4.89 (1.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people of Guam should feel privileged and honored for being a part of the United States.</td>
<td>5.43 (1.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American ways of living or the American culture is generally more admirable, desirable, or better than Guam’s culture.</td>
<td>3.40 (1.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam’s residents should praise the United States for liberating the island from the Japanese occupation of World War II.</td>
<td>5.37 (1.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam’s residents should be thankful to the United States for transforming Guam’s way of life into an American way of life.</td>
<td>4.46 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit indices for one-factor model:</td>
<td>α = .77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χ² = 22.08, df = 9, p &lt; .01; CFI = .97; SRMR = .04; RMSEA = .07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Controls and other measures.** For control purposes, respondents were asked to report their age, gender, income, education level, ethnicity (1 = non-Chamorro, 2 = Chamorro), how interested they were on the buildup, and how knowledgeable they were about the buildup. For descriptive purposes, respondents were also asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements along a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree): “local officials support the military buildup” (M = 5.44, SD = 1.39) and “the PDN supports the military buildup” (M = 5.08, SD = 1.83). The mean scores for these items were above the mid-point of 4, indicating that residents perceived local officials and the PDN to be supportive of the buildup.

**Analyses**

OLS regression models were employed to test the above hypotheses. Prior to running the regression analyses, zero-order correlations were inspected for any high correlations between variables, which might cause multicollinearity. A moderately high correlation was found between attention to U.S. officials and attention to the PDN (r = .51, p < .001). This correlation may be explained by the potential that the PDN devotes a fair amount of coverage to the messages of U.S. officials. Therefore, the effects of attention to U.S. officials and attention to the PDN were analyzed in separate regression models.4 H1, H2, and H3 were tested by separately regressing each attitudinal index on the control variables, attention to either U.S. officials or the PDN, and colonial debt. H4 and H5 were tested by regressing colonial debt on the control variables and attention to either U.S. officials or the PDN. Finally, to test H6 and H7, the INDIRECT macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was used, examining whether attention to U.S. officials and the PDN will have indirect effects on attitudes toward the buildup through colonial debt.

**Results**

**Descriptive Results**

Descriptive results showed that respondents scored higher in their level of agreement with the statements, “the buildup will bring in much needed federal funds to Guam” (M = 5.73, SD = 1.52), “the buildup will improve Guam’s economy” (M = 5.62, SD = 1.59), and “the buildup will create lots of jobs for Guam” (M = 5.59, SD = 1.71), than in their level of agreement with the statements, “the buildup will make Guam overcrowded” (M = 5.00, SD = 1.86), “the buildup will increase Guam’s crime rate” (M = 4.55, SD = 1.85), and “the buildup will harm Guam’s environment” (M = 4.38, SD = 1.90).

**Results for Hypotheses**

H1 predicted that higher attention to U.S. officials will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. Results in Table 3 show that
attention to U.S. officials was positively associated with greater support for the buildup ($\beta = .170$ [SE = .065], $p < .001$) and endorsement of the buildup’s economic benefits ($\beta = .122$ [SE = .043], $p < .001$), but not its environmental risks ($\beta = .071$ [SE = .056], n.s.). Results showed some support for H1.

H2 predicted that higher attention to the Pacific Daily News will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. Similar to the pattern of findings for H1, attention to the PDN was positively associated with support for the buildup ($\beta = .129$ [SE = .070]), $p = .05$, and endorsement of its economic benefits ($\beta = .100$, $p < .001$), but not its environmental risks ($\beta = .011$ [SE = .062], n.s.). Results showed some support for H2.

H3 predicted that higher levels of colonial debt will be associated with more positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. Zero-order correlations showed that colonial debt was positively associated with all three attitudinal indices: support ($r = .469$, $p < .001$), economic benefits ($r = .260$, $p < .001$), and environmental risks ($r = .596$, $p < .001$). These positive associations are confirmed by the regression results shown in Tables 3 and 4. Thus, H3 was supported.

H4 and H5 respectively predicted that higher attention to U.S. officials and the PDN will be associated with higher levels of colonial debt. Results in Tables 3 and 4 show that attention to U.S. officials ($\beta = .184$ [SE = .041], $p < .001$) and attention to the PDN ($\beta = .132$ [SE = .047], $p < .001$) were positively associated with colonial debt. H4 and H5 were supported.

H6 and H7 examined whether colonial debt will serve as a mediator of the association between attention to the information sources and positive attitudes toward the military buildup. Using Preacher and Hayes’ INDIRECT macro (2008), separate analyses were conducted to estimate the indirect effects of the independent

Table 3 Regression Results for Predictors of Attitudes Toward the Military Buildup and Colonial Debt, with Attention to US Officials as a Predictor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Economic Benefits</th>
<th>Environmental Risks</th>
<th>Colonial Debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.002 (.007)</td>
<td>-.002 (.005)</td>
<td>.002 (.006)</td>
<td>.011 (.004)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male)</td>
<td>-.083 (.213)</td>
<td>-.010 (.141)</td>
<td>.103 (.186)</td>
<td>-.096 (.140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.13 (.065)*</td>
<td>.065 (.043)</td>
<td>.044 (.057)</td>
<td>-.054 (.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.044 (.073)</td>
<td>.072 (.048)</td>
<td>-.027 (.064)</td>
<td>-.060 (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (1 = non-Chamorro, 2 = Chamorro)</td>
<td>.383 (.213)</td>
<td>.268 (.141)</td>
<td>.327 (.185)</td>
<td>.338 (.139)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>.070 (.073)</td>
<td>.109 (.049)*</td>
<td>-.053 (.064)</td>
<td>.049 (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>-.017 (.090)</td>
<td>-.123 (.060)*</td>
<td>.052 (.078)</td>
<td>.066 (.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.10***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.151***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to U.S. officials</td>
<td>.170 (.065)**</td>
<td>.122 (.043)**</td>
<td>.071 (.056)</td>
<td>.184 (.041)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.05***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>.056***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial debt</td>
<td>.596 (.090)**</td>
<td>.598 (.060)**</td>
<td>.244 (.079)**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.11***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.015 (.663)</td>
<td>.155 (.441)**</td>
<td>1.168 (.579)*</td>
<td>2.796 (.405)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table presents standardized coefficients and standard errors, *indicates $p \leq .05$, **indicates $p \leq .01$, *** indicates $p \leq .001$. 

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variables (attention to U.S. officials, attention to the PDN) on attitudes through colonial debt. Results showed some support for H6, revealing significant indirect effects of attention to U.S. officials for support (point intercept = .108, 95% CI = .047–.181), economic benefits (point intercept = .110, 95% CI = .052–.180), and environmental risks (point intercept = .045, 95% CI = .015–.095).\(^5\) Results also showed support for H7, revealing significant indirect effects of attention to the PDN for support (point intercept = .082, 95% CI = .010–.158), economic benefits (point intercept = .082, 95% CI = .019–.143), and environmental risks (point intercept = .036, 95% CI = .010–.084).

**Discussion**

Using the case of the U.S. military buildup on Guam, the purpose of the present study was to test the relationships between attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests, internalized colonialism, and attitudes toward U.S. military presence. This study contributes to our understanding of the implications of internalized colonialism on communication processes among colonial/post-colonial groups in a number of ways. First, this study reinforces the expectation that attention to information sources supportive of U.S. interests leads to support for U.S. military presence. This study found that attention to U.S. officials and the PDN had direct effects on support for the buildup and endorsement of the buildup’s potential economic benefits. However, attention to these sources did not have direct effects on

---

**Table 4** Regression Results for Predictors of Attitudes Toward the Military Buildup and Colonial Debt, with Attention to the Pacific Daily News as a Predictor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Economic Benefits</th>
<th>Environmental Risks</th>
<th>Colonial Debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.004 (.007)</td>
<td>.001 (.004)</td>
<td>.003 (.006)</td>
<td>.014 (.004)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male)</td>
<td>-.098 (.211)</td>
<td>-.012 (.140)</td>
<td>.072 (.186)</td>
<td>-.117 (.142)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.142 (.065)*</td>
<td>.056 (.043)</td>
<td>.037 (.057)</td>
<td>-.071 (.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.033 (.073)</td>
<td>.064 (.048)</td>
<td>-.023 (.064)</td>
<td>-.074 (.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (1 = non-Chamorro, 2 = Chamorro)</td>
<td>.396 (.212)</td>
<td>.276 (.141)</td>
<td>.347 (.187)</td>
<td>.368 (.141)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>.074 (.074)</td>
<td>.110 (.049)*</td>
<td>-.042 (.065)</td>
<td>.061 (.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.003 (.089)</td>
<td>-.111 (.059)</td>
<td>.085 (.079)</td>
<td>.096 (.060)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R^2)</td>
<td>.11***</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to the Pacific Daily News</td>
<td>.129 (.070)*</td>
<td>.100 (.047)*</td>
<td>.011 (.062)</td>
<td>.132 (.047)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R^2)</td>
<td>.02**</td>
<td>.03**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.023**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial debt</td>
<td>.632 (.088)**</td>
<td>.622 (.059)**</td>
<td>.276 (.078)**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R^2)</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.04***</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.256 (.668)</td>
<td>1.353 (.444)**</td>
<td>1.050 (.588)</td>
<td>2.628 (.421)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Table presents standardized coefficients and standard errors, *indicates \(p \leq .05\), **indicates \(p \leq .01\), ***indicates \(p \leq .001\).*
attitudes toward the risks it poses to Guam’s environment. These findings could be explained by the potential that U.S. officials and the PDN are rallying support for the buildup, and are doing so through emphasizing its economic benefits and downplaying its environmental risks. Indeed, a content analysis (Dalisay & Yamamoto, 2011) found that the proportion of reports of the buildup’s potential economic benefits published by the PDN was greater than that of its environmental risks.

Second, consistent with theory, the present study found that colonial debt leads Guam’s residents to hold positive attitudes toward the U.S. military buildup. Colonial debt refers to the tendency among members of colonized groups to feel fortunate for having been colonized, instilling the colonized with a sense of debt toward their colonizers (David, 2011; David & Okazaki, 2006). With regard to U.S. colonialism on Guam, Souder (1991) suggested that the American liberation from the Japanese occupation of World War II instilled a mentality of reciprocity among the island’s local residents, leading them to feel they need to “pay back” the United States for its war-time efforts. It should be noted that age was positively associated with colonial debt ($r = .27, p < .001$), indicating that older respondents, who may have lived through the Japanese occupation of Guam during World War II, or had parents who spoke about the war, had higher levels of colonial debt.

Third, the findings of this study suggest that information sources communicating support for U.S. interests could serve an acculturating role in reinforcing or maintaining internalized colonialism. Again, it is likely that U.S. officials and the PDN are communicating support for U.S. interests. In turn, as Guam residents increase their attention to U.S. officials and the PDN, this leads to higher levels of colonial debt. This finding warrants further investigation of whether other information sources communicating support for U.S. interests can reinforce colonial debt.

Fourth, the results also showed that attention to information sources that communicate support for U.S. interests can have indirect effects on attitudes toward U.S. military presence through colonial debt. Specifically, this study found that attention to U.S. officials and the PDN positively affected colonial debt, which in turn, led to favorable attitudes toward the buildup. One explanation for this finding is provided by the research on priming. As noted previously, recent experiments reveal that colonial mentality could be implicitly activated through the priming of feelings of inferiority (David, 2010; David & Okazaki, 2010). Additionally, communication effects research on priming indicates that communication messages can implicitly activate cognitions such as stereotypes and political ideologies, which can then influence judgments toward political issues. Drawing upon this research, we can surmise that messages conveyed by U.S. officials about the buildup could activate Guam residents’ colonial debt, which then affects their attitudes toward the buildup. For instance, although there was no direct effect of attention to U.S. officials on attitudes toward the buildup’s environmental risks, there was an indirect effect of attention to U.S. officials on environmental risks through colonial debt. Since the items measuring these attitudes were reverse-coded—where a lower score
indicated greater agreement with positive attitudes; a higher score indicated lesser 
agreement—it is plausible that colonial debt needs to be activated before one’s 
attention to U.S. officials leads to disagreeing with the stance that the military 
bUILD will pose risks to Guam.

Some limitations of this study should be noted, along with directions for future 
cross-cultural research. First, Guam’s remote location, small size, and historical 
relationship with the U.S. military could limit the generalizability of this study’s 
findings. Specifically, these findings could be unique to tiny Pacific colonial/post-
colonial islands such as Guam. In this case, it is recommended the propositions set 
forth in the current study be tested in other areas of the world.

Second, the present study focused only on two information sources that were 
assumed to support U.S. interests. A question is begged as to whether information 
sources that do not support U.S. interests can also affect colonial debt and attitudes 
toward the U.S. military buildup. Along these lines, local media may also report on 
negative incidents or issues concerning U.S. military presence. For instance, as noted 
above, local media in Okinawa have publicly voiced concerns over environmental 
problems, such as noise resulting from live firing exercises and training conducted by 
U.S. combat operations (e.g., Akibayashi & Takazato, 2008). At any rate, both 
positive/negative incidents that would affect local/military relationships over time 
could be an important additional element to consider. Yet survey data for the present 
study were collected in a limited period of time (i.e., 2009). Future studies should 
thus be conducted over a longer period of time to examine whether positive/negative 
incidents will affect news coverage and public opinion regarding the buildup.
Furthermore, future research should examine the outcomes of attention to 
information sources that may be disseminating anti-American messages. For 
instance, one could expend great attention on antithetical articles for all sorts of 
reasons and this wouldn’t lead to positive attitudes, but would bolster prevailing 
negative images and perceptions.

Third, the proposition about the indirect effects of information sources on 
attitudes through colonial debt was theoretically derived from the literature on 
priming (David, 2010; David & Okazaki, 2010; Domke, 2001; Valentino, 1999). It was 

therefore reasonable to expect that colonized groups’ colonial debt could be implicitly 
activated by communication messages. Nevertheless, alternative models derived from 
the selective exposure literature (Klapper, 1960) are equally plausible, such as one in 
which colonial debt leads to greater attention to sources supportive of U.S. interests, 
which then influences attitudes. As such, future studies should specify a set of 
plausible alternative theoretical models and test them in experimental settings that 
allow for causal inferences.

Fourth, for the purpose of keeping the survey succinct and thus appealing, some 
measures some constructs were measured by single items (e.g., attention to the PDN, 
personal support for the buildup), while other measures could not be included. For 
one, a measure of anti-U.S. stances, or resistance to colonialism, was not included in 
the survey. David (2010) proposed that the theoretical opposite of internalized 
colonialism is cultural mistrust, which can be conceived as a manifestation of
resistance to colonialism. Further research can therefore measure cultural mistrust and examine its relationship with colonial debt. Also, it is plausible that Guam residents' personal contact with U.S. military personnel can also exert a significant impact on outcomes such as attitudes toward the military buildup (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Yet the present study did not measure personal contact with military personnel. In this case, future research should contain measures of personal contact with the U.S. military personnel.

Finally, the sample for this study includes only registered voters of Guam. Thus, the results derived from this sample can only be generalized to registered voters of Guam. Along these lines, given the response rate of 34.4%, we must acknowledge the potential limitation of response error, along with the potential that a skewed sample may have volunteered if they had either given “high attention” to the buildup in the first place and/or were positively inclined toward it. Thus, future studies should incorporate other techniques to increase response rates (see Dillman et al., 2009), such as utilizing more than two contacts.

In conclusion, this study’s findings imply that information sources supportive of U.S. interests may play an acculturating role by reinforcing colonial debt among colonial/post-colonial groups, which in turn, facilitates support for U.S. military presence on their homelands.

Notes
[1] The 2000 dataset was used to approximate the racial composition of Guam because results of the 2010 dataset regarding this information are not available as of yet.
[2] The PDN (http://www.guampdn.com/) is one of two daily newspapers that serves Guam (the other newspaper is the Marianas Variety, and their Web site is http://mvguam.com/). The PDN has a local circulation size of 25,000. It is a newspaper that appeals to all ethnicities living on Guam. Guam’s residents can also acquire information about public affairs through two local broadcast news organizations that air news in both television and radio. These news organizations are KUAM (http://www.kuam.com/) and the Pacific News Center (http://www.pacificnewscenter.com/). Since the official language of Guam is English, and the island’s residents are proficient in English, these media are equally accessible to residents of Guam.
[3] A focus group conducted in 2008 on Guam with students from the University of Guam revealed that the term “U.S. politicians” is interpreted as those living in the U.S. mainland serving in Washington D.C.
[4] This method of dealing with multicollinearity was specified by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2002).
[5] Note regression results showed that colonial debt had a large positive effect on all three attitudinal indices for the attention to U.S. officials model. Additionally, colonial debt almost completely mediated the prior effects of attention to U.S. officials and the PDN on the three attitudinal indices. Due to page limitations, the results for the effects of attention to U.S. officials and the PDN on the three attitudinal indices, without controlling for colonial debt, were not included in Tables 3 and 4. The following results report the unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for the model with attention to the PDN as a predictor, which does not include colonial debt as a predictor—personal support: .211 (.075), p < .01; economic benefits: .182 (.055), p < .01; risks: .047 (.062),
The following results report the unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses for the model with attention to U.S. officials as a predictor, which does not include colonial debt as a predictor—personal support: .278 (.067), \( p < .001 \); economic benefits: .232 (.048), \( p < .001 \); risks: .116 (.055), \( p < .05 \). Comparatively, when colonial debt was added as a predictor to the regression models, as shown on Tables 3 and 4, the effects of attention to U.S. officials and the PDN on the three attitudinal indices were substantially reduced. These results suggest that the effect of attention to the two information sources on pro-buildup attitudes comes largely from colonial debt.

References


