

Attitudes of Japanese people towards the USA Military Bases in Japan

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the conflict caused by the USA military bases in Okinawa and analyses the factors that differentiated the attitudes of the native Okinawans from those of mainland Japanese. Data was collected by online survey using 158 questionnaires from 17 March to 16 June 2021. The majority of the participants were female with an average age of 38-year-old and had bachelor's degree education. Among the participants, 55.06% were mainland Japanese, whereas 44.94% of Okinawans. The survey outcome showed the contrary attitudes of mainland Japanese and Okinawan regarding the USA military base in Okinawa. The significant differences in behavior on the USA military base in Okinawa were "Have you ever talked with people from Okinawa about the US military base?" While different attitude on the security and USA military base was "Do, you agree that Okinawa people are really against the USA military base in Okinawa?" The level of non-similarity that occurred between Mainland Japan and Okinawa follows factors in descending order, including history, economy, culture and tradition, geography, and local government. Hence, this issue needs more attention and discussion from the central government and the local people to resolve the conflict.

Keywords: Attitude, The USA military base, security, native Okinawans, mainland Japanese

1. Introduction

Okinawa is a prefecture located at the southern end of Japan, which consists of multiple main islands: Okinawa, Ishigaki, Miyako Islands, and other islands that stretch towards Taiwan. Okinawa is also known as 'The Hawaii of Japan' because of its numerous tourist attractions and the beautiful clear seawater. It has become a world heritage site in the Ryukyu Kingdom.

Since 1429, Okinawa has been an independent and self-governing state that the Ryukyu Kingdom ruled for over 450 years. During the reign of this empire, its primary source of income was fishing and trading, owing to its proximity to numerous countries and cities throughout East and Southeast Asia. The realm was annexed as part of Japan in the Meiji period (1879) and renamed an "Okinawa Prefecture" (Hidenori, 1998; Ishii & Yoshikawa, 2017). In 1945 Okinawa was governed by the USA during the Battle of Okinawa for 27 years (BBC NEWS, 2016). The islanders were put under USA military rules and deprived of privately owned land to build military bases for USA Cold War geopolitics (Tanji, 2007). The treaty of San Francisco and the Japanese constitution in 1950 granted the United States of America the right to set up military bases in Japan, especially in Okinawa, to maintain the stability of Japan and its neighbors such as Southeast Asia and the world, notably the United States of America and China. As a result, Okinawa Prefecture has many USA military bases and USA military personnel. In 1969, a treaty was signed stating the USA would hand over Okinawa to Japan by 1971, and Japan would carry on the role of the US troops in the far East in promoting peace in the region Halliday and McCormack (1975).

The USA military bases in Okinawa have been established without the consent or rights of the local Okinawans. Although more than 70 years have passed, continuing protests from the local community have been lingering in various forms, such as the district and provincial referendums on the issue of USA military bases in Okinawa. In 2019, Okinawan residents held a referendum about moving the Futenma base to Henoko. The result revealed that the Okinawan residents disagreed with constructing an airbase at Henoko and requested to close the Futenma base. Nevertheless, while the Japanese government acknowledged the referendum's outcome, the central government still rushed to reclaim and build a US military base at Henoko. This action could lead to serious internal conflicts and possibly challenges in maintaining stability in the region (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2021). The USA military bases affect noise, accidents, crimes, and local political and economic areas.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to 1) discuss the conflict caused by setting up and expanding USA military bases in Okinawa, Japan, and 2) examine factors that differentiate the perspectives of Okinawa local people from those on the mainland of Japan in terms of the security and the USA military bases regarding the history, geography, economy, politics, society, and culture aspects.

3. Literature review

3.1 USA military bases in Okinawa prefecture

A USA military base began in 1945 during World War II (WWII), and its construction continued across Japan, even during the 1955 war on the Korean Peninsula. On the contrary, Okinawan residents did not consent to establishing the base; hence several oppositions and protests in 1969 ensued. In 1970, Okinawans called for the USA's nuclear weapons and toxic vaping withdrawal. Okinawan residents did not want USA military bases, leading to wars and other conflicts. In 1971, the USA military was called to "withdraw the base," and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, "Don't let the self-defense forces come in." This shows the objection toward various forms of military power in Okinawa (Halliday & McCormack, 1975), but the US military bases have not left Okinawa until this day.

A 2017 report on the percentage of area exclusively used for USA military facilities shows provinces with the most space occupied by USA military bases are Okinawa with 70.4%, followed by Aomori (9.0%), Kanagawa (5.6%), Tokyo (5%), Yamanashi (3.3%), Hokkaido (1.8%), Nagasaki (1.8%), Hiroshima (1.3%), and others (2.0%), respectively. It can be seen that Okinawa has the most areas occupied by USA military bases. Moreover, the proportion of USA military construction changes in 1972 and 2017 for the Mainland of Japan is 41.3% and 58.7%, compared with 29.6% and 70.4% on Okinawa Island, respectively. As a result, the proportion of construction in Mainland Japan is decreased compared to Okinawa (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2018).

The USA bases on the Okinawan Islands and other islands in the Okinawa Prefectures have been accounting for 0.6% of the area of Japan, with a total population of 1.43 million or 1.1% of the entire Japanese population. The number of constructions involving the USA military in Okinawa is 31 and representing 8.2% of the total area of Okinawa. The total number of USA soldiers in Okinawa is 25,843, accounting for 70.4% of the actual USA soldiers in Japan (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2018).

The USA military base in Okinawa has caused trouble for the residents, especially around the military base. An example of this is the Futenma base in the center of Ginowan, with

a population of around 100,000, which is considered the most dangerous USA base in the world. Several fallen objects, loud noises, and plane crashes have caused damage and problems for the community. The USA military bases have had several aircraft accidents and related cases from 1972 to 2016, including 47 hits, 518 emergency landings, and 144 others, numbering 709 in total. Besides this, the local people were involved in the various crimes, including 576 serious crimes (murders, rapes), 1067 violent offenses (injured), and 4,276 other cases, for prefectural. In addition, the various causes, such as the rape of local women by USA military persons and accidents like fallen objects and noise from aircraft, caused distress to the Okinawan community.

Local Okinawan residents have been protesting to evict USA military bases. Meanwhile, the news is spread via various media. The USA and Japanese governments are trying to reduce the problem by punishing the convicted soldiers and being more careful during interrogation. However, this is only a reaction to temporary situations, but it does not offer a long-term solution that most Okinawan people long for.

3.2 Resistance activities against USA military base in Okinawa

The first wave of Okinawans' protest was raised against USA land policy in the 1950s. At the end of the 1960s, the next protest occurred against the USA ministration, mainly demanding revision of the Japanese administration. Then, mass protests followed the rape case of 1995. Since 1996, the Okinawa Prefecture has made important provincial-level policies related to the issue of USA military bases and peace. The policy aims to reduce the base size and the problems caused by the USA military and close the base at Futenma as soon as possible. They did not force the base to be relocated to Henoko but demanded a negotiation to decrease the burden of the USA military base. The war ended over 70 years ago. While Okinawa has been in Japan's hands for 46 years, the small area of Okinawa (0.6%) is still the most dominated (70.3%) by USA military space across the country.

Following the treaty needs Okinawa to inevitably play a role and support the USA bases to maintain the stability of the country and region. There have been countless protests occurred to evict military bases in Okinawa. The results of the majority of referendums opposed the relocation and construction of the USA base at Henoko indicate there have been internal conflicts between the nation and prefecture.

In the past, there has demonstrated prefectural people's rally for anti-base in 1995. Then, a referendum in 1996 to amend the agreement and organize and reduce the military bases between Japan and the United States of America resulted in 89.09% agreeance. In 1997, the referendum on Nago regarding the building of a USA military heliport resulted in a 52.85%

objection (Eldridge, 1998). In 2015, a proposal for Yonakuni to establish the marine corps of the self-defense forces showed people's agreement; that was the first time the province welcomed the establishment of a military base for the self-defense forces (The Mainichi newspapers, 2019). Later on, in 2016, the issue of Henoko was battled in Fukuoka Supreme Court at the Naha Office between the province and nation. The Supreme court ruled out the objections to building a new base, including proving that the need to reduce the burden of military bases is the exact need of people.

For this reason, a community group called "Henoko kenmin tohyo no kai" (Henoko Prefectural Voting Party) was established for the provincial referendum. In the referendum, there were three options: agree, disagree, and not both. Initially, there were only two options, but five cities declined to join the referendum, so another option was added to receive an all-district referendum (McCurry, 25 February 2019).

The base issue made a big headline again on February 24, 2019, in Okinawa prefecture, after a referendum was held on the official relocation of the USA military base from Futenma Camp to Henoko. The results of this referendum highlighted that 434,273 people disagreed (72.2%), 114,933 people agreed (19.1%), and did not choose 52,682 people (8.8%). The total number of voters accounts for 52.48%, with the majority opposition to the relocation (NHK, 25 September 2019a). The provincial governor, Denny Tamaki, met and reported the referendum to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and notified the results to USA President Donald Trump through the USA Embassy in Okinawa (NHK, 25 September 2019b).

However, this result has no legal consequence. If the referendum received more than 1/4 voting, the provincial governor must report the outcome to the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of the United States of America. However, the results of this referendum conflict with the national security policy and agreement between Japan and the United States of America regarding the base area. The Japanese government insists on moving USA military base from Futenma to Henoko because the Futenma camp is located inside the residential areas causing trouble of sound, falling objects, and being the most dangerous military base in the world (BBC, 2019). This process is against the referendum that contradicts the reclamation of the sea to build a new base at Henoko.

3.3 Concept of Marginality

The study of perspectives between people from Okinawa and the Mainland of Japan employed the concept of marginal people. This concept in geographical terms refers to a group of people who have to move from their native homeland due to nature, economy, politics, and socio-culture. As a result, these people face competition to gain access to limited natural

resources and are deprived and exploited by large groups of original local people. Marginalized people lived farther away from economic, political, and socio-cultural centers. Therefore, they lack the bargaining power, education, and tools to access the influence in politics, society, and culture. They are not recognized but discriminated against by people of mainstream culture. Thus they need to learn, adapt, and fight to survive under such circumstances. The characteristics of marginalized people differ from most of society in terms of their ethnicity, skin, religion, ideology, education, economic status, social classes, etc. Examples of marginalized people are minorities, migrants, slum dwellers, countryside farmers, prostitutes, unskilled labor, and migrant workers. It can occur in every situation depending on their point of view. These people are often excluded or displaced from social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental contexts (Wankeaw, 2003, 2007).

Okinawan people have a different history, society, and culture to traditional Japanese, which has simply marginalized them. Therefore, marginalization can also arise from both the exclusion and inclusion processes. The same characteristics that have marginalized the Okinawan people could also restrict their access to power for their province's critical decision-making.

Noriyuki Suzuki (2018), a social scientist, describes Okinawan society as being more international than the Mainland of Japan because it was governed by the United States of America for 27 years, creating a mixture of social and cultural history, cultural diversity, and racial complexity. In addition, some descendants of Okinawan residents, who had migrated to South America, have returned to their ancestral hometown in Okinawa. In 2012, Noriyuki studied the perception of the plural societies of Urasoe City, Okinawa Prefecture, and found that the Okinawan people viewed their multiculturalism positively, concerning cultural capital, more attention was paid to English-speaking countries such as America and Canada than the culture of Chinese, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. However, Okinawans were more likely to reject the USA military. Moreover, researches on Okinawa society suggest that it possesses three main feelings of friendliness and hostility, including the shared historic pride, the shared values of the English language under globalization, and the resistance to being under the USA military (Suzuki, 2018).

Kei Kawano (2017) conducted a questionnaire survey on “American military bases are important to Japan’s stability.” While the result of USA military bases in Okinawa indicated that most Japanese islanders agreed while Okinawan residents both agreed and disagreed on the topic. Considering the age factor, the Okinawan people over 50 were increasingly resisting while the under 50s group agreed more. Thus, the age intersection was 50. Consequently, people

born before and after Okinawa became an active part of Japan had a different view of the USA military bases in Okinawa. In addition, other results on whether the people of the Mainland of Japan understand the Okinawan people or not, the Okinawan people replied that 19 percent of them "understood" and 70 percent "did not understand." On the other hand, people from the mainland Japanese responded that 30 percent of them "understood" and 59 percent "did not understand." In 1970, the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) surveyed Okinawans' opinion regarding the USA military bases' direction when Okinawa was returned to Japan. Out of the three options: immediately eradicating them, shrinking and later shutting them down, or downsizing, along with the USA military bases on the main island, 75 percent of the answers wanted them to be downsized and restricted. However, after 40 years, they have not been eradicated, resulting in heavy criticism from people born before Okinawa was returned to Japan. Half of the people born after returning to Japan said they wanted to downsize the bases close to the ones on the main island instead of moving them from Futenma to Henoko. Nevertheless, half of them accepted that the USA military bases in Japan were a necessity. Furthermore, the use of Okinawa as a USA military base was an insult to 70% of the total Okinawan people and 16.8% of the people of Mainland Japan (Kawano, 2017).

The review of the book *Japan's ASEAN Policy: In Search of Proactive Multilateralism* was explained the three types of Japanese foreign policy: (1) Mainstream - A group described as being dependent on the United States of America, (2) Alternative model, Asian policy and the adjustment of the relationship between Japan and the United States of America to be a more equitable partnership, and (3) Moderate model, focusing on trade liberalization. All policies showed that the United States of America played a leading role and influenced Japan's foreign policy (Wajjwalku, 2016). Moreover, Japan needs to strengthen its army to be more powerful. There are several reasons for this, including the United States of America's idea that Japan must be more self-sufficient because the USA faces budget and economic problems. North Korea test-fires intercontinental ballistic missiles through Japan and tests nuclear bombs. Moreover, China and the United States of America are increasingly facing each other economically and militarily (Strategic Studied Centre, 2018).

A phone interview of an American man stated that "I was an American worker in the USA military camps in Okinawa for 4 years. I learned about Okinawa culture and the Japanese foundation language. Most Americans don't want to come to Okinawa because of the difficulty in communication. There were some activities with local people, including festivals, volunteer work to clean up the beach and local schools, supplying food to the homeless at the parks in Naha city, teaching English to high school and university students on military bases, garbage

collection work with residents, and a barbecue with Japanese soldiers. The movement against the USA military bases in Okinawa was that some were opposed to the support of China." A study on the USA military bases in the Okinawan area showed the issue of regional stability from the perspective of the Okinawan people. Secondary documentary studies found views in the public sector of Okinawa, in terms of security and the US military bases, to be utterly different from that of the mainland of Japan. Most people in Okinawa prefer to either reduce or exterminate USA military bases altogether and generate a higher income from tourism revenue instead of the military and USA military bases budget. On the contrary, most mainland Japanese argue that the USA military bases in Japan are essential for maintaining national security and play a crucial role in the economic development of Okinawa.

From the previous literature review, it was found that the survey issue concerns the opinions of Okinawans about the existence of American military bases in Okinawa. It has received a lot of attention both from within Japan itself. It also found that some media are continually conducting polls to look at trends in attitude changes. The overall attitude of Japanese people both agree and disagree with the presence of US military bases in Japan. However, having the US military base is also essential to Japan's security and the region.

Apart from this, a third party has less researched this issue. In Thailand, it was found that no surveys have been conducted yet. In fact, in the future, if there is a conflict in the region, Thailand will likely be affected either directly or indirectly. Therefore, this study will provide preliminary information to introduce the conflict situation, find the solution, and protect the possible future conflict.

4. Methodology

This research project examines the conflict caused by setting up and expanding USA military bases in Japan, especially Okinawa. Additionally, factors differentiating the perspectives regarding the security and the USA military bases between the people of Okinawa and the mainland of Japan were studied. Also, the study reviewed previous literature and conducted an online questionnaire to collect data during the COVID-19 pandemic, targeting Okinawa local people and mainland Japanese.

Data was collected by snowball via an online channel, targeting Japanese nationals aged of 18-year-old and over. Online questionnaires have been distributed via private social media channels, mainly Facebook and Line. The questionnaire questions were designed by the authors and consist of 4 parts with 17 questions as below;

Part 1 Behavior on USA military base in Japan (4 questions)

Part 2 Attitude on the security and USA military base (5 questions)

Part 3 Level of similarity in attitude between Mainland Japan and Okinawa (1 question)

Part 4 Personal background (7 questions)

Data were collected from 17 March 2021 to 16 June 2021 or three months, with 158 questionnaires. Moreover, informal interviews were also referenced by phone and interviewing scripts in other media as secondary documents.

Analyses tools for this survey were Descriptive statistics and Crosstabulation. Descriptive statistics can describe the personal characteristics of the samples. Next, Crosstabulation is an essential technique for examining the relationship between two categorical variables. This study used place of birth as a row variable and level of opinions as a column variable. The samples were divided into two groups and examined whether they had different opinion levels.

Ethical consideration and approval

The right to decline participation during the research was presented to protect participants' anonymity. In addition, this study received ethical approval from the Office of the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects: in Full Compliance with International Guidelines for Human Research Protection, Mahidol University (MU-CIRB 2021/064.0402)

5. Findings

Questionnaire under the title “A survey of attitudes of the mainland Japanese and Native Okinawans toward the security and US military bases in Okinawa, Japan,” following the questionnaire, the results showed four different perspectives; part 1 Personal background, part 2 Behavior on USA military base in Japan, part 3 Attitude on the security and USA military base, and part 4 Level of similarity on attitude between Mainland Japan and Okinawa.

Table 1 represents the general personal background of the participants. A total of 158 participants were involved in the survey. Gender-wise, 53.8 % of participants were females (85), while 46.2% (73) of male participants were recorded with an average age of 38-year-old (84 years for the eldest and 18 years for the youngest). The education background of the participants revealed that 72.78 % (115) were under graduated, 15.19 % (24) were master's or upper degree qualified, while 12.03 % (19) were studied high school. Among the participants, 55.06 % (87) were born in mainland Japan while 44.94 % (71) were born in Okinawa. The Japanese participants living in Okinawa were 49.37 % (78), Mainland Japan 44.30% (70), and

overseas 6.33% (10). The participants who had been to Okinawa were 77.85% (123), and no experience in Okinawa was 22.15% (35). Moreover, the participant's knowledge of the Okinawa language showed that only 3.80% (6) were fluent (native), while 12.60% (20) were good, 34.18 % (54) poor, and 49.37 % (78) did not have any knowledge of Okinawa language.

Table 1 General personal background of the participants (as of 2021)

Title	Personal background	number	percentage
Gender	Female	85	53.8%
	Male	73	46.2%
Age	Average 37.87 Y (Youngest 18Y and Eldest 84Y)		
Education	Master's degree or upper	24	15.19%
	Bachelor's degree	115	72.78%
	High school	19	12.03%
Place of birth	Mainland Japan	87	55.06%
	Okinawa	71	44.94%
Place of living	Mainland Japan	70	44.30%
	Okinawa	78	49.37%
	Overseas	10	6.33%
Okinawa experience	Having experienced being in Okinawa	123	77.85%
	no experience	35	22.15%
Okinawa language	Fluent	6	3.80%
	Good	20	12.60%
	Poor	54	34.18%
	Disable	78	49.37%

Part 1 (personal background) showed Japanese participant's behavior on USA military bases in Japan, and it consisted of 4 questions (Q); (Q 1.1) "How often do you read / surf more information on USA military bases in Japan?", (Q 1.2) "Have you ever talked with people who are from Okinawa about the USA military base?", (Q 1.3) "Have you ever supported (by money /assistance) activities against USA military base in Japan?", (Q 1.4) "Have you ever participated in the parade against USA military base in Japan?"

The survey found the most replies for Q1.1 was “Sometimes (3.19)”, Q1.2 was “Sometimes (2.93)”, Q1.3 was “Rarely (1.99)”, and Q1.4 was “Rarely (1.85)”. However, based on their birthplace (Mainland Japan and Okinawa), Figure 1 shows the different frequency between mainland Japanese and Okinawan on (Q 1.2), (Q 1.1), (Q 1.4), and (Q 1.3) in numerical order. Therefore, part 1 found that Okinawans have an action on surf information and talking with people about USA military base more frequently than the mainland Japanese.

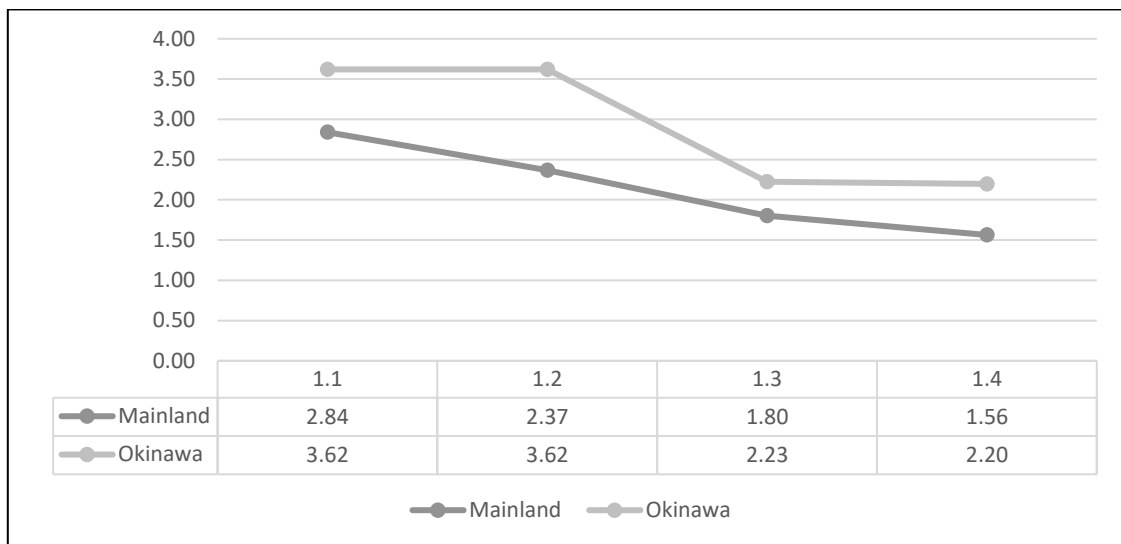


Figure 1 Behavior on US military base in Japan

(Note: Point scale 1 is “Never”, 2 = “Rarely”, 3 = “Sometimes”, 4 = “Often”, and 5 = “Very often”)

In part 2, their attitudes on the security and USA military base were indicated, which included 3 questions: Q 2.1 “Do you think Okinawa’s economy depends on US military?” Q 2.2 “Do you agree that US military base is important for Japan? why or why not?” Q 2.3 “Do you agree that Okinawa people are really against the US military base in Okinawa?”

The survey found the most replied by participants for Q2.1 was “Not sure (3.17)”, Q2.2 was “Not sure (3.21)”, and Q2.3 was “Agree (3.87)” as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Attitude on the security and US military base

Question	2.1	2.2	2.3
Average	Not sure 3.17	Not sure 3.21	Agree 3.87
S.D.	0.99	1.12	1.05

(Note: Point scale is 1 = “Strongly disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Not sure”, 4 = “Agree”, and 5 = “Strongly Agree”)

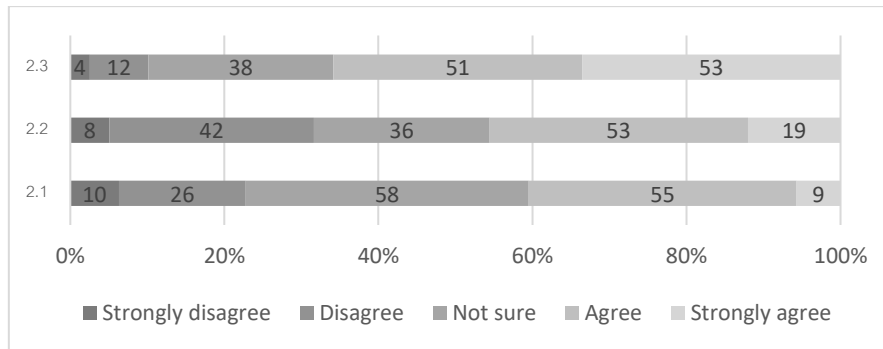


Figure 2 Attitude on the security and US military base

However, based on their birthplace (Mainland Japan and Okinawa), the result shows the different frequency and percentage between mainland Japanese and Okinawan (Figure 3), especially the opinion that Okinawans are against the US military base in Okinawa. Figure 3 shows the results of the attitude between mainland Japanese (M) and Okinawans (O) towards the security and USA military base in Okinawa.

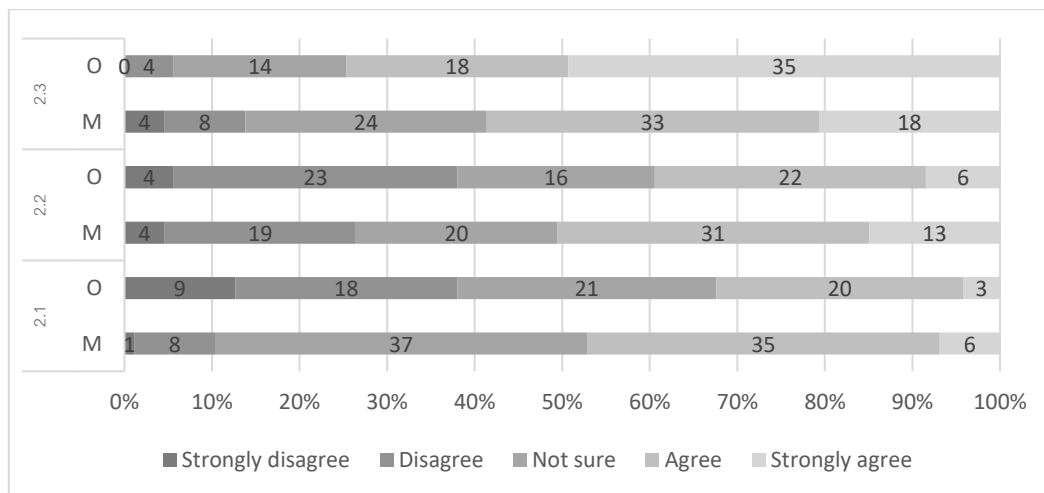


Figure 3 Attitude of the security and US military base between mainland Japanese and Okinawan

Aside from choosing the level of attitude, some of them have described their opinions and supported the description in Japanese and translated into English as follows;

Additional reasons for Q 2.1 opinions on Okinawa's economic dependence on the USA military. The example of responses of origin from either mainland Japanese people (M) or Okinawans (O), with different gender (male or female) and age (Y), described as

“Some stores expect USA troops as customers of stores run by Okinawans. In addition, there is the employment of clerical staff in the base as a place of employment for the citizens of the prefecture. If these disappear, it will hurt the Okinawan economy.” (M31/male, 28Y)

“There are people who have worked in the USA military for decades, and there are shops that are enriched by the USA military.” (M91/female, 21Y)

“The number of USA military personnel is smaller than that of residents and tourists, and consumption activities are poor.” (M22/ male, 53Y)

“Considering the US military land lease fee, bars, and restaurants around the base, I think a considerable amount of money has fallen in Okinawa Prefecture. It cannot be denied that some people will benefit from it.” (O32/female, 23Y)

“Because many Okinawans are working in the base and many people are receiving land lease fees for military land.” (O153/ male, 55Y)

Additional reasons for Q 2.2 opinion on the importance of USA military bases to Japan.

The example of responses of mainland Japanese people (M) and Okinawans (O) was:

“According to the Japanese constitution, Japan will not go to war. According to In the Japan-USA Security Treaty, the United States of America protects Japan. Many USA military bases in Okinawa and Japan are preparing for emergencies. Therefore, not only Okinawa but also other USA military bases in Japan are needed.” (M10 / male, 35Y)

“At present, the existence of the USA military cannot be denied in terms of Japan's security.” (M127 / male, 57Y)

“Regardless of whether it is Okinawa or not, it is essential that Japan has a USA military base, as Japan's defense is based on the premise of Japan-US security.” (M130 / male, 62Y)

“For Japan, which has insufficient self-defense, it seems that it is possible to avoid the invasion of other countries by receiving the protection of the USA military or nuclear umbrella.” (M90 / female, 61Y)

“It has no need of the USA military, although it depends on it now.” (M131/ female, 60Y)

“It is reasonable that business can be established with foreigners stationed there. The reality is that the economy is not turning just in the domestic tourism industry.

However, if the USA military base disappears, it may be possible to put more effort into the tourism industry and revitalize it.” (M111/ male, 51Y)

“It would be nice if Japan had the power of self-defense, but in reality, it relies on the United States of America, and if it disappears, it could be under dangerous conditions for national defense.” (O65 / female, 20Y)

“The existence of the USA military, the world's largest army, in Japan has one aspect of playing a police role in the Japan-USA Security Treaty, the Pacific Ocean, and Asian countries.” (O32/ female, 23Y)

“To be honest, I don't think Japan's current diplomatic power can easily counter threats from other countries.” (O80/ male, 20Y)

“I don't need it at all. Far from being important, it can be life-threatening. Even if there is a USA military base, the military does not protect Okinawa Island. If you look back on the history of the Battle of Okinawa, you can easily understand it. It's just the same as saying that both Japan and the United States of America should sacrifice to Okinawa.” (O28/ male, 72Y)

“It is a deterrent from other countries, but on the contrary, it is a target of attacks. Japan should not rely on the USA military.” (O151/ female, 21Y)

Additional supporting statements for Q 2.3 opinions on Okinawa people, really against American military bases provided by the mainland Japanese people (M) and Okinawan (O):

“The construction of the new Henoko base will not be canceled even though the Okinawans have expressed their opposition to the construction of the new Henoko base in the prefectural vote.” (M20/ male, 56Y)

“Became a battlefield in the war, and since then has lived with a USA military base. Mainlanders must understand the suffering, sadness, and anger of Okinawans.” (M52/ female, 41Y)

“The noise of airplanes and fighters is boisterous. Doesn't it fall every time an airplane or fighter passes by? The sound is so magnificent that it's scary, and the distance is close.” (M74/ male, 20Y)

“It seems that the Okinawan people are not the main players in the movement against the base, but the minions of China and South Korea and the remnants of the left-wing radicals are doing a lot to raise funds.” (M139/ male, 46Y)

“I can understand how Okinawans are dissatisfied with the fact that the bases are concentrated in Okinawa.” (M130/ male, 62Y)

“I agree. People around me, including myself, are the victims of an accident caused by the USA military, so there is the fact that they are life-threatening.” (O2/ male, 70Y)

“If you look at the results of the prefectural vote at the time of the Henoko new base relocation problem, you can see that you oppose it. However, some Okinawans work with military personnel, so people cannot say the opposite in a loud voice. However, I don't think there is any area that wants Futenma Air Station, the most dangerous. I think the people who want it are those who have money and can only work for their own sake.” (O33/ male, 45Y)

“It's been 76 years since the end of the war, but there are still many accidents, and just relocating to the prefecture will never go away.” (O61/ male, 21Y)

“I understand my feelings, but it doesn't seem realistic. In particular, I wonder how to defend against neighboring countries that wield hegemony. It's too early to coexist peacefully with our neighbors.” (O105/ female, 29Y)

Lastly, in part 3 level of similarity between mainland Japan and Okinawa consists of seven questions as follows: Q 3.1 “History,” Q 3.2 “Economy,” Q 3.3 “Culture and tradition,” Q 3.4 “Food,” Q 3.5 “Language,” Q 3.6 “Geography” and, Q 3.7 “Prefectural government” The most similar levels were “Economy” 3.03 and “Prefectural government” 3.03, followed by “Food” 2.92, “Language” 2.91, “Geography” 2.64, “history” 2.51, and “culture and tradition” 2.50 by sequent. However, when data were analyzed based on their birth of place, it was found that some topics had a significant difference of less than 0.05. This shows that the level of perspective toward history, economy, culture and tradition, geography, and the prefectural government was affected by the participants’ place of birth, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Level of similarity between Mainland Japan and Okinawa

Part 3	3.1 History	3.2 Economy	3.3 Culture and tradition	3.4 Food	3.5 Language	3.6 Geography	3.7 Prefectural government
Average	2.51	3.03	2.50	2.92	2.91	2.64	3.03
S.D.	1.06	1.16	1.12	1.06	1.13	1.15	1.14

(Note: Point scale is 1 = “0-19% of similarity”, 2 = “20-39% of similarity”, 3 = “40-59% of similarity”, 4 = “60-79% of similarity”, and 5 = “80-100% of similarity”)

The result indicated that attitude on the ranking of similarity between mainland Japan and Okinawa from most to least closet was Prefectural government, economy, food, language, geography, history, and culture and tradition.

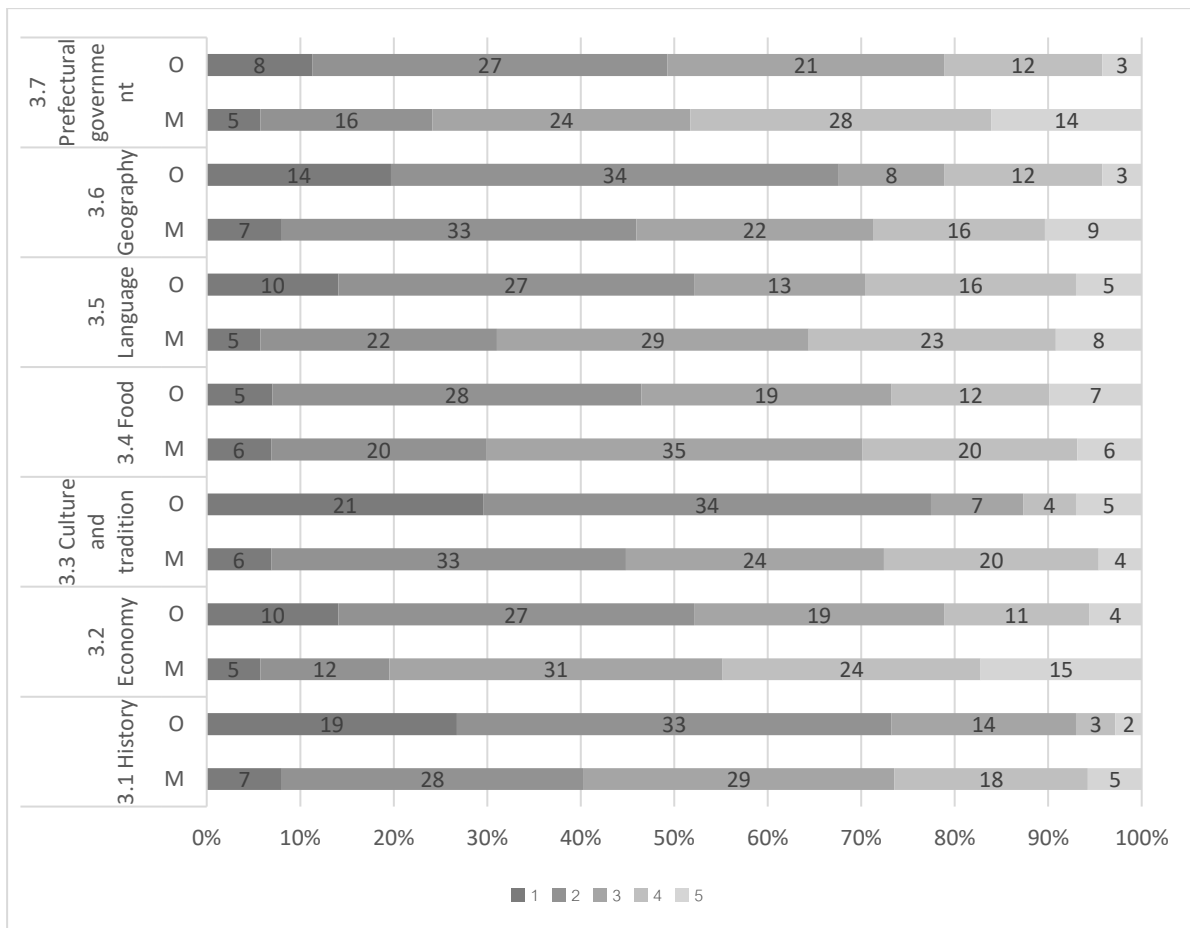


Figure 4 level of similarity and, Mainland Japan and Okinawa

(Note: Point scale is 1 = “0-19% of similarity”, 2 = “20-39% of similarity”, 3 = “40-59% of similarity”, 4 = “60-79% of similarity”, and 5 = “80-100% of similarity”)

When comparing each topic on level of similarity, it was observed that most of the different opinions given on the prefectural government with mainland Japanese people choose 4 (60-79%) while Okinawan 2 (20-39%) as the most replied. There were also differences in history, economy, food, and language which mainland Japanese answered option 3 (40-59%) while Okinawans chose option 2 (20-39%). However, both groups' culture, tradition, and geography were at the same level as option 2 (20-39%).

Following the results of an online questionnaire, we had noted a gap in attitudes between the mainland Japanese and Okinawan; for part 1 higher gap was noted with “Have you ever talked with people who are from Okinawa about the USA military base?” in part 2 the most of the hole was observed with “Do you agree that Okinawa people are really against the USA military base in Okinawa?” and part 3 the higher gap was found for “Economy,” “History,” and “Prefectural government.”

6. Discussion

This is the limitation of this survey due to the situation of COVID-19; direct distribution of questionnaire is impossible, replaced by an online questionnaire. Even during pandemics, questionnaires were collected, and the number of participants involved was 158 out of 400 (approximately 40% of the total requirement). It still considered their attitudes toward USA military bases in Okinawa prefecture. The results of the study showed the different points of view related to other histories, geographic locations, and economic systems, including the social and cultural aspects as follows:

(1) Prefectural government aspect

USA military bases are based on an international agreement following the 1951 San Francisco Treaty. The intent is that Japan was prohibited from having military forces but only had self-defense forces to protect themselves. For this reason, the USA is required to build a USA military base in Japan; thus, if Japan is unable to comply, it may affect the stability of Japan. Japan demands to secure its stability from the military alliance to protect against communist countries. Concurrently, Okinawa is also attached to the process called stability at the national and regional levels by acting as a strategic point for surveillance and transport of USA troops, vehicles, and other weapons in East Asia, South East Asia, and cover toward the Indian Ocean. Hence, this is legitimate action from the condition in the San Francisco Treaty Agreement in 1951 and the Japanese Constitution. The sample of the person who gave an opinion was M10, M20, etc.

(2) Economics aspect

An opinion poll on the USA military base dependence on the Okinawa economy between Okinawan peoples and Japanese people across the country was as follows:

Okinawa Prefectural Government reports the proportion of USA military base income versus total income from the province was 30.4% in 1965, 5.2% in 2000, 5.2% in 2005, 5.3% in 2010, and 5.7% in 2014. In conclusion, Okinawa's economy was not dependent on the USA military base, and that thought was utterly untrue (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2018). Following the data survey in 2017 by Japan News Agency, NHK concluded that after Okinawa returned to Japan, Okinawa gained a 20-fold increase in tourism income. In 2016, the overall revenue of Okinawa residents increased more than eight times compared to 2014, while the income of citizens associated with USA military bases dropped from 15.5% to 5.7 percent. In addition, the telephonic interview to collect the opinion regarding USA military bases and their relevance to the Okinawa economy found that 31% of Okinawa residents agreed that "Okinawa's economy would not be good without a US military base."

In comparison, 58% of the whole country agreed. On the other question, “Okinawa's economy doesn't grow without military bases.” Most Okinawan people say, “I don't think so.”. In contrast, most mainland Japanese replied, “I think so” (Kawano, 2017). Moreover, it can be seen that most Japanese people still think that USA military bases have a significant impact on the economic development of Okinawa, while most Okinawan residents disagree.

This survey also showed that the sample of the person who gave an opinion was M111, O33, etc.

(3) Historical aspect

According to historical evidence, the Okinawans and the Japanese of the Mainland share an ancestor that the 18,000-year-old. Minatogawa human bone was unearthed near Naha, Okinawa, and is believed to be the ancestors of the Japanese people today. The era of the Jomon period (10,000 - 4,000 years BC) found that both Japan of the main islands and Okinawa should be related by the decoration of the rope pattern on the pottery, including the foundation of related languages. Before 300 AD, Okinawa culture began to separate from the Japanese culture of Mainland Japan. For historical background, Okinawa is home to the Ryukyu Kingdom with a unique culture and a fusion of cultures from China and Southeast Asia. On the other hand, Japanese history varied until the history of Okinawa came to be part of Japan. Consequently, according to the law, Okinawan residents are Japanese.

However, the USA military base concentrated in Okinawa has been carried on until now, even though the war is over. Although the Okinawan people have protested differently, this conflict leads to a stable perspective and separation inside Japan.

This survey found that the sample of the person who gave an opinion were O28, M52, etc.

(4) Social and Cultural Aspects

Okinawa is home to the Ryukyu Kingdom, a self-governed state. Language experts, ethnographic, and archaeologists believed that the Okinawan culture began to be influenced by mainland culture and culture from the south in the Yayoi era (400 BC - 250 BC). Therefore, the Japanese culture was obtained through Kyushu Island, Chinese culture, and the Southern country, making it a unique culture and language different from common Japanese culture. After Okinawa became a part of Japan, Ryukyu was not recognized by mainland Japanese, and the new generation descendants of Okinawa ignored the native language and used standard Japanese. They speak the Japanese language with an Okinawan accent, also known as Uchinaaguchi, influenced by Ryukyu and American English.

(5) Geolocation aspect

Okinawa consists of 160 islands in southern Japan for the geographic location, stretching across the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The subtropical climate is humid with plants, animals, and natural resources different from mainland Japan. In a radius of 1,000 km is close to major cities such as Japan's Fukuoka, China's Shanghai, Taiwan's islands, and within a radius of 2,000 km close to the capital cities, including capital Japan's Tokyo, South Korea's Seoul, North Korea's Pyongyang, Beijing of China and Manila of the Philippines, etc. (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2018). It is considered a crucial strategic point for commercial and military purposes. The USA military bases in Japan regarding Okinawa as a critical strategic point in the East China Sea, a strategic area against the Cold War and the military tensions near China, North Korea, and Russia. In addition, a USA base in Okinawa serves to maintain peace in the left Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean (Asahi newspaper, 2018). It is nearly 2,000 km from Tokyo, the capital city, making its social and cultural characteristics different from mainland Japan. Some opinions on this aspect of the samples were O32, M90, M130, etc.

From this survey, many factors emerged that the Japanese on the Mainland and the Okinawans had different attitudes towards the existence of the American military base. Especially in Okinawa, whether it is the historical basis, economic, national political system, or local politics, including social and cultural foundations. After studying the Okinawan people's views and the mainland Japanese on the security and USA military base, we obtained a picture that revealed the Okinawan people's lack of power to decide on their native land—observed from the referendum voting, including the central policies that are often used in election campaigns in Okinawa that often appear against the existence of American military bases. The population of Okinawans is less than 1% of people in Japan. It is hard to push the country's policy. Although some mainland Japanese people disagree with a USA military base in Okinawa, all decisions are based on the central government.

7. Conclusion

The people of Okinawa have not been willing to set up military bases in the first place for 50 years. At the same time, Okinawa is also drawn into a national and regional security process by acting as a strategic point of surveillance and transportation to American soldiers, vehicles, and various weapons in East Asia and Southeast Asia and may cover the entire Indian Ocean region. This act of legitimacy is considered a condition in the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco among the USA, Japan, and other countries without Okinawa. Moreover, the role of various media affects the perception of the situation differently between Okinawa people and

Tokyo. Finally, the stories of American soldiers who have relations with local communities were not often mentioned in the news.

The research indicated historical, economic, social, and cultural differences create a way of life between mainland Japanese and Okinawans. Most mainland Japanese still believe that Okinawa cannot develop without a USA base. From the Okinawans and the mainland Japanese in security and USA military bases, it was observed that Okinawans lack the decision-making power in their original territory.

The outcome of this study will increase the awareness of events that have impacted Okinawa and the stability in East and Southeast Asia. The lessons learned from Okinawa should be studied to understand the causes of such conflicts and how to cope with them in the future. Additionally, we can gain insight to shed light on various domestic disputes.

Thailand is also a military relationship with the United States of America, Japan, South Korea, and China. They all play an economic role as significant trading partners of Thailand. Therefore, Thailand should consider this regional security policy in agreement with national, provincial, and local levels, including domestic conflicts, such as problems in the three southern border provinces and community protests by the different shirt colors. All of them show the difference between people in the country originated from the historical, geographic, economic, and socio-cultural diversity, which are factors in establishing marginalization.

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