

Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa

*Women, Militarized Domesticity, and
Transnationalism in East Asia*

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Acknowledgments

Retracing the varied and often surprising trajectories of domestic scientists, military wives, club women, and housewives who travelled across the Pacific in the decades following the Second World War has turned out to be a truly transnational endeavor. My research project has taken me to locations across North America, the Pacific, and Asia, giving me not only access to rare and often forgotten historical documents and mementos but also opportunities to experience the kind of trepidation as well as excitement these women must have felt more than half a century ago as they stepped into the world of Cold War homemaking. In the course of my cross-border journeys, I have accumulated debts to many individuals and institutions, without whose support I could not have completed this project.

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1 Re-thinking gender and militarism in Cold War Okinawa

On March 3, 1960, Brigadier General John Ondrick gave a speech titled "Why Are We Here?" at a women's symposium in US-occupied Okinawa. Speaking to an audience of American and Okinawan women, Ondrick painted a startling picture of Cold War struggles. With its plan for "aggressive conquest of Asia," the forces of communism had already achieved some success, pulling China into its bloc and building "formidable military forces dedicated to the purpose of the ultimate enslavement of the people of Asia." The only reason the communist forces had not yet achieved global domination was "the superior military power of the United States" that had been fending off the danger engulfing the world. Given the precarious nature of the post-war international situation, the answer to the question "Why are we [the Americans] here?" was obvious: to wage a heroic battle against communism that was threatening the free world.

While emphasizing the significance of the fight *against* communism, Ondrick also felt it necessary to explain what the US was fighting *for*. In post-war Okinawa, US military forces had been tirelessly working with the local population to "devise and implement plans leading to the upgrading of the Ryukyuan economy and to achieve a progressive rise in the standard of living." The list of projects pursued under US guidance included development of new industries, improvement of public health, and expansion of education. The occupation of Okinawa was about improving the lives of the local population. Given the humanitarian objectives pursued by the Americans, Ondrick argued, an allegation that the occupation was a case of colonialism was groundless. While "the purpose of colonizing a foreign area is to make profits," the US did "not receive a profit from the islands." Rather, Okinawa was "a source of great expense," indeed a "burden," which Americans were willing to bear for the sake of world peace.

Defining the occupation as a humanitarian endeavor, Ondrick went on to emphasize the central role women could play in American operations in Okinawa. The success of the occupation critically hinged on "the degree that understanding and willing cooperation exist between us [the US and Okinawa]," and women, he said, could "assist significantly in identifying ways in which we can achieve a higher degree of mutual understanding, of tolerance of each other's

way, and of dedicated cooperation leading to the attainment of these mutually beneficial goals." A gathering such as a women's symposium was an ideal occasion for cultivating mutual sympathy and affinity, since "the more we see each other, the more we talk to teach other, the more understanding we will have between us." Advocating women's involvement in the occupation, however, Ondrick immediately characterized their participation as non-political: "I only ask this splendid group of women, and the women you represent, that you do not become involved in politics and that you will look at all issues squarely and intuitively as women normally do for the single and sole purpose of making this world a better place to live in."¹

Ondrick was not to be disappointed. American and Okinawan women turned out to be more than eager to participate. Against the backdrop of Okinawa's violent transformation into the "Keystone of the Pacific," which entailed forced confiscation of land and relocation of people, pervasive destruction of nature and environment, intense build-up of military bases and facilities, as well as countless military accidents and crimes against the local population, American and Okinawan women engaged in a series of feminine and domestic activities to cultivate mutual affinity and affiliation (see Figure 1.1). Wives of American occupiers organized themselves into clubs and pursued a variety of activities ranging from cooking demonstrations to tea and coffee parties to fashion shows in order to generate "mutual understanding" and "dedicated cooperation" between the occupiers and the occupied. Home economists were dispatched from Michigan State University (MSU) in order to train Okinawan home economists in American "domestic science" and disseminate knowledge and technologies of "modern" homemaking among local mothers and housewives. With the help of US military vehicles and helicopters, these home economists reached women in rural communities and on the outer islands to spread the gospel of new domesticity even further. Not content with staying in Okinawa, they soon began to work with other home economists in Taiwan, the Philippines, and Hawaii, creating a transnational network of "female scientists" across Asia and the Pacific amidst the region's increasing militarization under American rule.

Okinawan women were no less enthusiastic in their responses and reactions to Cold War domestic mobilization. At the University of the Ryukyus (UR), Okinawan home economists developed new curricula and pursued a series of studies on nutrition, hygiene, clothes design, and home management in collaboration with American home economists, showcasing the occupation as an instance of cross-cultural endeavors focused on female science education

¹ John G. Ondrick, "Why Are We Here?," March 3, 1920, File Number: 835, USCAR Administrative Office, Miscellaneous Publication, 1959–1965, Okinawa Prefecture Archives (hereafter OPA), Haeburu, Okinawa.

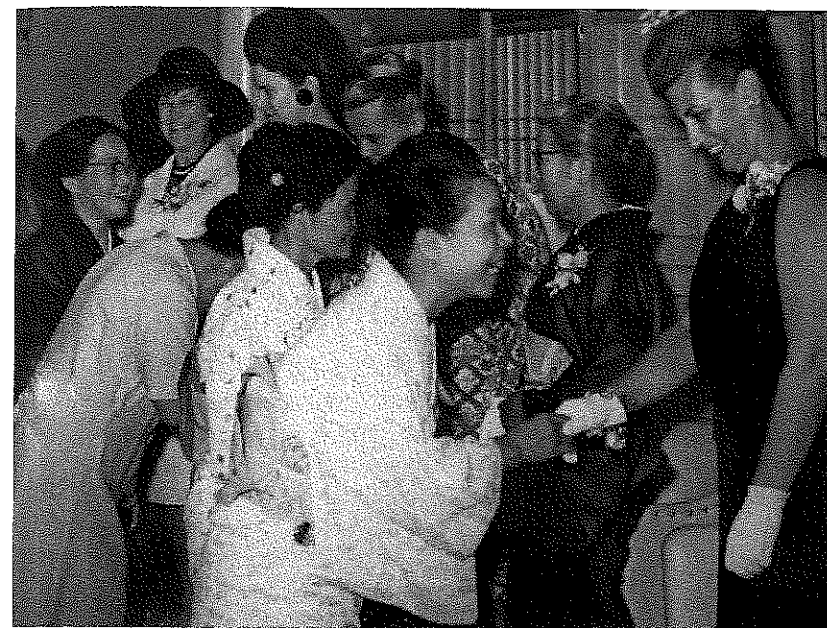


Figure 1.1 Cold War feminine affinity and affiliation
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and community empowerment. At local high schools, the Zen Okinawa Kōtō Gakkō Katei Kurabu, or Future Homemakers of Okinawa (FHO), was established, recruiting young women into the project of modern homemaking and creating a new generation of domestic experts who would contribute to Okinawa's reconstruction and development pursued under the direction of the US military authority. At city halls and cultural centers, local wives and mothers flocked to workshops and lectures to acquire up-to-date domestic techniques from American and Okinawan home economists and bring new methods of cooking, cleaning, and sewing back to their own homes to practice. Not only did they learn how to cook with luncheon meat and other types of military ration food that poured into post-war Okinawa; they acquired a new set of sewing skills with which they created women's jackets out of discarded military uniforms and wedding dresses out of military parachutes. Cold War domestic mobilization even provided some women with opportunities to go abroad. Traveling to the US, Okinawan women leaders not only experienced American domesticity and femininity at first hand, but also engaged in numerous grassroots exchanges with American women in the various cities and towns they visited. During the US occupation of Okinawa, women's domestic activism flourished,

subsuming the violent contour of foreign military domination into relentless talks and practices centered on the home and homemaking, and recasting the occupation as a moment of feminized transnational encounter where mutual affinity and affiliation would be cultivated among women across racial and national differences.

Re-thinking women, home, and empire in the US occupation of Okinawa

Since the 1995 assault and rape of a twelve-year-old girl by three US servicemen in Okinawa, a trope of masculine domination and feminine subjugation has centrally informed discussions concerning post-Second World War US–Okinawa relations. Such gendered analysis has offered a powerful tool of critique, revealing the staggering scale of sexual violence against Okinawan women by US military personnel, galvanizing large-scale local, national, and international feminist protest mobilization, and generating a series of academic and non-academic writings that highlight the centrality of rape as a metaphor and a reality in Okinawa's encounter with the US. However, American dominance in Okinawa since 1945 has entailed not only violence and coercion but other kinds of dynamics that have also had to do with women and gender. As seen in Ondrick's speech, post-war US rule in Okinawa centrally targeted women as key agents of the occupation, deploying a multitude of strategies involving gender, race, and nation and enticing women to participate in Cold War US expansionism in Asia and the Pacific. Domesticity constituted a central arena in this mobilization process, in which women pursued a series of discourses and activities related to homes and homemaking and cultivated mutual affinity and affiliation between the occupiers and the occupied. Far from being mere victims of US military domination, Okinawan women actively participated in the occupation, generating an extraordinarily dynamic picture of women, the home, and empire in the Cold War context. The current emphasis on the violent, coercive, and *masculine* nature of American military domination in Okinawa thus elides the significance of other, more *feminine* and *domestic* dynamics that also informed the occupation, leaving a lacuna in the critical understanding of women, power, and hegemony in Cold War American nation- and empire-building.

Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa: Women, Militarized Domesticity, and Transnationalism in East Asia intervenes in the existing discussion of gender and power in the US occupation of Okinawa by examining a crucial yet hitherto understudied link between domesticity and militarism. Tracing women's sentiments, discourses, and practices concerning homes and homemaking in the densely militarized zone called Okinawa, this study illuminates how the occupation mobilized women as feminized agents of Cold War

expansionism and turned their homes into a focal site of imperial politics. Notwithstanding John Ondrick's insistence at the depoliticized nature of women's involvement in the occupation, Cold War deployment of women was deeply political, as it forged an unlikely yet crucial link between their feminine and domestic activities and the American military and militarism. Re-imagining the boundaries between the private, feminized domain of homemaking and the public, masculinized domain of nation- and empire-building as less distinct and more permeable than previously understood, this study re-casts Okinawan domesticity as a deeply entrenched site of Cold War politics, where women engaged in a multitude of active, heterogeneous negotiations with the dominant structure of power with complex results.

Drawing on insights offered by gender studies, Cold War studies, and Japanese and Okinawan studies, *Cold War Encounters* presents three inter-related arguments, as it critically retraces the interplay between home, i.e., the depoliticized sphere of things feminine and domestic, and military, i.e., the politicized sphere of things masculine and violent, in the US occupation of Okinawa. First and foremost, this study draws on feminist discussions of gender and empire to argue that domesticity constituted the "engine of empire," facilitating American militarism and imperialism in post-war Okinawa in a deeply gendered and gendering manner. The centrality of "home" in US expansionism has been emphasized repeatedly by scholars on gender and empire. As Victoria de Grazia states, for example, the US was an "irresistible empire," whose consumer goods, habits, and practices crossed the Atlantic to reach, invade, and conquer twentieth-century Europe to establish American hegemony in gendered, cultural terms.² As Kristine Hoganson states, in another example, the turn-of-the-twentieth-century American home constituted a "contact zone," where exotic objects, artifacts, and practices would arrive from abroad to fill the interior space of household and create "consumers' imperium" as well as "emporium."³ Whether articulating the empire's outward thrust into the world or its inward trajectory back home, domesticity was at the center of American nation- and empire-building.

The significance of domesticity becomes even more salient when one examines those cases of empire-building where acts of conquering, domesticating, and possessing the racial and national others were not only figurative but quite literal. As Jane Simonsen shows, colonization of North America involved a process whereby indigenous girls and women were forced to acquire white domestic sensibilities, habits, and practices so as to become "assimilated" and

² Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-century Europe* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 4–5.

³ Kristin Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 8.

therefore “civilized.”⁴ With the Anglo-Saxon Christian home as the model, white women reformers played a crucial role in facilitating such gendered and racialized dynamics of colonization, as they drew upon “the power of a well-ordered home to influence individuals’ moral character and upon women’s crucial role in transforming architectural space into ‘home’ through their industry, refinement, and taste” to regulate, discipline and transform the conquered and subjugated.⁵ It was not only the indigenous population in North America, however, who were subjected to such gendered mechanism of assimilation and domestication. As the US extended its borders and boundaries through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, other racial and national groups also came to be schooled in white domesticity. While Native Americans, African Americans, and European immigrants constituted the earlier subjects of white American women’s reformist zeal, Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, Chinese, as well as Asian immigrants arriving in Hawaii and the US West Coast became its targets toward the late nineteenth century.⁶

The nexus between the home and empire is succinctly articulated by Amy Kaplan. Observing the ways in which the discourse of “manifest destiny” circulated in tandem with the “cult of domesticity” in mid-nineteenth century America, Kaplan proposes the term “manifest domesticity” to highlight the domesticating nature of empire and the expansionist dynamics of domesticity. Examples are numerous. The American colonial war with Mexico (1846–1848) was described as a necessary intervention in a “disorderly home” (i.e., Mexico) and its colonial conquest a matter of “good housekeeping.”⁷ “The empire of the Home” was intoned as “the most important of all empires, the pivot of all empires and emperors.”⁸ Women were to play a central role in the project of homemaking *cum* empire-building. In *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, Catherine Beecher, the leading domestic pedagogue at the time, exhorted American women to extend their moral responsibility beyond the home and even beyond the nation: “to American women, more than to any others

⁴ Jane Simonsen, “‘Object Lessons’: Domesticity and Display in Native American Assimilation,” *American Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 2002, 80.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶ For Hawaii, Patricia Grimshaw, *Path of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989); for the Philippines, Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); for China, Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); for Japanese immigrants in Hawaii and on the US West Coast, Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford University Press, 2005); for Chinese immigrants on the US West Coast, Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁷ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 27.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

on earth, is committed the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences, that are to renovate degraded man, and ‘clothe all climes with beauty.’”⁹ Noting that such “extension of female sympathy across social classes worked to uphold the very racial and class [and national] hierarchies that sentimentality claims to dissolve,” Kaplan argues that domesticity was a device of central significance in US nation- and empire-building.¹⁰

As Kaplan argues, the working of “manifest domesticity” is complex and even paradoxical: “If, on the one hand, domesticity draws strict boundaries between the home and the world of men, on the other hand, it becomes the engine of national expansion, the site from which the nation reaches beyond itself through the emanation of woman’s moral influence.”¹¹ Yet, it is this contradictory movement of contraction and expansion that makes domesticity a powerful tool of national and imperial expansion: “by withdrawing from direct agency in the male arena of commerce and politics, woman’s sphere can be represented by both women and men as a more potent agent for national expansion,” as its seemingly non-political and benign façade would help disguise and legitimize colonial violence and destruction.¹² Such dynamics were not limited to *antebellum* America, the context of Kaplan’s discussions, but also observed in other regions of the world where the US was attempting to extend its influence. Analyzing American missionary movements throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jane Hunter states that “[t]he power of women’s sphere to redeem expansionism depended on women’s innocence and ignorance of aggressive intent,” the latter being associated with the male sphere of politics and violence.¹³

Intertwined with the movement of empire, domesticity was extraordinarily mobile. Examining American women’s involvement in the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century, Vicente Rafael shows how women’s homemaking activities followed the borders and boundaries of an expanding American empire. Dispatched to colonial outposts in Asia, American women replaced the wild and unknown with the orderly and familiar as they created and maintained their homes, thereby “subsuming the Philippines into something already known” so as to feel “at home” and claim the place as their own. In the context of American nation- and empire-building, Rafael argues, domesticity functioned as “a movable entity positioned on the edge of a mobile frontier” and “a relay point in the construction of empire.”¹⁴

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29. ¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³ Jane Hunter, “Women’s Mission in Historical Perspective: American Identity and Christian Internationalism,” in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812–1960*, eds. Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Connie Shemo (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 25.

¹⁴ Rafael, *White Love*, 62.

As I argue in this book, the US occupation of Okinawa constitutes one of the primary examples where the working of “manifest domesticity” informed the contours and contents of post-war US empire-building in Asia and the Pacific. Okinawa was considered a new, wild “frontier” situated on the edge of a Cold War American empire, a place where American women would step in to tame, claim, and transform through their homemaking activities. As seen in John Ondrick’s speech, Okinawan and American women were expected to cultivate “mutual understanding” and “dedicated cooperation” through exchanges of feminine sympathy and affinity. Needless to say, the objective was political, as it aimed to contain Okinawan resistance to foreign military occupation and sustain US rule over the islands. Notwithstanding the political nature of the task assigned to women, Ondrick immediately depoliticized women’s involvement as feminine, domestic, and outside the purview of power, thereby re-drawing the boundary between the masculine sphere of empire-building and the feminine sphere of friendship making.

Women were more than willing to participate in and reinforce such convoluted movements of contraction and expansion that animated “manifest domesticity.” Repeatedly insisting on the “informal” nature of their involvement, American military wives proceeded to cultivate grassroots friendships with Okinawan women, as they pursued numerous charity activities of giving food, clothing, books, scholarships, and even sewing machines and washing machines to the “unfortunate islanders,” whose misfortune had much to do with being displaced from their homes and land by the US military build-up across the islands. Okinawan elite women joined American women at tea parties, luncheons, and cooking and sewing demonstrations, creating a picture of the occupation as an occasion of feminine affinity and affiliation and thereby feminizing and indeed domesticating the violent nature of foreign military occupation. During the US occupation of Okinawa, domesticity played a central role as the “engine of empire,” facilitating women’s involvement in Cold War expansionist dynamics while also depoliticizing and concealing their very involvement in the dominant operation of power.

Second, *Cold War Encounters* analyzes how the US occupation of Okinawa was informed not only by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century dynamics of gender and empire, but also by a set of Cold War discourses and practices that emerged following the Second World War. Here John Ondrick’s speech is once again crucial, as it highlights a number of dynamics unique to the Cold War that informed the US occupation of Okinawa. Most obviously, the speech shows how the occupation was informed by the logic and logistics of the Cold War where bi-polar struggles between the US and the USSR constituted the defining feature of post-war geopolitics. As I argue, however, the significance of Ondrick’s speech as an artifact of the Cold War is found not so much in its predictable pronouncement of anti-communist sentiment but

rather in its articulations of other post-war dynamics involving gender, race, and empire.

Among studies that examine Cold War culture, Christina Klein’s work is especially useful in identifying and appreciating a number of strands of post-war cultural dynamics that informed Ondrick’s speech specifically and the US occupation of Okinawa more generally. According to Klein, in the US during the Cold War, two discourses – “a global imaginary of containment” and “a global imaginary of integration” – emerged to inform American imaginations and interventions abroad. The containment discourse envisioned the world in a binary manner, in which the forces of democracy (i.e., the US) struggled against that of totalitarianism (i.e., the USSR). While such anti-communist narrative held sway for a while, defining the US role exclusively in negative terms (i.e., what the US was *against*) soon proved limited in its effectiveness. Equally necessary was a narrative that would articulate what the US would stand *for*. “A global imaginary of integration” or “Cold War Orientalism” emerged to answer this need, envisioning the post-war world where the US would enter into an interdependent relation with non-white and non-Western others through mutual affinity and affiliation. “Getting to know you” became an important agenda in the Cold War US, enticing Americans to reach out to and become acquainted with strange and unfamiliar peoples and cultures abroad. Gender played a central role in this Cold War integrationist politics, as post-war US expansionism was imagined to be no longer about masculine imperial domination driven by racial-national violence but rather about feminine multicultural encounter guided by mutual affinity and sentimental bonding among people of different racial and national backgrounds.¹⁵ Ondrick’s speech was a salient example of this Cold War integrationist dynamic, as it articulated not only what the US was *against* but what the US was *for*, and enlisted women to the task of cultivating and sustaining mutual affinity and affiliation between the occupiers and the occupied despite – because of – vast differences and indeed inequalities between the two.¹⁶

Cold War integrationist dynamics turned out to be exceptionally productive, generating a series of new discourses and practices that quickly spread across the US and beyond. Conspicuous among them was the post-war project of international technical and educational exchange and interchange. Following

¹⁵ Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹⁶ For the ways in which US domestic politics of race were informed by and in turn informed its international politics of race and empire in the Cold War world, see Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-Colonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Harry Truman's 1949 announcement of the "Point Four Program," a project of overseas technical outreach in agriculture, engineering, home economics, and so on became a crucial part of anti-communist strategies. Showcasing "what the US global leadership was *for*," it enlisted American land-grant colleges and universities as its chief agents to promote community development and economic modernization in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific, and to facilitate America's multicultural and transnational encounters with the non-white and non-Western others around the globe. Home economics constituted a feminized field of this post-war technical and educational endeavor, whereby American women would be dispatched to various "frontiers" of Cold War struggles to propagate female science and technical education and to initiate cross-cultural encounters with the strange and unfamiliar others.

The Cold War nexus between domesticity and technology was indeed crucial, which was amply demonstrated in the famous "kitchen debate" in 1959. At the American National Exhibit in Moscow, US Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev each insisted on his country's political, military, and economic superiority over the other as they compared and contrasted "American" and "Soviet" kitchens and housewives. Turning "home" into a site of ideological struggle between the two opposing systems, Nixon and Khrushchev not only highlighted the deeply politicized and politicizing nature of domesticity, but also demonstrated the Cold War linkage between domesticity and technology.¹⁷ As the Soviet's successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 escalated tensions and competitions between the US and the USSR, the connection between science, technology, and domesticity became repeatedly articulated at more than one site or place. Not only were American domestic technologies and appliances exhibited in various regions of the world to express American technical strength and thus national prowess.¹⁸ American policy makers and educational leaders, including those involved in the US occupation of Okinawa, often discussed "domestic science" and "nuclear science" as equally significant and inter-related topics in their speeches and writings.

As the subsequent chapters will show, US-occupied Okinawa became a dense site of Cold War politics where the dynamics described above came to be performed repeatedly by women. Far from insisting on their racial and national superiority, American women embraced the Cold War integrationist politics, emphasizing the "egalitarian" nature of their encounters with Okinawan women

¹⁷ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Robert Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997); Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds., *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*.



Figure 1.2 Cutting the friendship cake
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and portraying the occupation as an occasion for cross-cultural encounters that would benefit both groups of women (see Figure 1.2).¹⁹ Thus, it was not only the case that Okinawan women would learn about the "American way of life," American military wives were also expected to learn from their Okinawan counterparts and to become familiar with the "Okinawan way of life." Just as Okinawan women were invited to visit the private residences of Americans on the base, which, with their up-to-date domestic technologies and other signs of material wealth, symbolized American national power and prowess, American military wives were in turn invited to visit the far humbler abodes of Okinawan women for the sake of promoting cross-cultural communications and facilitating the occupation encounter that would be "a two-way street."

No less earnest in facilitating cross-cultural encounters with Okinawan women, but distinctly different in their outlook in comparison to American military housewives, were American home economists dispatched from MSU,

¹⁹ For the argument that emphasizes the continuity of pre-1945 imperial racism and sexism in US-occupied Okinawa, see Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946–1965* (New York University Press, 2007).

one of the leading land-grant institutions in the US. Informed by the land-grant philosophy of "helping others help themselves," these home economists advocated American-style "domestic science" and disseminated knowledge and technologies of modern homemaking and home management among Okinawan women. In their personal letters and official reports, they repeatedly argued against a top-down imposition of American domestic techniques and technologies, emphasizing the significance of indigenous domestic customs and habits as well as Okinawan women's willingness to initiate domestic modernization and rationalization on their own terms. Observing the patriarchal nature of higher education in Okinawa, Faye Kinder, one of the "home economics advisors" sent from Michigan, pointed out similarly male-dominant dynamics in American academia, emphasizing commonality rather than difference in the ways home economists in both societies had to struggle to gain legitimacy as "scientists" and sustain female education against various adversaries. Driven by the common objective of female education and technical training, Okinawan and American home economists forged a strong partnership, as they jointly pursued domestic modernization and rationalization in US-occupied Okinawa.

Such Cold War dynamics of gender, race, and empire were made even more complex, as Hawaii became involved in post-war technical and educational assistance in Okinawa. As Japanese and Okinawan Americans in Hawaii began to participate in the occupation as educators, instructors, advisors, and technicians, their involvement not only reinforced the American claim of multiculturalism and racial equality, but also gave Hawaii's immigrant communities invaluable opportunities to assert their worthiness as American citizen-subjects despite their minority "alien" status. Under the leadership of Japanese American agriculturalist Baron Goto, Hawaii's technical assistance in Okinawa flourished, mobilizing the University of Hawaii (UH) – another land-grant institution – as well as the East-West Center along the way, and generating a series of exchange and interchange between the two island communities.²⁰ As Okinawan women traveled to Hawaii to receive technical training, they stepped into the dynamic field of home economics education where "Western" as well as "Eastern" domestic techniques and technologies were simultaneously disseminated, "evidencing" the progressive, multicultural, and democratic nature of the US. Opening up a new trans-Pacific space for women and immigrant minorities, Cold War technical interchange between Okinawa and Hawaii nonetheless presented a complex, problematic picture, as its repeated celebration of multiculturalism and transnationalism concealed and contained, rather than revealed and challenged, the history of the military and empire in not only Okinawa but also Hawaii.

²⁰ Baron Goto of Hawaii should be distinguished from Baron Gotō Shinpei of Japan, who played a central role in Japan's colonial expansionism.

Third, *Cold War Encounters* also illuminates how Japanese imperial dynamics of gender, race, nation, and empire came to inform post-war Okinawan experiences. Annexed by Japan in 1879 and occupied by the US in 1945, Okinawa constitutes a complex site of geopolitics, where not one but two (i.e., American and Japanese) imperial powers intervened to impact its political, economic, and cultural dynamics. The Okinawan home offers a particularly rich site to observe such "double colonialism," as post-war American domestic reformism inherited some of the basic premise and practice of pre-war and wartime Japanese colonial interventionism. The centrality of domesticity in Japan's colonial rule in pre-1945 Okinawa has been well documented by a number of scholars.²¹ Under Japan's colonial gaze, every aspect of Okinawan life came to be regarded as "evidence" of Okinawan inferiority and a justification for their status as second-class citizens. Articulating its own version of "manifest domesticity," Japanese colonial rule in pre-war and wartime Okinawa generated a series of discourses and practices that intervened in indigenous domesticity and femininity. In the name of "progress" and "civilization," various reform efforts were initiated, attempting to replace local female clothing and hair styles with those of mainland Japanese women, banning the custom of tattooing women's hands, repressing religious practices by female shamans called *yuta*, promoting "hygienic" living space especially in kitchens and toilets, enforcing "rational" time management and budgeting, and so on.²²

Importantly, domestic reformism in pre-1945 Okinawa was part of the larger dynamics of the "life improvement movement" that proliferated throughout imperial Japan. As has been well documented by scholars on Japan, the nation's modernization process was accompanied not only by economic and political transformation but also by the invention of "modern domesticity," whereby the emerging state machinery collaborated with various civil groups to mold, regulate, and discipline sentiments, habits, and practices of its subjects at home. Drawing on discourses and practices of Western (mainly British and American) domesticity as well as those of the indigenous reformist tradition in Japan, state bureaucrats, ideologues, educators, Christian reformers, and feminists advocated the "modern," "rational," and "efficient" home and homemaking suitable for the imperial nation. Not confined to urban centers, domestic reformism spread to Japan's margins and peripheries, including the northern region of Tohoku, the southern region of Okinawa, as well as the newly acquired

²¹ Alan Christy, "The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa," in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 141–169; Tomiyama Ichirō, *Kindai Nihon shakai to "Okinawajin"* – "Nihonjin" ni naru to iu koto (Tokyo: Nihon keizaiisha, 1990); Kobayashi Shigeko, "Kokumin kokka" Nihon to imin no kiseki: Okinawa, Firipin imin kyōikushi (Tokyo: Gakubunsha, 2010).

²² Nahashi sōmubu joseishitsu Naha joseishi henshū iinkai, ed., *Naha onna no ashiato, Naha joseishi kindaihen* (Tokyo: Domesu shuppan, 1998), Chapter VII, "Fūzoku kairyō," 327–363.

territories of Korea and Taiwan. Promoting (and promising) “progress” and “assimilation” of those deemed “inferior” and “other,” the modern regime of imperial domesticity reinforced, rather than erased, the hierarchies between colonizers and colonized, center and margin, and “Japanese” and “non-Japanese,” articulating the complex intersection of gender, race, and nation that informed Japan’s nation- and empire-building.²³

Following the end of the Second World War, Okinawa was separated from mainland Japan and placed under direct US rule until 1972. However, the legacy of Japanese imperial domesticity persisted, mediated by the figure of Onaga Kimiyo, a Japanese home economist from the northern hinterland of Tohoku, whose involvement in US-occupied Okinawa was preceded by her stint as a home economist in Korea under Japanese colonial rule. Following the borders and boundaries of Japan’s expanding empire, Onaga’s career took her from one colonial outpost to another, articulating mobile dynamics of domesticity in the context of Japan’s expansionism. At the end of the Second World War, Onaga’s imperial trajectory finally placed her in Okinawa, where she went on to (re-)articulate “manifest domesticity” with renewed energy and vigor under the new colonial master, the American occupation authority. Collaborating with American military wives on the one hand and American home economists on the other, Onaga became the authority on all things feminine and domestic, combining her expertise and experience as a Japanese domestic pedagogue with American discourses and practices of “scientific domesticity” to turn Okinawan homes into a focal site of imperial politics.

As *Cold War Encounters* follows the motions and movements of American and then Japanese imperial domesticity to post-war Okinawa, it finally draws on the vibrant and expanding field of Okinawan studies where issues of racism, militarism, nationalism, and imperialism have generated a series of debates and discussions pertaining to the US occupation of Okinawa.²⁴ Among numerous

²³ Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton University Press, 1997); Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Mariko Asano Tamanoi, *Under the Shadow of Nationalism: Politics and Poetics of Rural Japanese Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998); Simon Partner, “Taming the Wilderness: The Life Style Improvement Movement in Rural Japan, 1925–1965,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2001, 487–520; Nakajima Kuni, “Taishōki ni okeru ‘seikatsu kaizen undō,’” *Shirin*, Vol. 15, 1974, 54–83.

²⁴ Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Okinawa: Cold War Islands* (Cardiff, California: Japan Policy Research Institute, 1999); Mark Selden and Laura Hein, eds., *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Masamichi Inoue, *Okinawa and the US Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Yakabi Osamu, *Okinawasen, Beigun senryōshi o manabi naosu: kioku o ikani keishō suruka* (Yokohama: Seiri shobō, 2009); Kano Masanao, *Okinawa no sengo shisō o kangaeru* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2011); Ōta Masahide, *Okinawa no chōsen* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1990); Arasaki Moriteru, *Sengo Okinawashi* (Tokyo: Nihon hyōronsha, 1976);

excellent studies available in the field, this book has especially benefited from those that shed light on the role played by the UR during the occupation,²⁵ the cultural formation and transformation in the areas of diet, clothing, housing, and so on under US rule,²⁶ the involvement of overseas Okinawan immigrant communities in post-war Okinawan recovery and reconstruction,²⁷ and sexual violence against women perpetrated by US military personnel.²⁸ Given the conspicuous lack of discussion on the US occupation of Okinawa in so-called occupation studies, or *Senryō Kenkyū*, where the main focus of research has been on the occupation of mainland Japan, those studies that illuminate the contours and contents of American domination in post-war Okinawa constitute not only an important source of information but also a crucial instance of intervention in mainland scholarship.

Notwithstanding its excellence, the field of Okinawan studies has largely remained male-dominated, marginalizing women’s voices, perspectives, and experiences and, equally or more importantly, obscuring gendered and gendering dynamics that informed US military domination in post-war Okinawa.²⁹

Ahagon Shōkō, *Beigun to nōmin: Okinawaken Iejima* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1973); Gabe Masaaki, *Sekai no naka no Okinawa, Okinawa no naka no Nihon: kichi no seijigaku* (Yokohama: Seiri shobō, 2003); Ogawa Tadashi, *Sengo Beikoku no Okinawa bunka senryaku: Ryūkyū daigaku to Michigan misshon* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2012); Yamazato Katsunori, *Ryūdai monogatari* (Naha: Ryūkyū shinpōsha, 2010).

²⁵ Yamazato, *Ryūdai monogatari*; Ogawa, *Sengo Beikoku*.

²⁶ Teruya Yoshihiro and Yamazato Katsunori, eds., *Sengo Okinawa to Amerika: ibunka sesshoku no 50 nen* (Naha: Okinawa taimususha, 1995); Miyagi Etsujirō, *Senryōsha no me* (Naha: Naha shuppan, 1982); Nahashi rekishi hakubutsukan, ed., *Sengo o tadoru: “Amerikayū” kara “Yamato no yū” e* (Naha: Ryūkyū shinpōsha, 2007); Umino Fumihiko, *Okinawa natsukashi shashinkan: fukki mae e yōkoso* (Naha: Shinsei shuppan, 2012); Ryūkyū shinpō shakaibu, ed., *Sengo Okinawa bukka fuzokushi* (Naha: Okinawa shuppan, 1987); Okinawa taimususha, ed., *Shomin ga tsuzuru Okinawa sengo seikatsushi* (Naha: Okinawa taimususha, 1998); Nahashi sōmubu joseishitsu, ed., *Naha onna no ashiato, Naha joseishi sengohen* (Naha: Shinpō shuppan, 2001).

²⁷ Ethnic Studies Oral History Project, University of Hawaii at Manoa, ed., *Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2009); Okinawaken fujin rengōkai, ed., *Okinawa imin joseishi* (Naha: Nakamaru insatsujo, 1979); Okano Nobukatsu, “Senryōsha to hisenryōsha no hazama o ikiru imin: Amerika no Okinawa tōchi seikaku to Hawai no Okinawajin,” *Imin kenkyū*, Vol. 13, 2007, 3–22.

²⁸ See, for example, Takazato Suzuyo, *Okinawa no onnatachi* (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1996); Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace, ed., *Guntai wa josei o mamoranai: Okinawa no Nihongun ianjo to Beigun no seibōryoku* (Tokyo: Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace, 2012); Michael Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

²⁹ For Western feminist discussions that highlight the centrality of women and gender in critical studies of US militarism and its impacts at home and abroad see, for example, Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (Oxford: Roman & Littlefield, 2007); Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon, eds., *Over There: Living with the US Military Empire from World War Two to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Catherine Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the Twentieth Century America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001);

When issues concerning women are raised, the focus is frequently on women's sexual victimization, which, as Linda Angst points out, would run the risk of reproducing the patriarchal understanding of femininity where women are perceived as powerless and helpless.³⁰ An alternative image of Okinawan women as resisters and protestors does exist, making frequent and necessary interventions in the patriarchal discourse of women as victims and providing an empowering picture of women's struggles against foreign military domination. However, as Nicole Constable would readily argue, the portrayal of women as "resisters" as a reverse image of "victims" is no less problematic, as it "romanticizes" women's oppositional politics and obscures the heterogeneous and often contradictory nature of women's agency where they also often participate in and reinforce the dominant working of power.³¹

That Okinawan women were neither simply "victims" nor "resisters" during the occupation has been suggested by several writers and scholars in Okinawa. A proliferating body of women-centered literature consisting of women's autobiographical and biographical writings, historical and historiographical essays on grassroots women's voices, perspective and experiences, and institutional histories of women's associations and organizations offer invaluable insights into Okinawan women's agency, whose range and dynamism far exceed the facile notions of women as victims or resisters.³² In the context of the post-war occupation, where US rule often proceeded in a haphazard and incoherent manner, women's daily realities were correspondingly messy, complicated, and unpredictable, which none of the static, categorical notions such as "victims" or "resisters" would be able to capture. As the following chapters will show, US military domination constituted the overarching, yet never entirely stable or coherent, context in post-war Okinawa, generating a series of complex and

Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull, *Oh, Say, Can You See: The Semiotic of the Military in Hawaii* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-Philippine and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

³⁰ Linda Angst, "The Sacrifice of a School Girl: The 1995 Rape Case, Discourses of Power, and Women's Lives in Okinawa," *Critical Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2001.

³¹ Nicole Constable, *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Migrant Workers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

³² Sengo 50 nen Okinawa josei no ayumi henshū iinkai, ed., *Sengo 50 nen Okinawa josei no ayumi* (Naha: Okinawaken, 1996); Okinawa fujin undōshi kenkyūkai, ed., *Okinawa onnatachi no sengo: shōdo kara no shuppatsu* (Naha: Hirugisha, 1986); Okinawaken fujin rengōkai, ed., *Okinawaken fujin rengōkai 30 nen no ayumi* (Naha: Wakanatsusha, 1981); Higa Yūten, *Okinawa no fujinkai: sono rekishi to tenkai* (Naha: Hirugisha, 1992); Ryukyu shinpōsha, ed., *Jidai o irodotta onnatachi: kindai Okinawa joseishi* (Naha: Niraisha, 1996); Onaga Kimiyo jiden kankōkai, ed., *Subarashikikana jinsei: Onaga Kimiyo jiden* (Naha: Onaga Kimiyo jiden kankōkai, 1985); Miyazato Etsu, *Yanbaru onna ichidai ki: Miyazato Etsu jiden* (Naha: Okinawa taimususha 1987); Horiba Kiyoko, *Inaguya nanabachi: Okinawa joseishi o saguru* (Tokyo: Domesu shuppan, 1991); Mizoue Yasuko, *Junantō no hitobito: Nihon no shukuzu, Okinawa* (Tokyo: Miraisha 1959).

convoluted dynamics involving gender and facilitating women's varied and multifaceted expressions of agency.

In re-thinking and re-examining the role and place of women and gender in the US occupation of Okinawa, the late Yakabi Osamu, one of the leading historians on modern Okinawa, also provides important insights. To critically understand the occupation, Yakabi suggests, one must examine culture, especially the "Americanization" of everyday lives at home in Okinawa. The introduction of the "American way of life" into post-war Okinawa, which resulted in a mass influx of American consumer goods such as food, clothing, and household electronic appliances into local households, constituted a salient phenomenon during the occupation. In this context, Yakabi points out, the program of home economics at the UR played an important role as a conduit for power, as its members facilitated the process of local dissemination and adaptation of American consumer culture, which in turn reinforced and legitimized the American rule over the islands.³³

Brief and not yet fully elaborated, Yakabi's insight nevertheless provides a crucial starting point in re-thinking and re-examining women, domesticity, and power in the US occupation of Okinawa. Not only does he suggest women's involvement in the dominant structure of power, as he highlights the complicit role played by Okinawan home economists during the occupation. He also points to a gendered and gendering mechanism of the occupation whereby American consumer culture transformed people's – especially women's – everyday lives at home, which in turn helped legitimize and sustain US military domination. Yakabi's insight not only makes an important intervention in the male-dominated field of Okinawan studies, in which women and gender have frequently been overlooked in critical discussions of the occupation. It also challenges the existing gender scholarship in Okinawa, where post-war domestic modernization has often been treated as a more or less "agreeable" legacy of foreign domination, in contrast to its explicit critique of American militarism and its violence against women.³⁴

Cold War Encounters builds on but also complicates Yakabi's insight, as it re-reads and re-examines women and homes in the US occupation of Okinawa. While the influx of American consumer goods indeed impacted Okinawan households and women's lives within them, Cold War domestic politics contained other equally important dynamics – Cold War scientism, feminism, multiculturalism, transnationalism, among them – that also animated women's discourses and practices in the occupied territory. Within this context, women's

³³ Yakabi, *Okinawasen*, 317–365.

³⁴ For an example of how discussions on women and military violence are often separated from those on domestic modernization and women's progress in US-occupied Okinawa, see Nahashi sōmubu joseishitsu, ed., *Naha onna sengo*.

participation in the occupation-era politics inevitably became complex and multifaceted. Notwithstanding their complicity, Okinawan home economists also unsettled and disturbed existing dynamics of power in more ways than one. By promoting science education for females, they upheld a women's place at university and promoted female empowerment in a male-dominated society. Participating in Cold War integrationist politics, they also acquired the resources and opportunities for cross-border movements and mobility, traveling to the US and elsewhere and pursuing cross-cultural studies of domesticity and femininity in strange and unfamiliar lands. With Hawaii's participation in Cold War technical and educational interchange, domestic education in post-war Okinawa became even more complicated, as it was now a space to articulate not only white American hegemony but Japanese and Okinawan immigrants' inclusion in Cold War American empire-building. During the occupation, furthermore, domesticity also became a critical space from which women would articulate oppositional politics in the 1960s, insisting on Okinawa's "return" to mainland Japan despite their continuing involvement in Cold War US imperial domesticity. Far from static or monolithic, women's negotiations in the terrain of domesticity were fluid and multifaceted.

As *Cold War Encounters* tracks the working of things feminine and domestic to highlight the complex and convoluted involvement of women and homes in Cold War US empire-building, this study specifically draws on Catherine Lutz' argument that "empire is in the details." Criticizing the overwhelmingly male-dominated nature of current empire studies in the US, where "macroscopic treatments of U.S. empire" and "[a]bstract, systematizing theorizing" focused on political economy prevail, Lutz points out that such an approach would in fact conceal rather than reveal the workings of empire, since imperialism, far from being "a single coherent and accomplished thing," is "a larger set of sometimes conflicting and only partially achieved projects" that entails contradictions, ambivalence, and ambiguities. To illuminate the complex and convoluted dynamics of empire, she argues, a different kind of approach is necessary, where detailed, "ethnographic" observations would be pursued with a focus on various cultural dimensions of empire, especially "gendered and raced quality, and their vicissitudes on the ground, where people live – and die." As she argues, such an approach would illuminate "many fissures, contradictions, historical particularities, and shifts in imperial processes," which in the end would "make challenges to imperial practice more likely."³⁵

Taking a cue from Lutz, *Cold War Encounters* analyzes grassroots dynamics surrounding women and the home, where "fissures, contradictions, and historical particularities" repeatedly erupted to produce a dynamic, and often incoherent and sometimes subversive, picture of Cold War US rule. As the subsequent

chapters will show, the picture of women, homes, and empire emerging out of such analytical process would be dynamic, complicated, and often unsettling.

Chapter organization

The subsequent chapters present the dynamic, multifaceted accounts of domesticity, empire, and Cold War cultural formation and transformation in US-occupied Okinawa. Chapter 2 focuses on members of American and Okinawan women's clubs whose grassroots activities spread across post-war Okinawa. Jointly pursuing a series of feminine and domestic activities at private homes of Okinawan and American women, US military bases, and the cultural centers, these women articulated Cold War "people-to-people" relations and insisted on the reciprocal and mutually beneficial nature of the occupation. Recasting Okinawa as a space full of innocent and innocuous activities centered on home-making and friendship-building, they effected the "domestication" of Cold War military occupation in Okinawa, contributing to US hegemony-building in a deeply gendered and gendering manner.

In US-occupied Okinawa, the politics of domesticity mobilized women of heterogeneous backgrounds and involved diverse institutions within and outside Okinawa. Chapter 3 examines Michigan State University (MSU) and its involvement in home economics education at the University of the Ryukyus (UR). Not only did MSU home economists articulate the Cold War notion of feminine affinity and affiliation as they collaborated with Okinawan home economists, they added a discourse of science to the Cold War politics of domesticity as they advocated "domestic science" and articulated a feminist notion of female empowerment as they insisted on women's enlightenment through science education. Reaching beyond Okinawa, MSU home economists cultivated a transnational network of domestic experts across Asia and the Pacific, turning domesticity into a site of expansionist dynamics in the context of the Cold War. Driven by the notion of female progress and empowerment, MSU home economists' discourses and practices were distinctly different from those of American women examined in Chapter 2. Yet these domestic experts nevertheless became complicit in the dominant dynamics of power, as their transnational mobility was enabled by the US military presence in the region and their advocacy of domestic science was informed by the Cold War science and technology war between the US and the USSR.

Chapter 4 extends and builds upon the previous chapter's discussions by examining the involvement of Hawaii in Cold War educational outreach in Okinawa. Following its statehood in 1959 and the establishment of the East-West Center in 1960, Hawaii emerged as the central hub of international technical training in Asia and the Pacific. Informed by the same logic of Cold War alliance-building that motivated the MSU mission, Hawaii's involvement in

³⁵ Catherine Lutz, "Empire is in the Details," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 593–611.

Okinawa nevertheless entailed its own unique dynamics, as it mobilized a large number of Japanese and Okinawan Americans rather than white Americans as the chief agents and emphasized hands-on technical training rather than science education. Traveling to Hawaii to receive training, Okinawan women were not only exposed to techniques and technologies of "modern domesticity" but also witnessed Hawaii's multiculturalism, especially the success achieved by Okinawan Americans under US governance, which reinforced the occupation's premise that Okinawa would thrive and progress under US rule. Hawaii's technical outreach thus became a dynamic site of Cold War pedagogy, where Okinawan women would be trained not only in modern techniques and technologies of domesticity but also in Cold War understandings of race, nation, and US hegemony.

The remainder of the book examines Okinawan women's active, heterogeneous, and sometimes even subversive responses and reactions to Cold War domestic mobilization. Chapter 5 focuses on Okinawan home economists at the UR. Collaborating with American military wives on the one hand and domestic experts dispatched from Michigan on the other, Okinawan home economists acquired numerous opportunities and resources. Not only did they develop curricula and instructions on "domestic science" at the UR, they also participate in the transnational network of domestic experts that spread across Asia and the Pacific. At the center of these dynamics was Onaga Kimiyo, head of home economics at the UR and a Japanese domestic authority with significant involvement in pre-1945 Japanese colonial expansionism in Korea. Domestic education at the UR thus constituted a complex site of imperial domesticity, where not only American but also Japanese imperial dynamics intervened to shape local women's discourses and practices.

Chapter 6 extends the previous chapter's discussions by examining grassroots women's domestic activism whose discourses and practices were significantly affected by the reversion movement, with a special focus on the Future Homemakers of Okinawa (FHO). During the occupation, Okinawan women at the grassroots level pursued a series of exchanges and interchanges with American club women and collaborated on many educational projects with American and Okinawan home economists. Against the backdrop of increasing tensions and conflicts between the occupiers and the occupied, however, they began to cultivate relations with women's groups and organizations in mainland Japan and advocate Japanese femininity and domesticity as the model, indeed the ideal, to emulate. Subverting the Cold War American logic of domestic modernization and feminine affiliation, grassroots women articulated their oppositions to the occupation by insisting on Okinawa's "reversion" to mainland Japan so as to eliminate foreign military from the islands.

The Epilogue highlights the book's chief arguments on gender, empire, and power in the US occupation of Okinawa and re-defines domesticity as

a transnational site of Cold War cultural formation and transformation. The overwhelming presence of the US military continues to inform and impact the post-occupation and post-Cold War lives of Okinawans, pointing to the enduring legacies of the Cold War, or its lack of closure and indeed of "ending," in peripheral and marginalized places such as Okinawa.