

“Racism” and Colonialism: Meanings of Difference and Ruling Practices in America’s Pacific Empire

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This article examines the meanings of “race” and difference in the first years of American colonialism in the Philippines, Guam, and Samoa. Moving beyond existing sociological studies of “race” and “colonial discourse,” I demonstrate that the meanings of racial difference in the U.S. Pacific empire were contemporaneously polyvalent, constituting an overarching field of multiple rather than uniform classifications. The different meanings formed the basis for intra-imperial debate among colonizing agents. They also contributed to notable variations in forms of colonial governance and policy across the empire. The implication for future study is that “race” should best be apprehended as a “code” that takes on specific meanings and obtains its social force only in particular contexts of use and utterance.

KEY WORDS: race; racism; colonialism; empire.

ABBREVIATIONS

BMP	Bernard Moses Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California-Berkeley
CE	Clarence R. Edwards Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society
CTIP	United States Congress Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions
ERP	Elihu Root Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division
FP	William Cameron Forbes Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
TP	Papers of William Howard Taft, United States Library of Congress

INTRODUCTION

It would seem indisputable that modern colonialism in the early twentieth century involved racism. Indeed, during colonial occupation, colonizing groups

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were granted political, economic, and social privileges denied to the colonized, and the hierarchy was typically sustained by claims that the latter were racially inferior. The historian Partha Chatterjee refers to this as “the rule of colonial difference”—the colonized, by virtue of their biology, were represented “as incorrigibly inferior” (1993, pp. 19, 33). Traditional scholarship has thus treated racism as “a built-in and natural product [of colonialism], essential to the social construction of an otherwise illegitimate and privileged access to property and power” (Stoler 1992, p. 322). More recent scholarship in the humanities has added that the very purpose of colonial discourse was “to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest” (Bhabha 1994, p. 70). Almost by definition, then, modern colonialism entailed “racism”: “The display of contempt or aggressiveness toward other people on account of physical differences (other than those of sex)” (Todorov 1986, p. 370).

In this essay, I will unsettle these assumptions about racism and colonialism, using examples from America’s colonization of the Philippines, Guam, and Samoa in the early twentieth century.¹ My goal is not to deny the prevalence of “racial” meaning, but rather to question the hasty homogenization of “racism” and disclose a complexity to meanings of racial difference typically uncharted (Stoler 1997; Thomas 1994). I show that the meanings of race and difference in the U.S. empire were less homogeneous than traditional scholarship would suggest. Rather than being singular or uniform, they constituted a multidimensional field traversed by multiple and often competing classifications of colonized peoples. Strictly “racist” schemes populated this field, but I show that other schemes populated it as well; so much, in fact, that colonizing agents argued among themselves about the different meanings. I also show that this multiplicity was more than a matter of words. Each meaning carried distinct implications for colonial practice, and the diversity to racial meanings contributed to a diversity in forms of colonial governance across America’s Pacific empire.

My analysis builds upon but critically expands two sets of existing literatures. This first includes recent scholarship in the humanities on “colonial discourse.” Inspired by Edward Said’s seminal book *Orientalism* (1979), this scholarship has looked beyond the strictly economic dimensions of imperialism to examine how imperial agents symbolically represented subject peoples; but it has yet to examine the possibly different meanings of alterity *within* the overarching system of symbolic representation. Thus, as noted already, it has become taken for granted that

¹The Philippines and Guam were seized from Spain in 1898; the eastern part of Samoa, which eventually became American Samoa, was acquired through a treaty in 1899 between the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. As distinct from the “incorporated territories” (e.g., Hawaii and Alaska) or, for that matter, Cuba, which was nominally independent, the Philippines, Guam, and Samoa were among the “unincorporated territories” of the U.S. empire. The one colony excluded from this analysis is Puerto Rico, which I discuss elsewhere (Go 2000). I exclude it from the analysis to keep the discussion focused up the unincorporated territories of the Pacific. (For a broader discussion of the incorporated and unincorporated territories, see Thompson 2002.)

modern colonialism entailed a homogeneous "racism." I show that this presumed uniformity was not the case in America's empire.

The second set of literature includes sociological scholarship on race and racialization. In recent years, a number of sociological studies have rejected the view of race as "a natural, biological division among human beings" and have instead emphasized "its socially constructed, and hence historically variable, meanings" (Loveman 1999a, p. 903; also Bonilla-Silva 1997; Marx 1998). My discussion affirms this constructivist approach, but takes it much further. Existing studies have compared racialization over time (e.g., the seventeenth century vs. the late nineteenth century) or across different societies (e.g., Brazil vs. the United States). But the literature has yet to probe possible variations in meaning *within* the same context or in the same time frame. In other words, while focusing upon historically or societally produced variations in racial meaning, it has overlooked *contemporaneous polysemy*. Such contemporaneous polysemy is logically possible given the implied theoretical premise of constructivist studies. As I see it, the underlying premise in the literature is that the meaning of somatic or phenotypic differences is not transparent in the "brute reality" of the differences themselves, but is mediated by the particular semiotic structures that agents construct and employ in their meaning-making activity. This is in part why meanings can vary historically or across different societies, for semiotic structures are likely to vary across these different contexts. But as I will show, "race" can also take on multiple meanings *within* the same historical period and social setting. In a single colonial empire, for example, the same imperial agents might construct distinct meanings of different colonized groups. Or, by the same token, they might construct different meanings of the very same colonized group. I show that both of these logical possibilities were realized in the U.S. colonial empire.²

Disclosing the different racial meanings, however, is not only important for demonstrating a complexity and intra-imperial conflict where existing studies find homogeneity and uniformity; I suggest that it is also essential for understanding authoritative colonial practice on the ground. This is a matter that existing scholarship on colonial discourse has elided. At most, existing scholarship intimates that representations of the "other" enabled, facilitated, or justified colonial rule. But did meanings of difference have a more specific impact on forms of colonial governance and policy? Or do we turn instead to traditional "material" matters (such as economic interest or universal imperatives of state-building) to explain

²By showing how different groups constructed different meanings of the very same racialized Other, my analysis offers a more powerful critique of biological or naturalistic analyses of "race" and racism. Indeed, while existing studies have tried to compare meanings across different societies, e.g., Brazil vs. the United States, this has led to a sticky analytic problem that potentially undermines the power of the constructivist approach: if we examine racialization in two different societies, how do we define which is the comparable "racial" group that takes on different meanings or is not "racialized"? This problem is evident in existing studies adopting a constructivist approach (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 1997; Marx 1998; cf. Loveman 1999a, 1999b), but my analysis overcomes it by demonstrating contemporaneous polyvalence of the same group in the same context.

them? Without addressing this issue, existing studies can be easily charged with “culturalism” or “discursivism” (Wacquant 1997, pp. 227–229).

I would suggest that such charges of “discursivism” are too often unwarranted. Racial discourse and schemes of difference (which I take to be part of larger, observable, and socially constraining meaning systems) are worthy objects of analysis in their own right (for, in themselves, they *are* social practices). But I do suggest that the distinct meanings of “race” and difference were important for shaping colonial governance. Each meaning laid out particular reasons for the putative inferiority of the colonized and typified the natives’ “true” character. In this way, each meaning delimited how colonial rule might be best organized, how colonial subjects might be best managed and treated, and what kinds of colonial projects were feasible and desirable. I show, then, that the varied meanings of racial difference in the U.S. empire helped to produce variations in authoritative practice across the empire. While they did not in themselves determine colonial policy, they worked in *conjunction* with other factors to make for an empire that treated its distinct colonial subjects in very different ways.

I begin by sketching the multiple meanings of race and difference and the intra-imperial conflicts that followed. I then show how the different meanings contributed to colonial policy and practice on the ground by their conjunctural effect.³

THE MEANINGS OF DIFFERENCE

Biology or History?

One of the assumptions of existing studies of race and colonialism is that representations of the colonized entailed “racism”—that is, “the display of contempt or aggressiveness. . . based upon physical differences” (Todorov 1986, p. 370). There can be no doubt that such “racism” was prevalent in the United States empire. This is seen in the discourse of at least two sets of actors. One set of actors were military soldiers and officers stationed in the islands since the beginning of

³Data include published as well as archival materials (plus some secondary sources), focusing upon the first decade of colonial rule and government hearings on colonial issues thereafter. The published materials include all government documents relating to the colonies, memoirs and reports of colonial officials or travelers, and all articles, memoirs, and journalist pieces written by settlers, travelers, missionaries, and colonial officials printed in books or in magazines from 1898 to 1906 (located by searching subject headings for the Philippines, Guam, and Samoa-Tutuila in *Poole’s Periodical Index*). The archival materials were dictated by what was available in the United States National Archives and in special collections holding related documents and records of colonial officials (see References). These materials include unpublished official reports and internal memos, and private correspondences among officials, personal journals, and diaries. The diversity of the data provides analytic leverage. Analyzing different mediums of discourse shows the ubiquity of the distinct racial meanings, and examining private (or internal) as well as public documents demonstrates that the meanings were not just cynical manipulations for public consumption.

occupation. For instance, soldiers typically referred to the Filipinos as “niggers.” The term was common. “Almost without exception,” testified one serviceman, “soldiers and also many officers refer to the natives in their presence as ‘niggers’” (U.S. Senate Committee on the Philippines 1902, II, p. 884). “The first thing in the morning is [the word] ‘Nigger’,” wrote another serviceman in his diary, “and the last thing at night is ‘Nigger’” (Gatewood 1971, p. 257). Apparently, the soldiers put all Filipinos into this category, using it as a derisive term to signify “a class beneath our notice to which, so far as our white soldier is concerned, all Filipinos belong” (Palmer 1900, p. 81).

Other actors articulating “racist” meanings included imperial minded senators such as Albert Beveridge of Indiana. In a speech before the Senate in 1900, Beveridge referred to the Filipinos as “a barbarous race modified by three centuries of contact with a decadent race [the Spanish].” Beveridge’s point was that the Filipinos, due to their biological constitution, were incapable of self-government: “They are not capable of self-government. How could they be? They are not a self-governing race. It is barely possible that 1,000 men in all the archipelago are capable of self-government in the Anglo-Saxon sense. They are Orientals, Malays” (*Congressional Record*, Jan. 9, 1900, p. 704). Of course, Beveridge’s signification of the Filipinos differed slightly from the military’s use of the term “nigger”: rather than equating Filipinos with African American groups, Beveridge specified them as “Orientals” and “Malays.” But both categories emphasized somatic differences (or differences in biology, blood, and stock), and both implied derision and aggression, if not utter contempt. Indeed, the term “nigger” was uttered by the military amidst the brutal Philippine-American war, and Senator Beveridge’s derogatory discourse was pitched at American audiences at home to legitimate colonial occupation. Together, then, this discourse fulfilled the function that all colonial discourse putatively fulfills: “To construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin in order to justify conquest” (Bhabha 1994, p. 70).

Still, the utterances of soldiers and senators were not the only ones at play in the Philippines. In fact, high-level officials of the civilian colonial administration articulated very different schemes. This discourse is distinct in the sense that it downplayed race as the substance of difference and gave somatic markers—biology and blood—a very different accent. More specifically, while Senator Beveridge claimed that the Filipinos were unfit for self-government because they were “Orientals, Malays,” high-level civilian officials claimed that the Filipinos were unfit because of their particular stage of development. This scheme inserted Filipinos into an historical hierarchy rather than a biological-racial one, articulating a developmental continuum of different historical stages in sociopolitical formation and levels of civilization. Moving along on this continuum were “peoples” and “nations” rather than *only* “races.” Thus one official, Cameron Forbes, wrote that one of the most appalling features of the Filipinos was not that they were part of the

“Oriental” or “Malay” race, but that they were locked in a “feudal” or “medieval” stage of development (Forbes 1928, Vol. I, p. 166; Forbes to Higginson, Sept. 2, 1904, FP, *Journal*). Similarly, Elihu Root, one of the key architects of colonial policy in the Philippines, scripted the Filipinos as “children” who were locked in a “rudimentary stage of political development.” To Root, this “rudimentary state” is what explained the Filipinos’ unfitness for modern self-government. “I think,” he wrote to anti-imperialists supporting Philippine independence, “that now independence would be the most fatal possible gift to the people of the Philippine Islands. There is a period in childhood during which the obligation of a guardian can not be performed without the power to control the child’s actions. The people of the Philippine Islands are still in a state of political childhood” (Root to Lowell, Feb. 11, 1904, ERP).

Of course, “race” was operative in these officials’ meaning structure. But in the officials’ discourse “race” meant something very particular indeed. For soldiers and senators such as Beveridge, racial difference was the *cause* of behavior and inferiority. Nature, in terms of a people’s biology, blood, and stock, was the substance of difference. By contrast, for civilian officials, race was more a *correlate* of behavior and inferiority. Skin color, blood, and biology were an index at most, and the root determinant of behavior lay in nurture, that is, in history and environment. Race still mattered, but in a different way.

The difference in part reflected differences in racial thought at home. In late nineteenth-century America, theories of race had proliferated in popular and academic discourse (arguably due to the spread of Darwinism, issues of emancipation in the South, and the influx of European immigrants to the North). This new racial discourse shared underlying themes, not least of which was that the Anglo-Saxon “race” was superior and that American democracy was a sign of that superiority (Burch 1902; Jacobson 2000, Ch. 4). But there were also key distinctions within this overarching meaning system. Some racial thinkers, for example, emphasized the strictly biological side of racial inferiority. A proto-Eugenicist conception, the accent here was upon genes, blood, and stock. The implication was that differences were forever fixed. On the other hand, other thinkers focused on the environmental-historical production of racial difference. According to Lamarck’s theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, for example, an organism’s traits developed in response to the environment, and these traits were then passed down to inheritors. Here the emphasis was less on nature than on nurture, more on history and environment than on genes or stock (Stocking 1968, pp. 238–241).

Civilian officials in the Philippines employed the Lamarckian scheme. If the Filipinos were inferior, it was due to a deficiency in their history: a lack of the proper nurture. Thus William H. Taft, first governor of the Philippines, was quick to claim that the Filipinos were politically inferior, for they were “ignorant” and exhibited a tendency towards “tyranny” rather than democracy. But, for Taft, this lack had been produced environmentally. Taft explained that the Spaniards had

given Filipinos “very little political education.” Spanish rule in the Philippines had been monarchical, overcentralized, and corrupt, and had thereby left the Filipinos mired in an unfulfilled development (Taft to H. Hoyt, Sept. 8, 1900, CE). “No responsibility for government, however local or unimportant, was thrust upon Filipinos in such a way as to give them political experience,” and “the only example they have had is the Spanish” (Taft 1908, p. 23; Taft to Root, Aug. 18, 1900, ERP). Similarly, Root concluded that “it is impossible that a people with this history . . . should have acquired any real understanding of the way to conduct a popular government. They had no opportunity to learn and they have never learned” (U.S. War Department 1899, p. 26). “The average native,” added another official, “has never as yet had a fair opportunity to show what he can do” (U.S. Philippine Commission 1900, I, p. 109).

The Lamarckian scheme was not restricted to Americans in the Philippines. It was also used by American officials in Guam. Although these officials identified the Chamorros as part of the “Malay race,” they also noted that because Spain had formerly colonized Guam, Chamorros had been injected with “Spanish blood” (U.S. Navy Department 1904a, p. 131). But when discussing the inferiority of Chamorros, such talk was tempered by an accent on environmental conditions. Seaton Schroeder, the second governor of Guam, noted that the Chamorros showed certain “vices” such as “laziness,” but he stressed that this was due to the remote and isolated context in which the Chamorros lived, and their relative lack of cultural penetration from Spanish colonial rulers (who had more or less left the Chamorros untouched). If the Chamorros had the vice of laziness, Schroeder argued, such a vice was “apt to be inherent in communities inhabiting isolated spots and without encouragement to attain the standards of civilization and morality that rule in the more enlightened parts of the world” (1922, p. 241).

American officials in Samoa also articulated the Lamarckian view. B. F. Tilly, the first governor of Samoa, tempered his talk of the Samoans as a “race” with claims that the Samoans “are still a patriarchal state” (USND 1901, p. 85). The implication was that historical development, rather than blood, had contributed to the Samoans’ characteristics. Another official in Samoa similarly claimed that the Samoans “lacked character,” but he blamed environmental factors. “Taken as a whole the people lack character. It is doubtless a natural law that there can be no development without hardship, and nature here is so kind that the natives practically never have to face hardships. They move along through life, as did many generations of their forefathers, without the necessity of any great amount of work or of privation. The result is that they are amiable, but lack seriousness” (Safford 1905, p. 236). Thus, if the Samoans lacked “character” and “seriousness,” it was not because of the Samoans’ biology, but rather because the Samoans’ history and environment lacked the stimulus for the production of these traits.

The Lamarckian scheme thus belies the assumption that “racial” difference in colonialism took on a singular meaning. In the Lamarckian scheme, nurture

trumped nature, culture transcended blood, and phenotypic characteristics were not merely the substance of difference. None of this, however, is not to deny Chatterjee's "rule of colonial difference." After all, both the biological and Lamarckian schemes classified the colonized as inferior and lacking, and both implied derision. The only distinction was the cause of the inferiority. Still, there was yet another dimension on which meanings of alterity differed. Indeed, in Guam and Samoa, officials did not so much deride as *romanticize* the natives, finding in them positive rather than purely negative traits.

Derision or Admiration? Romanticizing the Native

Something of this alternative scheme is seen in administrator Safford's brief description of the Chamorros in Guam:

They [are] a happy, careless people, fond of festivities, dancing, singing, story telling, and contests of strength and skill, yet sufficiently industrious to cultivate their fields and garden patches, build excellent houses for their families, braid mats of fine texture, and construct canoes which were the admiration of all the early navigators (1905, p. 236).

This image of Chamorros undoubtedly carries some condescension, but it also carries a certain amount of admiration. The Chamorros are "sufficiently industrious," they build "excellent" houses, and produce noticeable goods of all sorts. Thus, derision was not the only connotation in this scheme and, in fact, such discourse was common in both Guam and Samoa. The governor in 1904 asserted that while the Chamorros were sometimes lazy, they were at the same time a "peaceful, good-natured, law-abiding people, industrious *in their own way*" (USND 1904b, p. 131; emphasis added). Other officials claimed that the Chamorros were "mostly animated by good instincts," and that the typical Chamorro had a "simple, pleasure-loving disposition" (Born 1911, p. 637; Schroeder 1922, p. 234). Similarly, officials in Samoa tempered their possible disdain with claims that the Samoans were "amiable" and "fine-looking and courtly" (USND 1901, pp. 85-86). The governor in 1904 claimed that the "natives are a gentle, kindly, simple-minded race and are easily governed" (Commandant of U.S. Naval Station 1904, p. 7).

Such discourses were concomitant with a set of categorical distinctions between the Filipinos on one hand and the Chamorros and Samoans on the other. For example, while the military classified the Tagalogs in the Philippines as "niggers," the governor of Samoa asserted: "There is nothing about them to suggest the negro. The men are tall, proud in bearing, muscular in limbs and torso, never corpulent, very active, of great endurance—withal, a very handsome race of men" (Governor of Samoa 1913, p. 23). And while Lamarckian officials in the Philippines stressed the Filipinos' developmental and historical mire, officials in Guam and Samoa classified Chamorros and Samoans as located at an even lower rung on the developmental hierarchy, a rung wholly untouched by foreign influence and

altogether outside of history. Governor Dyer in Guam asserted that the Chamorros' "wants are few, and they lead lives of Arcadian simplicity and freedom from ambition or desire for change or progress" (Governor of Guam 1904, p. 2). The governor of Samoa asserted similarly that the Samoans lived a pristine natural existence based upon the abundant fruits of land and sea: "It is doubtless a natural law that there can be no development without hardship, and nature here is so kind that the natives practically never have to face hardships. They move along through life, as did many generations of their forefathers" (Commandant of U.S. Naval Station 1904, p. 7; also U.S. Congress Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions 1928, p. 34). The related distinction, then, was that the Chamorros and Samoans had comparably better characteristics. An official report for the Department of War remarked that "the indigenous race called Chamorros very much resemble the Tagals and Visayos [of the Philippines], but some writers contend that they are perhaps more indolent—a fault compensated for by good qualities, of which sobriety and unselfishness may claim notice" (U.S. Adjutant-General's Office 1900, p. 20). A Protestant missionary in Guam added that the Chamorros "are superior physically and mentally to the Filipinos," while administrator Safford contended that the Chamorros were "much given to buffoonery, mockery, playing tricks, jesting, mimicry, and ridicule, offering in this respect a striking contrast to the undemonstrative Malaysians" (Price 1906, p. 314; Safford 1905, p. 236).

In short, this discourse implied that because of, rather than in spite of, the inhabitants' undevelopment, the Chamorros and Samoans were worthy of admiration. To be sure, rather than classifying the natives as lacking or in need of something more, authorities typically represented them as having noble virtues. Governor Schroeder forthrightly claimed that the Chamorros had "wholesome traits" that were "admirable" and "enviable," claiming that the Chamorro was "in many ways an attractive person—honest, tractable, peaceable, and tending to emulate that which is good rather than to follow that which is bad" (1922, p. 242). Schroeder specifically praised the absence of crime and private property. Reflecting upon his early days as governor, he wrote that "there was very little crime . . . [and] little violation of the law. Certain of their unwritten laws exhibit very correct notions, too. For instance, any one passing by another's property and feeling hungry or thirsty is entirely at liberty to climb a tree, knock down a coconut and eat and drink" (*ibid.*). Officials in Samoa articulated the same positive view. The governor of Samoa pointed out how nature had been "kind" to the inhabitants and, because of this, the Samoans "are as a rule good natured and generous" (Commandant of U.S. Naval Station 1904, p. 7). Even some American travelers joined in the chorus. One journalist wrote that the Samoans' "natural disposition is open and amiable, and the absence of a thieving propensity is a most marked characteristic" (Webster 1899, p. 217; see also Nordstrom 1992).

This scheme thus idealized and romanticized, showing that meanings of racial difference were not always attendant with “contempt” and “aggression” (Todorov 1986, p. 370).⁴ In fact, when American authorities in Guam and Samoa extolled the virtues of the inhabitants, they contrasted them not only with other colonized groups but also with the alienation and dilemmas of the Americans’ own modern life. Schroeder wrote on his arrival to Guam:

[After first settling in to my job], I tackled my problems, encouraged by a feeling of prepossession with my surroundings. The island is a charming little spot isolated amid all that wide waste of waters, possessing great. . . attractions in the way of pretty scenery, a people mostly animated by good instincts, and conditions of life possessing the charm of novelty for those whose sphere leads them only through countries of familiar aspects and customs.” (1922, p. 234)

Administrator Safford added similarly: “If wealth consists in the ability to gratify one’s wants, the people of Guam may be called rich” (1903, p. 507). Governor E. J. Born even remarked that “the islander [in Guam] lives his life in peace and contentment, and is, apparently, *far happier than the average dweller in many a more advanced country*” (1911, p. 642; emphasis added). Thus, while the Americans in the Philippines saw in the Other a negative lack, this discourse turned the table, finding in the Other positive traits lacked by the Self.

Classificatory Conflicts

The foregoing analysis discloses that multiple meanings of difference in the U.S. Pacific empire co-existed side by side. Rather than denoting a singular meaning, discourses of difference adduced to multiple ones. But the co-existence of the different schemes was not always a happy one. Not only did the meanings differ from each other, they were also put into direct conflict, as colonizing agents argued over the “true” character of the colonized or the reasons for their inferiority. Such intra-imperial debate was stark in the Philippines, as high officials registered criticisms of the soldiers’ slurs. For instance, secretary James LeRoy lamented:

Without in the least justifying prejudice against the Negroes in the United States, what possible excuse does that afford for proceeding on the “nigger” theory among [the Filipino] people? The typical Filipino is every way distinct from the Negro as he is from the European. Yet it is the usual thing among Americans who have been in the Philippines, and imbibed with a contempt or dislike for the people, to betray in their conversation the fact that their theories of the situation are based upon popular notions at home as to Negro shortcomings

⁴These distinct meanings can be traced in part to pre-existing classificatory schemes on Pacific Islanders. Anthropological thought and the discourse of European colonizers of neighboring islands had already been romanticizing Pacific Islanders. They conjured the image of Rousseau’s noble savage, reducing natives and nature together in prelapsarian terms (Steinmetz 2002, pp. 176-181). The American writer Robert Louis Stevenson had constructed the Samoans in such terms, and colonial officials later conjured his insights (e.g., CTIP 1928, p. 24).

and incapacity. They prejudge the people before they have even seen them, and they come away without ever having made a single effort to find out what they really are like. (1902, p. 101)

In accordance with the Lamarckian scheme, LeRoy intimated that the soldiers needed to cut beneath somatic differences and consider what the Filipinos “really are like.”

On the other hand, proponents of the so-called “nigger theory” were unconvinced. Soldiers referred to the administrators as “nigger-lovers,” and they were especially uncomfortable with Governor Taft’s reference to the Filipinos as “little brown brothers” (Riggs 1903, p. 256). For Taft, this was a paternalistic reference implying that the Filipinos’ inferiority lay in their particular stage of civilizational development (the Filipinos were not yet grown up). But the implication for American soldiers was horribly menacing. The phrase “little brown brothers” implied that the soldiers’ white father had had sex with a brown woman or, more terrifying still, that their white mother had had sex with a brown man (Kramer 1999). The soldiers thus chanted, to the tune of “Mr. Dooley”:

I’m only a common soldier-man in the blasted Philippines;
They say I’ve got Brown Brothers here, but I dunno what it means.
I like the Fraternity, but still I draw the line;
He *may* be a brother of William H. Taft, but he ain’t no friend of mine. (Karnow 1989, p. 174)

Conflicts emerged in Samoa as well. For instance, biological theories of the inhabitants’ lack circulated among some American visitors and settlers, but officials were quick to argue that environment had more to do with it than anything else. One governor was particularly irritated by American settlers who claimed that the natives were naturally “lazy.” He argued that the naturally “abundant” environment of the islands was such that the natives had no compulsion to work hard, and so the “critics” of the natives were completely erroneous: they “do not take into account his [the Samoans’] life and environment” (Governor of Samoa 1913, p. 23). In a similar conflict, some missionaries on the island claimed that the “biology” of the Samoans prevented them from learning anything other than by rote, but some in the administration argued that the Samoans were “capable of learning as much as whites, provided they were given half the chance” (Keesing 1934, pp. 432–433).

Debate also ensued over the character as much as the capacity of the Samoans. Here, the debate was not between biology and environment but between derision and admiration. Some missionaries and travelers, for example, were found to be “continually insulting Samoans by their language and actions,” referring to the inhabitants as “savages” and treating them as “a despised and conquered people” (CTIP 1928, p. 5). But colonial officials were quick to object. One former governor told American congressmen: “The fact is you cannot know anything about American Samoa without knowing the people. . . The people. . . are a very handsome

race. . . by far the handsomest islanders in the Pacific Ocean.” The governor added that Samoans “are the happiest people in the world,” and though they “are a primitive people, they are not savage normally” (ibid., p. 34). Similarly, Governor E. J. Born countered claims that the Chamorros were savage by asserting that they were an admirable people who embodied the inherent nobility of humanity: “They are neither savages nor the offspring of savages *any more directly than ourselves*” (1911, p. 637; emphasis added).

These conflicts also spilled over onto representations of the colonized in popular periodicals, consumed by middle-class readers at home. For example, Willard French, an American writer and traveler, published an article on Guam in *Booklover’s Magazine* (French 1905) describing the geography and peoples of Guam, and oscillating between admiration and derision for the people. It also included photographs, one of which was titled “A Dance of Natives.” The photograph displayed scantily clad, dark-skinned men with spears, crouching and dancing in the mud (see Figure 1).

Governor Schroeder in Guam read the article and saw the photo, and in turn responded with a quick attack. In his article written in the same magazine, Schroeder asserted: “As a matter of positive fact there is not in the island today, and there has not been for years, a single person of the race or habits or appearance represented in that ghastly picture.” Schroeder explained that the picture presented by Willard French was of a small group of island inhabitants who had emigrated to Guam from the Caroline Islands, but who lived apart from the Chamorros. Schroeder then offered a very different photo, with the goal of representing the Chamorros through a more romantic and positive lens. The photo showed lighter-skinned men and women, donning Spanish upper-class attire, whose “niceness and modesty are noticeable,” as Schroeder put it (see Figure 2). Schroeder added that while some Chamorro men were indeed “apt to strip to the waist” when working in the fields, “the exposé is no greater than in more highly cultivated societies” (1905, p. 719). Apparently, Schroeder was intent on portraying the Chamorros to American audiences according to the positive and romantic classification he and his peers had been articulating.

Of course, we could easily find in the arguments registered by Schroeder a colonial function: By portraying the Chamorros as an ideally simple and child-like people, Schroeder further fed the colonial hierarchy. But reducing the discourse in this manner would efface the very different modes of “othering” that underpinned the debate in the first place. It would likewise overlook another critical point: The different meanings were more than mere wordplay, for each carried important implications for authoritative practice on colonial ground. The distinct meanings, in conjuncture with other factors, produced respectively different forms of colonial governance and types of colonial policy.

COLONIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Assimilation and Transformation in the Philippines

Consider, first, the distinction between the biological racism and Lamarckian environmentalism in the Philippines. As the former located lack in biology, blood, and stock, it implied that the inferiority of the colonized was interminable, and that the lack could not be overcome. This is the view of colonial difference which, according to Chatterjee, always dominated colonial classifications: Colonial agents classified local groups as “*incorrigibly* inferior.” However, as the Lamarckian scheme stressed the environmental and historical determinants of behavior, it implied that the colonized’s inferiority was not in fact interminable. If nurture trumped nature, the behavioral or civilizational differences between colonizer and colonized, however indexed by race, could be reduced (if not eventually erased) given the proper external stimuli and surrounding conditions. Inferior peoples could be civilized and uplifted, and so-called “children” could be raised into adulthood. Fittingly, in his address to the American Academy of Social and Political Science in 1901, the sociologist Edward Ross referred to the Lamarckian view as “the equality fallacy” which “belittles race differences and has a robust faith in the power of intercourse and social instruction to lift up a backward folk to the level of the best” (1901, p. 67).

In the Philippines it was exactly the “equality fallacy” that took precedence. While soldiers and military officers saw the Filipinos’ inferiority as “hereditary and fixed,” the role of these actors for colonialism on the ground was comparably limited. In 1900, the United States Congress called for an end to military rule in the Philippines and put colonial administration in the hands of the civilian officials who wielded Lamarckian schemes. And as these officials attended to the task of state-building and colonial governance, they were guided by their distinct lenses on racial difference.

The form of colonial government first planned and then finally instituted by these officials is suggestive. For one thing, the colonial government gave active participation to Filipinos. Local governments were staffed by Filipinos, who were selected by other Filipinos through free and regularized elections. A national legislature was also staffed by elected Filipinos, and Filipinos took up a range of other posts in the government. Of course, the American officials held ultimate power, staffing the Philippine Commission (that served as the executive branch and legislative house), but the rule was that Filipinos should be given as much participation as possible (USWD 1899, pp. 26–29). This was thus a quasi-democratic government, and it was not a matter of simple expedience. American officials explicitly modeled it after territorial governments at home that had been set up as transitional governments, moving towards full statehood in the Union (USPC 1900, I, pp. 106–109). Indeed, the officials who proposed the plan quoted Thomas

Jefferson's claim that the inhabitants of the Louisiana territory were like "children" (with the capacity but not yet the fitness for self-government), and they then applied the scheme to the Filipinos. "In planning a frame of government [for the Philippines], we can not do better than follow Jefferson's lead in adapting it to the condition of the natives, trusting that in the course of development under American training they will eventually reach the goal of complete self-government" (*ibid.*, p. 109).

The very form of colonial government thus carried an explicit colonial project aimed at transformation. The idea was that the Filipinos, by being granted some amount of governmental participation, would get the proper training and experience in American styled government so that they might one day rule themselves. The Filipinos would get a "practical political education" in American styled government under the "strong and guiding hand" of American officials, and the colonial government itself would serve as a "school of politics" (Taft 1908; USWD 1899, p. 24). In other words, the Filipinos would get the environmental stimulus that Spanish rule had not sufficiently provided. By creating the proper external influence, the natives' "capacities" would be built upon, their civilizational growth would be hastened, and the Filipinos would be transformed into American types. Fittingly, President McKinley called the policy "benevolent assimilation." Elihu Root referred to it as "democratic tutelage," the goal of which was to give the Filipinos "development in civilization" (USWD 1899, p. 24). "We think we can help these people," explained Governor Taft, "we think we can elevate them to an appreciation of popular government, educating them in self-government, until their knowledge of government, their knowledge of individual liberty shall be such that further action may be taken either by giving them statehood or by making them a quasi-independent government. . . or if they desire it, by independence" (quoted in Stanley 1974, p. 65).

The two other major policies carried out by the officials were oriented to the same purpose of uplift and democratic tutelage. The first was public education. The school system was the largest of its kind in the imperial world, and by 1930 it took up more amounts of state spending than public health, policing, or infrastructure (Monroe 1925, p. 567). American teachers were recruited from home, and by 1910 some one thousand teachers had flooded into the archipelago. These teachers were to "train up, properly and promptly, a [cohort] of Filipino youth to regenerate their own country" (Atkinson 1902, p. 365). Students were taught English, basic rudimentary skills of reading and writing, and American civics. The avowed goal was to create an educated and enlightened citizenry, turning the so-called "ignorant masses" into American types (Jernegan 1910; Margold 1995, p. 374; USPC 1900, I, pp. 41–42).

The second major program was economic development. The officials constructed extensive public works systems, built central banking facilities offering flexible credit, and tried to reduce existing trade barriers between the metropole

and colony (Golay 1984, p. 237). Of course, such measures would have benefited American capitalists, but in the officials' view they were critical for civilizational growth. Economic development stimulated by American capital would help to undo the putatively medieval social conditions in the archipelago and stimulate sociopolitical development along American lines. Taft suggested that with "Yankee capital" would come the "moral improvement and the education of the people," promoting "Yankee ingenuity, Yankee enterprise, and Yankee freedom" (quoted in Alfonso 1968, p. 246). American capital never did flood the archipelago as much as Taft had wished, but Taft remained hopeful throughout, insisting to American capitalists that investment in "foreign capital" would bring "the improvement in the intelligence and governing capacity of the people" ("Speech of Taft at Iloilo," Feb 18, 1903, TP; Go 2000).

In short, "practical political education," public schooling, and "Yankee capital" would together serve to work upon, develop, and ultimately transform the Filipinos into American types. Lamarckian schemes clearly underpinned the policy, for the idea of transformation and "benevolent assimilation" was possible only given the officials' understandings of difference as environmentally produced. To be sure, officials claimed that by their programs, tutelary rule would serve to dismantle existing conditions in the archipelago—that is, the "shackles which have made it impossible for them to run the course of progress"—and then reshape Filipinos by giving them the environmental conditions "already possessed by us" (Forbes 1928, vol. II, p. 443). Not surprisingly, then, those who articulated biological racism vehemently opposed the policy. Senator Beveridge was incredulous at the idea that the Filipinos could learn American styled self-government. "They are not a self-governing race," claimed Senator Beveridge. "What alchemy will change the oriental quality of their blood and set the self-governing currents of the American pouring through their Malay veins?" (*Congressional Record*, Jan. 9, 1900, p. 704). Other metropolitan actors were just as incredulous, questioning the wisdom of the officials' ostensibly uplifting efforts. Bernard Moses, who helped build the public school program, related in his diary a meeting with one Congressman who "started with the premise that the Filipinos are savages." "I tried to give him a few facts," wrote Moses, "but he absolutely refuses to see anything meritorious in the Filipino character or any hope in their progress. He thinks it a great waste of time of good material to send college graduates [e.g., American teachers] to teach such a people. To him the Filipino is a savage and will always remain one" (Diary, Nov. 6, 1901, BMP). Another critic at home claimed that the colonial regime, by its "missionary work of training the politically underdeveloped people for self-government, has taken an optimistic view of the situation, but hereditary incapacity. . . must be given due weight and consideration" (Burch 1902, p. 94).

Such criticisms further attest to the implications of meaning for authoritative practice. Indeed, critics who articulated the biological view of difference suggested that military rule should have never been replaced by civilian administration. They

also claimed that the United States should give up on its civilizing mission and instead attend to naked exploitation. “There are two classes [of foreign residents] here,” wrote Forbes in his journal, “(1) those that believe in the effort to educate and help the Filipinos. . . and (2) those who say the Filipinos are hopeless and that we’d best exploit the Islands for our own benefit” (Journal, Aug. 16, 1904, FP). But the officials stood firm in their policy. Forbes, after noting in his diary that there was a class of residents who saw the Filipinos as “hopeless,” wrote: “I am glad to say that none of the Commission feel that way and none of the higher officers of the government. . . act in that way” (ibid.). The basis for their firmness was, again, their Lamarckian view of difference. In response to incredulous senators, Taft explained that the policy was well-founded because the Filipinos’ inferiority was not interminable: “While there is to-day a palpable unfitness for self-government upon them, there is in them a *capacity* for future development, for future preparation for self-government, which justifies the plan we have adopted” (USCCP 1902, I, p. 90; emphasis added).

This is not to say that the Lamarckian scheme of difference determined the policy in and of itself. There were other factors involved. One was the imperative of legitimation. Anti-imperialists in the United States had been critical of annexation, and some Filipinos had resisted American sovereignty with armed resistance. Thus, the policy of giving Filipinos political participation and “civilizing” them fit a legitimating function, portraying occupation as beneficial to the colonized. Still, the importance of the Lamarckian scheme in shaping the policy cannot be easily discarded. If the Lamarckian scheme did not in itself produce the policy, neither did the drive for legitimacy. After all, senators, like Beveridge, also tried to legitimate colonial occupation to the American public, but they did so on the grounds of biological inferiority. The American officials could have done the same thing. Furthermore, the Americans could have legitimated their rule to Filipinos by giving them political participation without the talk of a civilizing mission or the efforts to transplant American political forms. They did not, and instead granted the Filipinos political participation for the purposes of “practical political education” and structured the colonial state as a “school of politics.” And even after Filipino resistance had quelled, they proceeded in their tutelage efforts with vigor. In their private correspondences and internal discussions, they consistently stressed the Filipinos’ capacity for development and insisted that the proper “experience” and “training” would realize that capacity. We have already seen this: Cameron Forbes wrote in his private journal that the American officials, despite the critics, were intent upon “educating” the Filipinos. But Forbes was not alone. When Governor Luke Wright received letters from American residents complaining that the Filipinos had been given too much control over local affairs (part of “political education”), Wright responded: “It seems to me obvious that in purely local matters at least we must give the people of the various municipalities a reasonable hand in directing their own affairs and endeavor, by precept, example and constant watchfulness, to develop them along American lines. This I appreciate is a work of time and labor.

I must think, however, that it is worth our best efforts" (Wright to Rooker, May 6, 1904, CE).⁵ Such evidence suggests that while tutelage and "assimilation" were not determined by Lamarckian meanings alone, they were nonetheless determined by a conjuncture of Lamarckian meanings and other imperatives. If we cannot neglect the latter for apprehending the policy, neither can we neglect the former.⁶

Preservation and Protectionism in Guam and Samoa

While Lamarckian schemes contributed to transformative and developmental policies in the Philippines, the romanticist schemes in Guam and Samoa contributed to a very different policy outcome. On one hand, the Lamarckian view classified the colonized as inferior and lacking due to environmental factors. It thereby pinpointed the need and possibility for "development in civilization." On the other hand, the romanticized view in Guam and Samoa did not classify the colonized as wholly lacking, but rather as picturesque and near perfect in their pristine state. Isolated from time, modernity, and corrupt foreign influences, the Chamorros and Samoans were already happy and contented, bestowed with prelapsarian virtues and "admirable" characteristics. The implication was that colonial rule, rather than changing local conditions so as to transform the colonized, would do best to maintain the status quo.

To be sure, administrators in Guam and Samoa made little effort to "civilize" the natives and cast them into metropolitan molds. There was no talk of Americanization or developmental tutelage. The very forms of the colonial governments in Guam and Samoa are indicative. In Samoa, the first governor, B. F. Tilley, was charged with devising a form of colonial government, and he decided to adopt a form of indirect rule that would keep pre-existing Samoan "customs" intact. After noting that the Samoans' sociopolitical organization was chiefly based upon authority, he divided the island into administrative districts, corresponding to what he took to be the "ancient" sociopolitical divisions. He then appointed hereditary native chiefs to administer them. As Tilly noted, the goal was not to change the pre-existing system, but rather to maintain or regulate it "without interfering with the deeply rooted customs of the people or wounding their susceptibilities in any way" (USND 1901, pp. 85–86).

⁵The American officials also took various steps that far exceeded the simple drive for legitimacy. For instance, when the American officials instituted elections and gave Filipinos the vote, they did not simply keep the pre-existing electoral rules from the Spanish period in place or only expand the electorate to appease local demands. Rather, they instituted the Australian ballot system, which called for nonpartisan ballots and private voting booths. This was the system that Progressive Era reformers were instituting at home to undo the corruption of urban machine policies and "Americanize" new immigrant voters. The American officials in the Philippines (intimately tied to the progressive movement at home) transposed it to the colony in the hopes of effecting the same Americanization (Go 2003).

⁶On conjunctural explanation, which explains events by reference to multiple causal mechanisms drawn from potentially different theories, see Steinmetz (1998).

Governors in Guam structured their colonial regime similarly. Guam did not have hereditary chiefs but, under Spanish rule, native district officials known as *gobrnadorcillos* (or “little governors”). The *gobrnadorcillos* were typically the leading elite of the island, and the first American governors did not alter the system. They kept these positions intact without elaboration, merely reappointing the *gobrnadorcillos* as “commissioners” (Cox 1917, p. 78; Governor of Guam 1903, p. 2). Thus, unlike the political system in the Philippines, local leaders were not chosen through American styled elections. There was no talk of “practical political education” and the colonial state was not fashioned as a “school of politics.”

The distinct romanticized meaning of difference guided the approach. As the natives were “the happiest people in the world,” contented and “rich,” there was no gap to fill, no lack to be transcended with developmental programs (CTIP 1928, p. 34; Governor of Guam 1904, p. 2). The “children,” valued for their positive traits, would be best left to play on their own. Indeed, Governor Tilley, after retaining the pre-existing system of chief authority in Samoa, let the villages decide local laws for themselves according to “custom.” His idea was that their “simple” and “docile” character—rooted in the fact that they were “still in a patriarchal state”—made them “law abiding and obedient” and that the local system should therefore be kept intact without interference from American authorities (USND 1901, p. 86). “No effort was made to make any radical changes in the long established customs,” Tilly reported, because “the natives, naturally docile and easily ruled, are happy and contented” (1901, p. 1601). Similarly, the officials in Guam felt that the pre-existing political system was appropriate and practical, “thanks to the docile temperament of a gentle people, their respect for law and order and their confidence in the integrity of the officers [commissioners] appointed to care for them and their welfare” (Governor of Guam 1904, p. 8). Thus, the theory was that if something was not broken, there was no need to fix it. As administrator Safford summarized: “When I first arrived, it seemed to me that I had discovered Arcadia, and when I received a letter from a friend asking whether I believed it would be possible to ‘civilize the natives,’ I felt like exclaiming, ‘God forbid!’” (1903, pp. 507–508).

This is not to say that the officials did nothing at all. To the contrary, what followed from the romanticist view was a strategy of paternalistic protection for the purposes of preservation. Indeed, officials in both colonies were obsessively worried that outside foreign influences would undermine the inhabitants’ Arcadian life, and they took various steps to impede this. For instance, one of the first things the authorities in Guam did was to expel Spanish priests from the island. The premise was that the priests were “the moral lepers of the place” and “a detriment” to the Chamorros’ way of life (Carano and Sanchez 1964, p. 181). The authorities in both colonies had also heard reports that shady settlers and speculators had previously used alcohol to put natives into a “drunken stupor,” and the officials thus forbade the importation and sale of liquor (Cox 1917, p. 43; Governor of Samoa 1913, p. 14; USND 1905, p. 33). This would prevent the “the degeneration

and annihilation that come to all aboriginal races in the presence of the unstinted use of alcoholic drinks" (Ide 1897, p. 169).

Economic policies were also protectionist, in clear distinction to the policies in the Philippines. For instance, governor Tilley in Samoa set a precedent by forbidding the sale of land to non-Samoans. He feared that if lands were sold to foreign speculators, the Samoans would be taken advantage of. "A primitive people will sell their land for a pittance if permitted to do so," explained a naval officer, and "Tilly resolved that such a thing should not happen" (Gray 1960, p. 126). Tilly also feared that the sale of lands would eventually extinguish the Samoans' noble system of communal landholding. "We found," Tilly reported, "that the natives would have to have some protection in dealing with the whites. An order was made prohibiting the sale of lands to whites and contracts between the two races were limited, and in some cases declared illegal" (1901, p. 1601). Authorities in Guam took the same approach. Among the first regulations they enacted was one that forbade the sale or transfer of land, so designed as "a safeguard for the residents of Guam against the machinations, devices, and schemes of speculators and adventures" (USAG 1900, p. 39). It was also an explicit effort to keep the land in the hands of peasant producers, thereby impeding disruptions to their style of life and their "wholesome traits." Governor Schroeder explained in an unpublished memo:

Account must be taken of a noticeable trait in the Chamorro character, viz., the pride and happiness in the possession of land, which results in the community being composed of a large number of small land owners. The effect of this is, of course, to minimise [sic] the amount of labor that can be hired. . . While this seems to offer something of a barrier to material productiveness, it is a very wholesome trait which it is hoped will hold its own against outside influences. (Governor of Guam 1901, p. 5)

Thus, while their counterparts in the Philippines felt that the Filipinos needed more outside influence, the officials in Guam and Samoa took steps to prevent exactly such influence.

The preservationist and protectionist strategy is also seen in the officials' approach to education. In both Guam and Samoa, the officials at first provided some funds for public schools, but the school systems were sparse. There was only one state-funded school in Samoa by 1920, along with a couple of missionary schools that American authorities grudgingly tolerated (CTIP 1928, p. 7; Darden 1951, p. 30; Governor of Samoa 1927, p. 81). And while there were a few more state-funded schools in Guam (owing perhaps to the larger population), neither Guam nor Samoa saw the kind of educational program carried out in the Philippines. There, officials were vehement about public education: They immediately set up a separate Bureau of Education, constructed public schools in nearly every town across the archipelago, and set up a curriculum devoted to citizenship training. State expenditures devoted to public schooling were high, taking up 41 percent of total spending and trumping expenditures for public health and infrastructure development (Monroe 1925, p. 567). By contrast, funds devoted to education in

Samoa were next to nothing; and in Guam, they took up a sparse 17 percent (Governor of Guam 1904, pp. 21–24). The curriculum in the existing schools was likewise minimal. Schoolchildren in the Philippines were given civics classes, while students in Guam learned only “habits of cleanliness” and, at most, English. “It is not the intention,” wrote the governor, “to carry the instruction of the mass much beyond that” (ibid., 1905, p. 14). The complaint of one critic hit the nail on the head: “We have gone quite mad over education in the Philippines, and not quite mad enough over Guam” (French 1905, p. 379).

Again, this is not to say that the meaning determined colonial policy in itself. After all, both Guam and Samoa had been annexed for naval purposes, and naval bases were immediately set up. The naval commander of the base was put in charge of civil administration, and the foremost concern was stability and peace so as to secure the smooth operations of the naval apparatus. Thus, the governor in Guam wrote that colonial governance should attend to the “welfare” of the Chamorros, but only because the natives’ welfare in turn secured the welfare of the navy base. “The interests of the Naval Station and natives are intimately interwoven. The one, as an organization, cannot escape, or live far apart, from the other, and the efficiency of the first depends entirely on the welfare of the second” (Governor of Guam 1904, pp. 2–3). Still, the romanticist scheme was a critical determinant, offering a blueprint for action. The officials may have aimed to sustain the “welfare” of the natives so as to meet strategic naval imperatives, but *how* to achieve such welfare was not transparent in naval imperatives alone. That is, the realization of native welfare was dependent on the officials’ distinct understandings of the natives’ character, traits, and interests.

For example, when American speculators later tried to open up Samoa to commercialization and turn Samoans into wage laborers, American officials argued that it would be fruitless. “It is no use to think of changing the Samoan because no Samoan wants to make a change. . . nature does everything for them, practically. All they have to do, substantially, is to plant their grain or their roots, and nature does the rest” (CTIP 1928, p. 36). They likewise argued that economic change would be harmful to the Samoans’ way of life. “The Samoan people should be self-supporting. Any other system will undoubtedly result in detriment to them” (ibid., p. 54). Thus, if the officials tried to attend to the natives’ “welfare” so as to secure the welfare of the naval base, the particular steps they took were guided by their idealized sense of the natives’ Arcadian and prelapsarian life. As the natives were already happy, contented, and free from desires for progress, any attempts to change that state would act against the natives’ own “welfare.”

The governor of Guam rejected public education for the Chamorros on this ground exactly. He explained to Washington: “This is purely an agricultural community. It would be of doubtful advantage to attempt to educate them in subjects likely to induce feelings of restlessness and dissatisfaction with their simple lives” (Governor of Guam 1905, p. 10). By the same token, when missionaries in Samoa later insisted that the regime build public schools, the authorities responded by

saying that public education would only be harmful to the Samoans, given the Samoans' contented and pristine state. Governor Bryan explained that with an educational program, the Samoans "will be less and less happy all the time, and I am not in favor of Americanizing them" (CTIP 1928, p. 42; see also Commandant of U.S. Naval Station 1904, p. 10).⁷ In short, while knowledge is power, the particular "knowledge" of Chamorros and Samoans mediated and conjoined with naval imperatives to determine power's peculiar, paternalistic, and preservationist exercise.

CONCLUSION

Lamenting that Said's *Orientalism* (1979) has not yet been influential in sociology, Seidman (1996, p. 315) suggests that sociologists might learn from Said's work and take seriously "the problem of difference" and the "production of 'Otherness'." I agree, but I would also warn against an uncritical adoption of works such as Said's. Indeed, *Orientalism* is one example of the homogenizing tendency to which I have referred at the outset of this article. Much like the field of colonial cultural studies it has helped to spawn, *Orientalism* sees uniformity in Western discourses of the Other. I have shown something very different—rather than a uniform set of meanings, discourses of race and racial difference adduced to a multilayered and diverse set of schemes.

Recognizing the multiple meanings of racial difference is in full accord with the existing sociological literature on racialization, but it also extends beyond it. The existing literature has done well to track historically and societally produced polyvalence of "race," yet it has not examined contemporaneous polyvalence in detail. I have shown that contemporaneous polyvalence was both present and critical in the U.S. empire.⁸ It formed the basis for intra-imperial conflicts, and also contributed to differences in colonial governance and policy. The classificatory schemes served as blueprints for authoritative practice, converging with other factors to give particular shape to colonial projects and treatments of colonized subjects. Thus, rather than analyzing racial meanings as mere idealism or discourse, or rather than dismissing them for putatively more important "material" determinants (like strategic necessity, economic interest, or cynical drives for legitimation),

⁷It is possible that these claims served to legitimate the lack of educational programs, but it remains the case that the romanticized images of the inhabitants had been articulated by Americans *before* the governors embarked upon their particular programs (e.g., Ide 1897). And, even if the discourse was only legitimation, the larger point would remain: The "legitimizing" discourse involved very different classificatory schemes than, say, the developmental discourse of soldiers or officials in the Philippines, thereby undermining assumptions that "racism" in colonialism was uniform.

⁸Attending to contemporaneous variations might help sociological studies of racialization attend to other issues besides the historical emergence of "race" as a category. It might, for example, enrich our understanding of racial *reproduction*. We might hypothesize, for instance, that one of the reasons "race" as a category persists over time is not because "racism" (or race as biology) persists, but because it can take on so many different meanings. In other words, it may be the case that "race" persists not in spite of, but because of, its polyvalence.

I have suggested that racialized meanings were important for their *conjunctural* effect. Future research might further probe the relative salience of racialized meanings for social outcomes. My humble suggestion is that such research might first reckon with race's polysemic, and hence quietly pervasive, presence.

My point is not to occlude "race" as a critical marker of difference—colonial or otherwise. As I have stressed throughout, "race" as a category of discourse and practice mattered. It had a *pervasive* presence yet also a polysemic one. The larger theoretical issue is how to analyze both at once. My discussion of racial meanings in the U.S. empire refers to a historically specific field, but it nonetheless offers one solution. It suggests that "race," rather analyzed for a singular meaning, might be better conceptualized as an overarching *code*, that is, a set of signifying oppositions that take on multiple meanings by particular acts of utterance, hence when the code is articulated through localized signifying schemes that conjoin "race" to other categories and put into distinct narratives. Thus, for future research, the task should be to track this code not in its uniformity, but in its contextual deployments over time and across social spaces.

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