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The Fluidity of Race: Racializations of the American Mestizos in the Philippines and the

United States, 1900-1955

by

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Abstract of the Dissertation:

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This study is an examination of the American mestizos who lived in the Philippines from 1900 to 1955. No scholarly studies exist that analyze and historicize this group, but this is understandable, as the population of the American mestizos compared to the overall Filipino population is miniscule, never exceeding 20,000 individuals at any one time. Despite their small numbers, the American mestizos were a matter of social concern for the Philippine state and the expatriate Americans and Filipino nationalists who resided there.

Various actors in the Philippines carried their own imposed racializations of the group that changed over time, ranging from American expatriates who emphasized the group's "American" blood to Filipino nationalists who embraced them as Filipinos. This study will demonstrate that the boundaries of race have been constantly shifting, with no single imposed or self-ascribed American mestizo identity coalescing. American mestizo racial definitions and constructs are historically and regionally specific, complicating conventional scholarly assumptions and requiring a historically grounded approach to the understanding of race and ethnicity.

This study makes theoretical contributions to the study of race in the United States and its former colonies. Contemporary literature seeks to explain by what means racial identity is created and maintained. My study, however, seeks to explore racial formation from another angle, exploring why a distinct group identity never coalesced among the American mestizos despite the presence of similar economic, historical, and social forces that have clearly led to racial formation in other groups.

The concept of the American mestizo and the fluid Philippine racial framework challenged static American notions of race. I argue that contact with the Philippines led to an assimilation of Filipino racial ideas among American expatriates, who in turn created their own colonized concepts of race and nationality, demonstrating that under certain historical conditions, American concepts of race had room to bend. Tracking the transmittal of these hybridized ideas, and their transformations and various interpretations at each venue, allows us to gain insight into the malleability of Philippine and American notions of nation and race, and into the larger processes of racial construction overall.

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Introduction: Who are the American Mestizos?

The histories of the Philippines and the United States have been directly intertwined since 1898, most dramatically when the two peoples first came into sustained direct contact in the aftermath of the brief Spanish-American War and subsequent Philippine-American War from 1899 onward. The islands would not simply be an adjunct to the burgeoning American military and economic empire in the 20th century, but a place where the colonizer and colonized would construct new identities. Social interaction between American bachelor colonials-- males dressed in military and civilian garb-- and Filipinas resulted in a population of children of mixed American and Filipino parentage. Observers of the time referred to this offspring as the “American mestizos.” The concept of an American mestizo was alien to the new colonizers, for they were familiar with the rigid color line of the United States that placed whites on one side and “colored” peoples on the other.

This study is an examination of the American mestizos who lived in the Philippines from 1900 to 1955, a period in which the islands went from an American colony to an independent (1946) nation. In one very important sense, this study is exploratory, for it adds to the historiography of the Philippines and United States a previously undocumented byproduct of American political and military hegemony. No scholarly studies exist that analyze and historicize this group, but this is understandable, as the population of the American mestizos compared to the overall Filipino population is miniscule. Comprehensive demographic data on the group is difficult to obtain, mostly due to the fact that the American colonial and Filipino governments never attempted to comprehensively track the American mestizos in any of their censuses. Best estimates

from the available primary resources suggest that the American mestizo population never exceeded 20,000 individuals at any one time, less than one quarter of one percent of the overall Philippine population.¹

Empirical and Historiographical Contributions of the Study

Despite their small numbers, the American mestizos were a matter of social concern for the Philippine state and the expatriate Americans and Filipino nationalists who resided there. The presence of the American mestizos further complicated an already heterogeneous regional and racial landscape inhabited by Spanish and Chinese mestizos, the products of previous waves of bachelor colonization and immigration. The existence of this group confounded observers in the islands from the early 20th century onward, with various actors debating whether these people were Filipino, American, or something altogether different. Various actors in the Philippines carried their own imposed racializations of the group that changed over time, ranging from American expatriates who emphasized the group's "American" blood to Filipino nationalists who embraced them as Filipinos. Those who thought most about the American mestizos, however, were not the Filipino nationalists, or the mestizos themselves, but the colonizers. My narrative, therefore, is necessarily told from the American occupiers' perspective, supplemented by archival material gathered across the United States and the Philippines.²

This study will demonstrate that the boundaries of race have been constantly

¹ My research indicates that in 1913, around 2000 individuals were identified as "American mestizos." By 1920, it was estimated there were 18000 in the Philippines. By 1950, there were 5000, born to American soldiers who came to the Philippines to fight the Japanese during World War II.

² Many historical documents on the American colonial period were destroyed during the Battle of Manila in 1945, which decimated the majority of the city's infrastructure and causing over 100,000 civilian deaths.

shifting, with no single imposed or self-ascribed American mestizo identity coalescing. American mestizo racial definitions and constructs are historically and regionally specific, complicating conventional scholarly assumptions and requiring a historically grounded approach to the understanding of race and ethnicity. The American mestizo of 1900 formed after the Philippine-American War had little in common with the American mestizo of 1955 formed after the Japanese occupation during World War II. Nor did the American mestizo of the 1920s, formulated in the colonial metropolis of Manila, resemble the American mestizo of the 1920s, formulated in the agricultural fields and factories of California, Oregon, and Washington. Imposed identities of the American mestizos were themselves situational and historical, regularly in a state of flux. This study seeks to explore and document, using a plethora of never before utilized primary sources, imposed racializations of the American mestizos.

Just as importantly, I seek to document how imposed racializations and historical factors influenced the American mestizos' own identity formation when they reached adulthood. Ascertaining the self-ascribed identities of the American mestizos is admittedly the most challenging aspect of this study. How do you track a population that does not keep diaries, write autobiographies or memoirs, and does not even identify themselves as "American mestizos?" Regardless of the lack of sources, I attempt to analyze self-ascribed racializations of the American mestizos in the later chapters of the study. This study seeks to describe the lived experiences of the American mestizos, using anecdotal accounts from Americans and Filipinos, engaging the available primary sources and seeking to give voices to a people whose records do not exist. Shifts in self-ascribed identity from the earliest American occupation until the immediate post World War II era

will be explored.³

The concept of the American mestizo and the fluid Philippine racial framework challenged static American notions of race. I argue that contact with the Philippines led to an assimilation of Filipino racial ideas among American expatriates, who in turn created their own colonialized concepts of race and nationality. In the Philippines, the binary of whites and non-whites did not exist, for the islands' history was not impacted by African slavery. Rigid color lines created in the United States could not be transplanted to its colonies without being altered. The American racial binary had to be adapted to the Filipino racial hierarchy, resulting in the creation of hybridized racial concepts. I will demonstrate that these hybridized ideas were transported to the metropole by expatriate Americans returning to the United States. Under certain historical conditions, which I will explore throughout this study, American concepts of race had room to bend.

Theoretical Approach and Chapter Summary

This study makes theoretical contributions to the study of race in the United States and its former colonies. A question that concerns many contemporary scholars who study racial formation is how to determine what causes a racial group to coalesce. These scholars have identified numerous historical processes and actors that lead to group formation, including “governmental and organizational routines of social counting and accounting,” “outside racial pressures” from a politically or culturally dominant group, and ethnic and political entrepreneurs who stimulate a sense of self-ascribed identity

³ For future research, I seek to conduct oral histories of descendants of “American mestizos” to ascertain self-ascribed identity.

through “invented traditions” that are embraced within the community. Contemporary literature seeks to explain by what means racial identity is created and maintained.⁴ My study, however, seeks to explore racial formation from another angle, exploring why a distinct group identity never coalesced among the American mestizos despite the presence of similar economic, historical, and social forces that have clearly led to racial formation in other groups.

In keeping with the work of sociologist Rogers Brubaker and others, this study concerns itself with “the variability in groupness over time,” applying this theory to transnational racial identities.⁵ In this study, I identify several periods from 1900-1955 where imposed racializations of the American mestizos by actors in the Philippines and the United States shifted due to changing political, economic, and cultural factors. This study also seeks to explore the invention of self-ascribed identities and the complex, ever-changing historical factors that must be taken into account when studying these moments

⁴ See Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival, 1934-1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002); Fredrick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, “Identity,” in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 85; and Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, “Conceptual Confusions and Divides: Race, Ethnicity, and the Study of Immigration,” in Nancy Foner and George M. Fredrickson, editors, *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States* (Russell Sage Foundation: New York, 2004), 23-41. See Virginia Yans, “On Groupness,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, No. 4 (Summer 2006): 119-126 for an excellent synthesis of contemporary scholarship on racial and ethnic group formation.

⁵ See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). The Philippine racial and national framework, as Paul Kramer in *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* most recently illustrated, was flexible, undergoing a series of dramatic changes due to Filipino nationalism during the American colonial period. Unlike Kramer, this study deals with how the Philippine racial structure impacted American concepts of race. My premise is backed with evidence gathered from never before utilized archival sources from the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, the Bentley Historical Library and William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, as well as other archives across the United States that hold materials from the American colonial period and its aftermath. These primary sources are accompanied by a reexamination of acclaimed secondary sources on colonization and immigration, such as John Higham’s *Strangers in the Land*, Mae Ngai’s *Impossible Subjects* and Rick Baldoz’s *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, all of which uncovered raw data important to understanding the American mestizos, despite the topic not being the primary concern of their respective studies.

of creation. There was not one racialization of the American mestizo, but many, all of which emerged from different experiences, histories, and worldviews. These imposed racializations and self-ascribed identities coexisted; in some cases they even clashed with one another.

My study will begin by exploring the development of the “mestizo” category in the Philippine racial structure prior to 1898, the product of centuries of Spanish state intervention and Chinese immigration. Chapter 1 clearly demonstrates a long history of state enforced racial categories by the Spanish state that ultimately led to the creation of a subsuming Filipino national identity in opposition to the colonizers. My brief comparison of the Philippine racial structure with that of Cuba-- another region of the world where Spanish colonialism, Chinese immigration, and American imperialism intersected-- suggests how external historical processes and state interventions could lead to different localized outcomes. The American mestizos’ physical emergence after the Philippine-American War will be documented in Chapter 2. State intervention-- such as providing families of American mestizo children with their own homesteads in the southernmost islands of the Philippines-- would be taken in order to alleviate a perceived social problem in the colonial state. Imposed racializations of the American mestizos from different strata of American and Filipino societies will be the sole focus of this chapter.

Chapter 3 documents how white colonial officials sought to “protect” the American mestizos and Filipino nationalists’ reactions to their policies. By the 1920s, expatriate Americans were convinced that the American mestizos were victims of racism on the part of the Filipinos, not of the pervasive poverty that afflicted every lower class

inhabitant of the islands. It was argued that the American mestizos were destined-- because of their “white” blood which imparted them with superior racial characteristics-- to be the leaders of the colonial Philippines. These imposed racializations were not uniformly held among the American expatriate community, however. Black expatriate community leaders believed that the children of blacks and Filipinas were American mestizos. Despite these protests, white expatriates refused to believe that blacks and their progeny were Americans at all. Filipino nationalists, on the other hand, concerned with the construction of a common Filipino identity during this period, were puzzled at all of these assertions, claiming that the American mestizos were neither black, white, or American, but part of a Filipino nation.

Race as a fluid, historically and regionally specific phenomena, rather than a monolithic transnational category, is all the more demonstrated in Chapter 4. Situated primarily in the United States, this chapter follows how the imposed racializations of the American mestizos clashed with one another in the metropole. White colonial officials brought their concept of the American mestizo to the continental United States. In the late 1920s, American expatriates argued that the American mestizos were deserving of economic aid because of their “white” blood, even if it was mixed with that of Filipinas. As blacks were being lynched in the American South, colonial officials in the metropole proposed that these racially mixed people be given the American citizenship they were legally entitled to, and furthermore, not be discriminated against. The racial binary of whites and non-whites that preexisted in the United States would not be applied in this colonialized permutation of the American mestizos, which argued that the group could serve as American proxies in the Philippines. This colonialized concept of the American

mestizo as a kind of proxy for the white colonial occupiers was transplanted to the East Coast of the United States-- a region where little miscegenation had occurred due to the lack of physical contact between the colonized and the colonizer-- and advocated by prominent Americans, including Presidents William Howard Taft, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and dozens of other influential politicians.

Americans in other regions of the United States, particularly the West Coast, proved to have varied attitudes towards colonial migrants due to their contact with thousands of Filipino laborers whom they perceived as a threat to their women and economic livelihoods. Negative experiences with Filipino bachelor immigrants in California, Oregon, and Washington informed how American residents there would receive the American mestizo. Clashing imposed racializations of this group-- one arguing the American mestizos were white proxies and should not be discriminated against, the other arguing that they were the products of illicit liaisons and belonged with non-whites on the other side of the racial binary-- encountered each other in the continental United States, doppelgangers of one another.

Chapter 5 will explore imposed racializations of the American mestizos in the Philippines from the 1930s and 1940s, and for the first time in the overall study, ascertain the self-ascribed identities of the maturing American mestizo population. The Filipino Repatriation Act, passed in 1935, brought a handful of children with Filipino fathers and American-born mothers to the islands. Through scholarly studies and anecdotal data on this group, I will explore whether the American mestizos saw themselves as racially distinct from the overall Filipino population. Academic questions, however, would take a back seat to the calamity that was to befall the Philippines during the Japanese invasion

of the islands in late 1941. In the pyre of the Second World War, Filipinos, Americans, and American mestizos fought together against a common foe aimed at military and cultural domination of the Philippines. The self-ascribed identities of the American mestizos during this tragic conflict will be further explored.

The final chapter examines the redefinition of the American mestizos after World War II to include both the offspring of black and white Americans, an imposed racialization that took hold in the Philippines even among the expatriate community which had previously rejected this. With the vanquishing of the Japanese, the Philippines became a major launching point for American military forces during the Cold War that engulfed Asia. A group of racially mixed children with American serviceman fathers and Filipina mothers were born in the newly independent Philippines. Expatriate Americans racialized the “G.I. children,” as contemporaries called them, as the second generation of American mestizos. However, it was clear that a self-ascribed racial identity had never coalesced among those racialized as American mestizos: the evidence suggests that socialization by their Filipina mothers and extended families led individuals in this group to see themselves as Filipinos. The Filipino government, unlike the Spanish colonial and American colonial governments, made sure not to foster difference among the American mestizos with their “Filipino First” policies, welcoming these individuals into the fold of the newly independent *Republika ng Pilipinas*. How Filipino state policy affected American mestizo self-ascribed identities will be explored in this study’s concluding chapter.

From 1900 to 1955, the demographically small American mestizo population prompted reactions from residents in the colony and the metropole which sparked

colonialized racializations of the group. Clearly influenced by exposure to both American and Filipino racial concepts, this study tracks these hybridized ideas from their inception in the Philippines, their transplantation to the United States, and their return to the Pacific. When possible, how these imposed racializations impacted the self-ascribed identity of the American mestizos will be ascertained. Tracking the transmittal of these hybridized ideas, and their transformations and various interpretations at each venue, allows us to gain insight into the malleability of Philippine and American notions of nation and race, and into the larger processes of racial construction overall.

Chapter One: The Mestizo and the Evolving Racial Framework of the Philippines Prior to
1898

In 1898, with the conclusion of the Spanish-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the United States acquired its first colonies in the Pacific, paying the sum of 20 million dollars for the Philippine islands. Men from the United States, dressed in military and civilian garb, came in large numbers to govern and administer the new colony. The influx of American men on the colonial Philippine mission in the early 20th century led to fears at home that their interactions with Filipinas would result in a mixed young generation of American-Filipino children. Filipinos were racialized according to established American racial stereotypes and to the propensity of Americans to project their own racial framework-- one born from centuries of enforcing a race hierarchy where dark-skinned peoples were of subordinate status. In the words of female American schoolteachers who resided in the islands, the natives were "just like the niggers" and "a colored race with the baser natures and the natural tendencies to evil."¹

If the "one-drop rule" were applied to these mixed race children, Filipino blood would overwhelm American blood, creating a population of degenerate backward savages. But the "one-drop rule" had no analogous cultural or legal status in the Philippines where the actual mixing was taking place. Formulated under an entirely different set of historical circumstances, the islands' racial understandings and hierarchy evolved from exposure to centuries of Spanish colonization, waxing and waning waves of Chinese immigration, and the more recent Filipino nationalism-- not a history of slavery and the "color line." Philippine racial identifications would initially be applied to the

¹ Mary Scott Cole to Helen M. Cole, letter, May 1904, Box Number 1, Harry Newton Cole Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Harry Newton Cole to Helen M. Cole, letter, September 17, 1902, 9, Harry Newton Cole Papers, Ibid.

children of mixed union, with American created racial identifications having little applicability.

By the 1900s, the myriad of racial and ethnic designations used in the Philippines had evolved to include a separate classification for multi-racial individuals, that of the "mestizo." This racial grouping in the Philippines, born from unique interactions between indigenous Filipinos and a variety of Asian and European groups, produced complex and fluid racial categories and relations far removed from the American binary paradigm of whites and non-whites. Before 1900, definitions of who was a mestizo fluctuated dramatically depending on the locale and class of the individual. Under Spanish colonial rule of the Philippines (1521 to 1898), two types of mestizo came to be widely recognized, the Spanish mestizo and the Chinese mestizo, the offspring of colonial and immigrant males partnering with the resident indigenous Filipinos. With the coming of a new colonizer after the brief Spanish-American War and the much longer and brutal Philippine-American War, a new type of mestizo emerged in the Philippine setting-- the American mestizo.

Spanish Colonial Rule to 1850 and the Formation of the Mestizo Category in the Philippines

The American mestizo entered a scene where certain rules and understandings of racial interactions and mixing had already taken form. The emergence of the mestizo as a distinct category began with the Spanish colonial regime in the 18th and 19th centuries. By the mid-18th century, with the overall population of the Philippines ranging from four to five million people, the Spanish state officially recognized four racial groups: the

Spanish colonizers/Spanish mestizos, the Chinese immigrants, the indigenous inhabitants of the Philippines (referred to then as Indios), and the Chinese mestizos. The Chinese mestizos, estimated to be around 250,000 individuals, were recognized as culturally distinct from Chinese immigrants and from the indigenous inhabitants of the Philippines. The small minority of Spanish mestizos, estimated to be under 10,000 individuals, identified politically and culturally with Spain.² A certain degree of fluidity was allowed, for those of mixed-race who were not assigned to or did not personally identify with any particular mestizo group often became absorbed into either the Indio, Chinese, or Spanish category-- not a generic mestizo category-- if there were no social, political, or economic barriers to their assimilation. Thus, there were many possibilities of imposed and self-ascribed identities for a mestizo of any type before the arrival of the Americans. The local arrangements regarding race and racial assimilation were clearly more complex than they were in the metropole.

The most dynamic of the mestizo groups in the Philippines, and the one that offered a race model for the 20th century American mestizo, was that of the Chinese mestizo. The formation of the Chinese mestizo category began centuries prior to American colonization. Large numbers of male Chinese, mostly originating from Fukien province and other coastal regions of mainland China were a fairly homogenous population. The new Spanish city of Manila, founded in 1571, initially attracted small numbers of Chinese in search of business and laboring opportunities. Chinese immigrants became indispensable to the Spanish colonizers, providing services as traders,

² See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-86, which tracks the evolution of the use and application of the term "Filipino" to the indigenous, or "Indio" population. Antonio S. Tan, *The Chinese Mestizos and the Formation of Filipino Nationality* (Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines: Asian Center, University of the Philippines, 1984), 3.

artisans, and domestic servants. On the most basic level, they provided the tools and manpower to shape everyday life in the then Spanish colony. The Chinese importance went far beyond the everyday and mundane, as they were necessary for the overall economic health of the colony acting as the go-betweens in the Manila Galleon trade, where they used their small sailing vessels in exchanges of Mexican silver for Chinese silk, operations which funded the entire Philippine colonial venture and provided the Spanish colonizers with great wealth. The Spanish, realizing the importance the Chinese played in the local economy, encouraged immigrants to come and settle in their Pacific colony. Immigrant Chinese from Fukien province flooded the nearby Filipino islands in search of expanded opportunities within the Spanish possession, opportunities that were not always available at home as the crumbling Ming Dynasty submitted to the rule of the Manchus. By the early 1600s, the Chinese population in the Philippines had rapidly expanded to the point of greatly outnumbering the Spanish colonizers. Observers estimated that in 1603, 20,000 Chinese immigrants resided in the islands as compared to only 1000 Spanish colonizers.³

The Spanish colonizers, always fearful of being outnumbered by potentially disloyal subjects, felt threatened by the rapidly increasing Chinese immigrant population. They feared that the Chinese immigrants, a relatively homogeneous ethnic and cultural group from the same coastal region, would be far less loyal to the Spanish regime than the Catholicized Indios, souls devoted to God and the Catholic Church. Being outnumbered nearly 20 to 1, the 17th century Spanish worried that the Chinese, if sufficiently mobilized, could expel their small population from the Philippines. The

³ Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* (Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 6.

Spanish would have to stomach this fear, for if they wanted to maintain their colony in the Philippines, they would need the Chinese immigrants' indispensable economic services.

Spanish attitudes toward the Chinese were conditioned by their previous experience in the Iberian Peninsula, where they encountered Moors and Jews, economically necessary to the empire but culturally difficult to assimilate.⁴ In Europe, the Spanish used various state policies, including expulsion, hispanization through Catholicism, and physical segregation to alter the political and cultural makeup of their European homelands. The Spanish would import similar methods when dealing with the Chinese in their Pacific colony. Expulsion of the Chinese from the Philippines, although attempted on multiple occasions by either restricting their immigration or brutalizing the resident population, would not be conducive to the long term economic health of the Philippines.⁵ The other alternatives seemed promising: the policies of hispanization through Catholicism and physical segregation would enable the Chinese to stay active in the Philippine economy while minimizing their perceived cultural and numerical threat.

Spanish policies tacitly encouraged the formation of a Chinese mestizo population in the Philippines, a model that would guide how later populations would be absorbed into the islands' complex racial schema. The Spanish policy of converting the Chinese to Catholicism was the first step in the creation, albeit unintended, of a distinct Chinese mestizo community. The Spanish felt that creating a group of dependable Catholic Chinese, whose souls were loyal to Catholic Spain, would insure the security of the Philippine endeavor. Spanish priests, already working to convert the Indios, began to

⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵ Ibid.

actively convert the Chinese immigrant population. Attempts to convert the Chinese included the use of inducements and incentives such as reduced taxes and greater business opportunities for those who accepted the Catholic faith. Most important to the formation of the Chinese mestizos was Spanish encouragement of the Catholicized Chinese to marry other Catholics in the Philippines. Because the Chinese immigrants were predominantly male, marriage between Catholic male Chinese and Indio Catholic women was widely practiced. Under Spanish law, intermarriage between these two groups was legally recognized when both partners were Catholics, but not otherwise.⁶ These policies ensured that the Church would flourish for yet another generation, but also unexpectedly promoted the creation of a new racial group.

The Spanish policy of physical segregation of the Chinese resulted in the creation of special Catholic Chinese mestizo communities. When a royal order for the expulsion of the Chinese in the Philippines was received from Spain in the 1590s, Philippine authorities realized it could not be fully obeyed due to the disastrous effects it would have on the local economy. Being so far away from Spain gave them leeway to enforce the decree selectively, and thus a compromise proposition was struck. Wishing to maintain a small number of Chinese to continue to work in the Philippines, colonial officials purchased land across from the walled city of Manila and gave it to a group of prominent Chinese merchants and artisans for a new Chinese settlement. The existing Chinese settlement adjacent to the city of Manila, the Parian, was to be evacuated, and all "loyal" Chinese sent to the new town of Binondo across the Pasig River. The Dominican friars, upon having Binondo assigned to them as a parish, became active in converting the city

⁶ Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History*, East Asian Series, Reprint No. 10 (Lawrence, Kansas: International Studies Center for East Asian Studies, 1964), 68.

into a community of intermarried Chinese and Indio Catholics.⁷ Before long, this intense proselytizing led to the first generation of Chinese mestizo offspring appearing in the city. The Dominicans had high hopes for this population, believing they would excel in higher education and assist them in the spiritual conquest of the Philippines, and perhaps even for the larger harvest of souls in China.⁸

As a result of Spanish policies, Chinese mestizo communities began to form in the segregated regions surrounding Manila where intermarried Chinese and Indio Catholics resided. In the district of Santa Cruz, the Jesuits established a community of Catholic Chinese, and in the village of Tondo, Augustinians catholicized the Chinese living there. Both areas, in turn, began producing additional Catholic mestizo communities.

Elsewhere in the Philippines, intermarriages were common between Catholic Chinese and Indios, resulting in the formation of Catholic mestizo populations across the islands.⁹ Outside of Catholic marriage, there existed innumerable informal and common-law unions between non-Catholic Chinese and Catholic or non-Catholic Indios, contributing to the cumulative size of the overall mestizo population of the islands.¹⁰

Group identity formation among the Chinese mestizos was encouraged by Spanish colonial state policy. As the Chinese mestizo population increased, members of this population began to organize politically in their local communities, believing themselves to be culturally distinct from the Chinese immigrants and the Indio natives. Although Chinese mestizos in Binondo sided with Chinese immigrants in the political and social questions of the 1500s concerning the general welfare of the town, by the

⁷ Tan, 4.

⁸ Wickberg, *The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History*, 70.

⁹ Tan, 4.

¹⁰ Wickberg, *The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History*, 67.

1600s, the Chinese mestizos had formed their own mestizo organizations which gave their own members a voice against both the new Chinese immigrants-- whom they saw as a potential economic threat-- and the Indios.¹¹ By the 1700s, mestizo organizations had formed in other areas with high mestizo populations, such as Santa Cruz.

By the mid-1700's, this political organization and natural population increase led to the Spanish giving the Chinese mestizos a legal status that differed from both the Chinese and the Indios. In 1741, the Spanish reclassified the entire population of the Philippines to reflect the changes in the racial demographic that had taken place in the islands since the Spaniards' arrival two centuries earlier. For the purposes of tribute or tax payment, the three classes that had existed since the beginning of Spanish colonization-- Spanish, Indio, and Chinese-- were to be replaced by four classes. The first class, Spanish and Spanish mestizos, were exempted from paying tribute by virtue of their Spanish blood. The second class, Indios, were assumed to have the lowest earning capacity and lowest social status, and were required to pay the least amount of tribute. The third class, Chinese, were assumed to have the highest earning capacity, and were to pay four times the Indio's tribute. The fourth class, Chinese mestizos, with an earning capacity halfway between that of the Indio and the Chinese, were to pay twice the Indio's tribute. As historian Edgar Wickberg quipped, "It would seem ... that in Spanish thinking, biology and economics had a certain correlation."¹²

Chinese mestizos comprised five percent of the four million inhabitants of the Philippines by the early 19th century. In the most westernized and economically advanced regions of Central Luzon, which had attracted large numbers of Chinese

¹¹ Ibid., 70.

¹² Wickberg, *The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History*, 64.

immigrants to exploit emerging economic opportunities, the Chinese mestizo population was as high as 15 percent. By 1810, the Chinese mestizo population had reached 121,621, and by 1850, the population had nearly doubled to 240,000 out of a total population that now consisted of around five million people. Spanish law classified any person born of a Chinese father and an Indio mother, as well as his or her descendants, as a Chinese mestizo. By midcentury, the Spanish lifted restrictions on marriage to non-Catholics permitting greater rates of intermarriage.¹³ Chinese mestizo women and Indio women who married Chinese men, as well as their children, were considered Chinese mestizos. Legislation also allowed for those classified as Chinese mestizo to leave the group, but this was not common as it implied a lowering in social status. Female Chinese mestizos who married Indio men, for example, were reclassified as Indio. The rapid expansion of the Chinese mestizo population that had occurred by the mid-19th century can be attributed to a number of these statutes, which changed the definition of who a Chinese mestizo was.¹⁴

The small Chinese mestizo population played an important economic role in the regions where they resided. Many Chinese mestizos worked as artisans and retail merchants, and were involved in large-scale wholesaling, retailing, and landholding across the islands, all among the most profitable occupations in the burgeoning Philippine economy. By the 1800s the Chinese mestizos competed with Chinese immigrants in these lucrative sectors, and in many cases, surpassed them. Chinese mestizo economic dominance led contemporary observers to describe the population as “more active and

¹³ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 23.

¹⁴ G. William Skinner, *Creolized Chinese Societies in Southeast Asia*, in Anthony Reid, *Sojourners and Settlers* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 53, 68.

enterprising, more prudent and pioneering, [and] more oriented to trade and commerce than the Indios.”¹⁵

Spanish policies not only fostered the expansion of the Chinese mestizo population but also contributed to the group’s prominence in nearly all aspects of the Philippine economy. The Chinese mestizos rise in economic power was the unintended side effect of the brief Spanish expulsions of Chinese immigrants throughout the Philippines in the 1700s. The reduction of the Chinese immigrant population meant less economic competition for the Chinese mestizos who remained. They were able to drive a sizable wedge into Chinese dominance of Manila’s retail trade, coming to share the function of retailing imported goods and local products. In the absence of Chinese traders, Chinese mestizos filled the void, providing goods and services to the richest among the city’s population, including the Spanish colonial authorities. Chinese mestizos had also expanded into trades that, before the expulsions, were exclusively Chinese, such as carriage-making, carpentry, masonry, printing, shoemaking, and tailoring.¹⁶

Outside of Manila, Chinese mestizo economic prominence within the Philippine economy was even more pronounced. Because of the Spanish expulsions, the provinces of the islands had been drained of most of the Chinese who resided there, resulting in even fewer Chinese to provide economic competition than in Manila. Chinese mestizos, as well as some rich Indios, completely replaced the Chinese in the provisioning of native foodstuffs collected from the provinces to the capital city of Manila. Looking for profitable outlets for their increasing capital, the investments of the mestizos began to

¹⁵ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 28, and Tan, 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

expand into other economic realms, including money-lending and long-term landholding, both of which were intimately connected. The acquisition of wealth enabled the mestizos to provide loans to Indios for the expenses related to living in Catholic Spain's colony, with the most expensive being fiestas, baptisms and litigation. In order to secure these loans, Indios would provide their rice lands as collateral. If the Indio borrower defaulted on a loan, the mestizo lender was in a position to obtain collateralized lands through foreclosure. This process became so widespread that the Spanish became concerned with its economic ramifications, and as early as 1768, passed laws against such practices. However, Wickberg contends that "it was not easy to break the power of the mestizo moneylender, who lived close to the Indio and knew his needs."¹⁷

Differences in political and economic status, already apparent, came to be accompanied by differences in cultural status. The settled and prosperous Chinese mestizo was not a sojourning immigrant, but part of the islands' permanent social landscape. Thus, the mestizos embraced many aspects of Indio culture. Intermarriage proved useful, as legal recognition in the Philippines was given to Chinese mestizos upon birth, with no requirement for the mestizos to dissociate themselves from identification with China. The Indio mother's influence in child-rearing was decisive, for most often the Chinese father returned to China or traveled throughout the Philippines on repeated sojourns to conduct business. Most mestizos spoke the Philippine dialect of the region where they resided, not a Chinese language. Most of the mestizos were raised by their Indio mothers to be Catholic.

Although many of Chinese mestizos' cultural attributes resembled those of the Indios, the two groups differed in other respects, the most important being class status.

¹⁷ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 29-30.

The Chinese mestizos were often groomed to inherit and expand their family businesses; as a result, they were among the wealthiest inhabitants of their local communities. This wealth enabled the mestizos to purchase the types of adornments and dress that set them apart from most of the Indio population. The attire worn by the mestizos was a unique blend of Spanish, Indio, and Chinese.¹⁸ Men wore a knee-length *camisa de chino* shirt, which was allowed to hang outside the trousers, as well as top hats, a status mark of the upper class. Women wore what was termed the "mestiza dress," a blend of Spanish and Indio traditions with little influence from the Chinese. Their wealth also enabled the mestizos to adopt many of the recent fashion trends, with observers noting that "many of them adopt the European costume."¹⁹

There was a certain flexibility with Chinese mestizo cultural status, a mark of the fluidity of the mestizo group in the Philippines prior to American colonization. Wealthy mestizos, if it served their interests, sought to maintain their distinctiveness from the Indios by becoming more hispanized and pro-Spanish than the Indio population. In regions where mestizo status was associated with social prestige, such as in the so-called "mestizo towns," there were cases where mestizos scorned their associations with the Indios in order to maintain a separate identity and to highlight their position as the richest and most politically dominant element of the regional population. Despite the extra tax burden, there were cases where Indios sought to change their political status to become legally recognized as Chinese mestizos because of the social prestige attached to the category. Yet, in other cases, such as among the poorer Chinese mestizos or those not living in mestizo enclaves, being born into mestizo legal status and the extra tax burden

¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹ Tan, 12.

might have been a hindrance. In these cases, Chinese mestizos emphasized their similarities to the Indios, embracing Indio culture. Under Spanish law there even existed a mechanism to change one's legal classification from mestizo to Indio and vice versa. The Philippine nationalist Jose Rizal's descendants, for example, changed their status from Chinese mestizo to Indio because it served the family's political interests.²⁰

Spanish Colonial Rule from 1850 on

After 1850, social and economic changes in the Philippines contributed to the most dynamic redefinition of Chinese mestizo cultural identity, ultimately-- according to Edgar Wickberg-- resulting in the community's "disappearance."²¹ The mestizo group status experienced a major shift towards identifying with the culture and interests of the Indios, whom many already lived closely to, as they confronted a great expansion of Chinese immigration.

The Spanish, needing skilled labor to further expand the lucrative export crop economy of their Philippine colony, opened up the islands to Chinese immigration in the 1850s and 1860s. The Chinese population, whom had traveled, worked, and settled in the islands for centuries, expanded from about 6,000 to nearly 90,000 by the middle of the century. The political and societal turmoil occurring in Qing Dynasty China at the time also encouraged resettlement in the Philippines. The Chinese immigrants who had the economic means reclaimed trades in which the Chinese mestizos had established themselves after the 18th century expulsions, and the immigrants began to enter trades

²⁰ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 34.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

and businesses that previously had been exclusively Chinese mestizo or Indio.²² Chinese economic competition led to a revival of anti-Chinese sentiment among the Indios and this time the Chinese mestizos saw it in their interests to join them. Economic concerns led to closer ties between both populations against the new threat to their common livelihoods. A nascent Filipino identity was the by-product of renewed Chinese settlement.

Another factor leading to the realignment of ethnic identity among racially mixed Chinese/Indio mestizos was that Indio culture was changing in a way that incorporated attributes previously regarded as Chinese mestizo. The Chinese mestizos, who had taken the lead in creating a hybridized culture that incorporated European as well as native elements, for decades had set new precedents in fashion, customs, and style by virtue of their wealth-- and therefore access-- to the world's goods, both material and cultural. Wealthy Chinese mestizos were entrenched in most Philippine towns, ostentatiously showing off their wealth through constructing "dwellings larger and better than the rest" and adorning these homes with modern European furnishings.²³ Mestizo families entertained guests with banquets of *lechon*, *adobo*, *pancit canton*, and other hybridized Philippine delicacies on traditional Catholic feast days. With the expansion of the Philippine economy after 1850, a new generation of wealthy Indios emerged and emulated the lifestyle of the Chinese mestizos. A new middle class consumer culture that incorporated both mestizo and Indio elements, in which the economic wealth of the individual, not any admixture of blood, was the main factor for entry, was coalescing. Without access to this consumer culture, Chinese mestizos and Indios of the lower classes

²² Ibid., 147.

²³ Tan, 12.

lived amongst each other and shared common interests. These reformulations of group identity in the Philippines, unlike in previous instances, were not engineered by the Spanish colonial state.

Chinese mestizos and Indios of all class levels were moving towards each other both socially and culturally. Both groups embraced hispanization, saw increased Chinese immigration as a threat to their economic opportunities, and overwhelmingly shared their Catholic faith. Contemporary observers, such as the Spaniard Manuel Azcarraga, believed that artificial distinctions created by the Spanish state for economic purposes were obsolete, when members of both groups were "born in the same towns, ... have the same customs, and speak a common language."²⁴

The most important stimulus leading to the convergence of the Chinese mestizo and Indio communities was the actions of Spanish colonial administration-- its policies and interventions-- after 1850. The Spanish enacted a series of measures that pushed the two groups towards one another, until, for all intents and purposes, they were a single cultural group self-defined and externally recognized as "Filipino."²⁵ The first measure was to open up higher education to both Chinese mestizos and Indios, making no distinction between the two groups. Increasingly, both groups were able to attend the same institutions of higher education, with wealthy parents able to send their children to newly accessible colleges in Manila and later, universities in progressive European countries such as France, England, Austria, and Germany.²⁶ One of the Spanish

²⁴ Manuel Azcarraga y Palmero, *La reforma del municipio indigena en Filipinas* (Madrid, Spain: J. Noguera, 1871), 91, in Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 139.

²⁵ Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines*, 66-72 provides an excellent explanation of the "Boundaries of the Filipino," demonstrating that while the new term was inclusive, especially in terms of those who were Catholic, it was simultaneously exclusive of non-Catholic elements of the population of the islands.

²⁶ Tan, 13.

government's more drastic measures was the complete reorganization of the tax system. The tax system, in place since the 1700s, and which gave Chinese mestizos and Indios differing legal statuses, was abolished and replaced with a series of direct taxes to be levied upon all inhabitants of the islands so that the Spanish could better extract wealth from prominent Filipinos, whatever their ancestral origins. The termination of the tax system enacted over a century earlier marked the end of the legal distinction between the Chinese mestizo and the Indio.

The Racial Structures of the Philippines and Cuba in Comparative Perspective

The Philippines was not the only place in the world where Chinese immigration and Spanish colonization intersected. From 1847 to 1874, indentured Chinese labor was imported by the Cuban authorities to work on sugar plantations to supplement African slave labor. In total, 125,000 Chinese, mostly from southeastern China, migrated to Cuba, suffering the same types of economic exploitation and political marginalization as the African slaves with whom they worked. The Chinese position in the 19th Cuban racial hierarchy was ambiguous, as they were relative newcomers to the Caribbean island. Official Spanish censuses categorized the Chinese not as a separate group, as was the case in the Philippines, but as white Cubans. However, because of their lower class occupational status, the Chinese usually lived among and were associated with slaves, indentured servants, and free peoples of "color."

The social status of the Chinese who immigrated to the Philippines and to Cuba differed in many ways. From the start, the Philippine Chinese population was dominated by entrepreneurs who freely traveled between China and the Philippines, utilizing social

and kinship networks built up over generations of intermarriage with the Indios. The Chinese were integral to the economic livelihood of the Philippines, with the Spanish needing their skilled labor and taxes to develop the local economy and enrich Catholic Spain. The Cuban Chinese, on the other hand, were not held in the same regard by the Spanish authorities in colonial Cuba. Spanish authorities in Cuba often forced the Chinese to reindenture rather than let them live as free peoples after their original contracts expired, seeing little value in the group beyond exploiting them for brutal sugar plantation labor.

A state or socially recognized “Chinese mestizo” category never evolved in Cuba under Spanish colonial rule. Although cross-racial mixing between Chinese and black and white Cubans did occur, the children of these relationships were legally recognized as part of a broadly defined “mestizo” category which included the children of all other interracial relationships. In Cuba, the Spanish authorities did not even institutionalize “Chinese” status, and the Cuban Chinese did not see it in their interests to push for a separate identity for their mixed racial children, nor did the Spanish provide any economic or political incentive to do so. The Cuban Chinese did not see their children as being culturally different from the other mestizos or colored peoples who resided in Spanish Cuba, and whose nationalistic interests and identities they came to champion. Although Chinese political, social, and economic status was dramatically different in the Philippines and Cuba, similar processes of racial construction and identity formation took place, ultimately influenced by these localized circumstances.²⁷

²⁷ The author would like to thank Professor Kathleen Lopez for her insight into the Cuban racial structure in comparison with the Philippine racial structure. Much of this section was synthesized from her work on the Chinese in 19th century Cuban society. See Kathleen Lopez, “Afro-Asian Alliances: Marriage,

The Birth of the Filipino and the Bonds of Filipino Nationalism

By the late 19th century a cultural transformation initiated by Spain was evident in the Philippines. Observers remarked that the Chinese mestizos of all classes did not insist on maintaining a separate distinction from the Indios; they referred to themselves collectively as Filipinos and engaged in economic and marriage partnerships. A major shift in Filipino racial classification and identity had occurred. Chinese mestizos and Indios were the indigenous national group, with the Spanish seen as an alien colonizer. The unmodified term "mestizo" no longer referred to the Chinese mestizo in popular usage, but acquired new meaning to refer to only Spanish mestizos, or European mestizos, and, with the coming of the Americans, American mestizos.²⁸

Just as the Chinese mestizos and Indios came together to express opposition to Chinese immigration, the two groups began to believe that the Spanish were acting against their collective interests. As Filipinos, the Chinese mestizos and Indios were part of the exploding nationalist sentiment taking place in the Philippines towards the conclusion of the 19th century. Filipino nationalism directed towards the Spanish completely bound Chinese mestizo and Indio social and political interests, even if they did not generally share the same class interests. The inhabitants of the islands, especially the middle and the much more numerous lower classes, became dissatisfied with their limited political opportunities under Spanish rule. The Spanish began to realize-- perhaps

Godparentage, and Social Status in Late-Nineteenth-Century Cuba," *Afro-Hispanic Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring 2008).

²⁸ James Leroy, *Philippine Life in Town and Country* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), 37, in Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 141.

too late-- that their actions were alienating the non-ruling classes of the Philippines, effectively uniting an increasingly disaffected population against them.

The Spanish began to fear the economic and cultural influence of the Chinese mestizos, who were the vanguard of Filipino political resistance. In the process of obtaining wealth and prestige, the Chinese mestizos ceased to be compliant subjects of Spain. As some of the most educated of the Filipinos, they set the tone of public opinion against Spanish rule. Spanish observers came to believe that Chinese mestizo leaders in the Catholic Church possessed "dangerous tendencies to revolution" and were using their influence in the most public of the 19th century venues in the Philippines-- the local Catholic churches-- to preach subversive ideas. Chinese mestizos were described by the Spanish as having "no sympathy for Spain" and their colonial endeavor; should the two sides come to blows, the Spanish feared that the mestizos would be "difficult to subdue" because of their support among the Indios, who were the manpower of the Spanish colonial administration's armed forces in the Philippines.²⁹

With the majority of Spain's South and Central American colonies peeling away from the empire, reactionary Spanish colonial officials worried as to how to save the Philippines, their only colony in Asia, from a similar fate. Spanish diplomat Sinibaldo de Mas, in a mid-19th century report to Madrid, emphasized that if Spain desired to keep its Asiatic colony, it must prevent the Chinese mestizos and Indios from forming a social-political alliance against them. To keep the Philippines, "race hatred between the Chinese mestizos and natives" had to be encouraged with the two groups "separated ... at sword's point." The Chinese mestizo class, "through its intelligence, activity and wealth," could not be combined with the Indio class, who, by making up the majority of the

²⁹ Tan, 15.

colonial population, was "strong through its number."³⁰ The Spanish, as Wickberg put it, "were haunted by the fear of an Indio revolution led by mestizos."³¹

The Spanish had realized too late that their colonial decrees, while seemingly making sense at the time of their implementation, had unintentionally contributed to the formation of a unified Filipino identity. Despite attempts to drive a wedge between the Chinese mestizos and the Indios, the Spanish failed to exacerbate divisions between the two groups. The Chinese mestizos, exposed to liberal ideas at educational institutions both in Manila and abroad, were increasingly independent-minded and radical, and with their local prestige and wealth at their disposal, made their opinions known among the Indios. The Indios, who for over two centuries had resisted Spanish rule through the form of regional revolts against the excesses of colonialism, were receptive to radical Chinese mestizo' demands for social reform directed at all inhabitants of the islands. Mobilization of the two groups for the Filipino nationalist cause proved that Spanish fears of an alliance of the leadership and manpower of the Philippines against them had become a reality.³²

The Catholic Church, Spain's vehicle for hispanization of the Philippines, would be the place where the Chinese mestizos openly came to the defense of the interests of the Indios. In the 1860s, Chinese mestizo priests argued that native clergy were just as intelligent and capable as the ones appointed by the Spaniards. The priests demanded that all Filipinos be allowed to preach with the official sanction of the church, which allowed only Spaniards to be official representatives of the cloth. In 1872, when natives of the islands revolted at the Spanish military arsenal in Cavite, the Spanish brutally put

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 144.

³² Tan, 16-17.

down the uprising, initiating a crack down on the nationalist movement in the islands-- including executing the Chinese mestizo priests who had questioned their authority, alleging they were part of a vast conspiracy to end Spanish rule.³³

Overreaction by the Spanish only solidified the bonds of the Chinese mestizos and Indios, both of whom had taken part in the Cavite Mutiny. Severe punishments doled out by the colonial administration diminished any political gulf that remained between the two groups. Across the Philippines, prominent Filipino families of Chinese mestizo and Indio extraction, targeted because of Spanish paranoia that they were involved in a larger nationalist rebellion, felt compelled to send their children to study abroad in Europe during the tense atmosphere after 1872. While in Europe, these students came into contact with exiled Cavite Filipinos, deported for their involvement in the mutiny. Without the harassment of colonial officials, the exiles found it easier to conduct their anti-Spanish propaganda and soon attracted followers among the Filipino students. According to Filipino historian Antonio Tan, "for the first time closer social ties and relations between Chinese mestizos and Indios coming from different regions in the islands would be formed."³⁴

Chinese mestizo and Indio intellectuals, or as they came to be called in the Philippines, *Ilustrados*, became politically conscious and began to think in terms of national rather than provincial concerns. Upon their return to the Philippines, their liberal reformist ideas spread across the islands. Educated *Ilustrados*, such as Pedro Paterno, Gregorio Sancianco, and most famously, Jose Rizal, began to articulate a nationalist Filipino identity, one which defined Filipino as anyone whose primary concern was the

³³ Ibid., 17.

³⁴ Ibid.

best interests of all the inhabitants of the islands, exclusive of racial distinction. These nationalist writers placed blame on the Spanish for causing and exacerbating many of the economic and social problems that plagued modern Philippine life. Rizal's writings were considered by the Spanish as the most dangerous, for his aim was "to create a feeling of national unity that would transcend class distinctions and parochialism" with the ultimate goal of creating a united, homogenous Philippines.³⁵

Spaniards blamed the *Ilustrados* and, more broadly, the Chinese mestizos for the political dissidence in the Philippines during the 1880s and 1890s that eventually led to the Philippine Revolution. Spanish observer Manuel Scheidnager believed "the enormous inconvenience for us and to the archipelago where it is found is the intermixture of the natives with the Chinese that results into the most possible wickedness and, unfortunately, in great abundance, known as the Chinese mestizo."³⁶ Other Spanish observers believed the Chinese mestizos radicalized the Filipino population throughout the islands, arguing that, "today, in all towns of the Philippines, there is a number of persons, almost all mestizos, who agitate and provoke the surge of opinion. They attempt to set the people into a critical thinking of the meaning of individual rights and freedom."³⁷ Another Spanish writer described the Chinese mestizo as the primary enemy of the state, "a breed of all components; he is the herald of restlessness, the adviser of disturbances, and the adversary in obeying colonial laws. All

³⁵ Ibid., 21.

³⁶ Soledad M. Borromeo, *El Cadiz Filipino: Colonial Cavite, 1571-1896* (University of California, Berkeley, n.d.), 116, in Tan, 22.

³⁷ Borromeo, 117, in Ibid.

officials must keep guard of them very specially so that with everybody's watchfulness, they will not mix with the ordinary masses."³⁸

At the outset of the Philippine Revolution, Chinese mestizos across the islands were involved in the nationalist rebellion "not necessarily as mestizos" but as Filipinos.³⁹ Hence, a new race, or rather, a new nationality was born, with the fluid racial identities of the Chinese mestizo integral to its formation. Mestizos held leadership positions in both the newly declared Philippine Republic and the hastily organized military, contributed capital to fund revolutionary activities, and, in the provinces, made up a great portion of the local revolutionary leaders and military units.⁴⁰ Fighting alongside their Indio brethren, their combined political action led to the vanquishing of the Spanish, forcing the surrender of the islands they had controlled for centuries. By the end of the 19th century, the Chinese mestizos and Indios came to share similar cultural values, the proximate cause being a nationalist revolution that had joined them as a people. Distinctions between the two groups had disappeared, with Chinese mestizos joining the Indios in creating a new Filipino society, with the end result far from being determined.⁴¹ Yet another possibility for the already fluid mestizo category in the Philippines had been laid out. The Americans would encounter the complexity of the evolving Filipino racial schema-- and attempt to interpret it through their own lenses-- upon their arrival to the islands in 1898.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 145.

⁴⁰ Tan, 24-25.

⁴¹ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 145. See Kramer, *The Blood of Government* for more on the development of Filipino nationality during the American colonial period.

Chapter Two: The Physical Emergence of the American Mestizos and Imposed American
and Filipino Racializations of the Group

After the Spanish were expelled from the Philippines, a new colonizer emerged to take their place. “We come not as invaders or conquerors,” President William McKinley told the Filipinos, “but as friends,” declaring that “the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule.” McKinley declared that Filipinos who cooperated with their new overseers “will receive the reward of support and protection,” but those who did not would “be brought within the lawful rule we have assumed, with firmness if need be.”¹ In 1899, when violence broke out between American troops and Filipino nationalists who demanded independence, McKinley’s declaration was backed with the “firmness” of the US Army’s rifles and artillery.

The Philippine-American War would officially rage on for three years, and unofficially-- with low intensity and sporadic conflict-- for as long as fifteen, with the United States deploying 125,000 troops, or two-thirds of its entire army, to combat the Filipinos, dwarfing the number of troops used by the US military during the Spanish-American War. War would neither be so “splendid” nor so “little” in the islands of the Philippines. The Americans suffered over 7000 dead and wounded in the first two years of the war when the bloodiest fighting took place, while the Filipinos suffered at least 220,000, and at the most, one million casualties, the majority being civilians who died of disease and deprivation as a result of US Army relocation and internment policies, which

¹ President William McKinley cited in Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 99, and Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 110.

bore striking similarities to American military policy towards indigenous populations on the North American continent in the last half of the 19th century.²

American occupation immediately followed the quelling of major Philippine nationalist resistance in the early 20th century. Working with friendly Filipino politicians on both the local and national level, Americans became directly involved in the Philippine economy, accelerating the expansion of cash crop production and the extraction of natural resources. The expansion of this direct American involvement in Philippine political and economic life brought "bachelor colonization." Simply put, the influx of Americans in the islands in the early 20th century was overwhelmingly male. The first wave of bachelor colonization included Admiral Dewey's sailors, who landed in Manila beginning in May 1898. The large influx of the US Army soldiers and support units who arrived during the Philippine-American War and stayed in its aftermath quickly followed. Merchant mariners, educators, businessmen, and colonial administrators, almost all men, came to the islands after 1900 to oversee the various sectors of Philippine life which they sought to exploit, nourish, and transform.

The Emergence of the American Mestizo Category and the Philippine Racial Framework

Bachelor colonization led to numerous sexual interactions with Filipinas, resulting in American-Filipino children soon thereafter.³ While new for the American colonizers,

² 220,000 is the estimate that Mae Ngai gives for Filipino casualties in the Philippine-American War. 250,000 is the estimate cited in most studies. Major General J. Franklin Bell of the U.S. Army estimated in a *New York Times* interview that over 600,000 people died in Luzon (the largest island in the Philippines) alone. One study estimates that there were over one million Filipino casualties. See Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Roskamm Shalom, *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1987) for a detailed discussion on estimates of casualties in the Philippine-American War.

for the Filipinos, it was nothing extraordinary-- the formation of an American “mestizo” population was nothing novel to the islands, as there were already mixtures of Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish residing there, products of centuries of cultural and sexual intermingling. Many Americans were well-aware of widespread miscegenation-- as contemporary observers would call it-- that had taken place in the Philippines prior to their arrival. Anti-imperialist G.S. Clarke, writing to Alfred Thayer Mahan, proponent of the devastatingly effective “New Navy,” wrote, for example: “it is most natural that Americans should feel chary of accepting responsibilities over the destinies of 8,000,000 people of somewhat mixed nationalities.”⁴ Incorporating a nation of mixed-race peoples within the empire would be a tough sell to Americans residing in the metropole.

For centuries following Chinese bachelor immigration, there had been a substantial number of Chinese mestizos present in the Philippines. The Chinese mestizos had, as shown in the previous chapter, set many precedents for the myriad of possibilities for mestizo integration into the Filipino racial structure. Prior to American governance, the Chinese mestizos had been a distinct mestizo community. They had merged with the Indios and absorbed into Filipino society. It was yet to be seen along which path the American mestizo group would take.

American Bachelor Colonization and the “Color Line” in the Philippine Setting

Despite superficial similarities, there were important differences between American bachelor colonization and Chinese bachelor immigration that made it

³ Edward Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 50. The US Army alone was posted at over 500 stations across the Philippines, guaranteeing a geographically dispersed American mestizo population.

⁴ G.S. Clarke to Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, letter, 1899, Box Number 1, American Anti-Imperialist Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

impossible for the American mestizos to strictly follow the precedents set by the Chinese mestizo population. The American community in the Philippines, unlike that of the Chinese, was far from homogeneous. Most immigrants from China hailed from the coastal province of Fukien, geographically the closest Chinese region to the Philippines.⁵ Kinship based chain migration was responsible for the majority of Chinese immigrants who came to the islands after 1900. The "Chinese" language spoken in the Philippines and used in the day to day lives of the Chinese immigrant community was not Mandarin, the official written and spoken language of Qing Dynasty China, but the Hokkien dialect.⁶

In comparison, while speaking amongst themselves a mutually understandable English language, the Americans were geographically and racially diverse. Colonization, not chain migration, brought them to the islands. Poor soldiers and businessmen did not call for their families to migrate to the Philippines, and for the few that would even consider it, geographic distance remained a deterrent. The presence of blacks, believed by their white compatriots to be racially and culturally inferior, was the most significant difference between the American and Chinese populations who arrived in the Philippines. American bachelor colonization brought two separate races to the islands; this demographic resulted in the customary imposition of the traditional American racial binary upon these mestizos. While it is impossible to track all African-Americans who arrived in the islands, we know from military records that the largest wave of blacks came to the Philippines as part of the American effort to subdue Filipino nationalist

⁵ Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, 170.

⁶ Wong Kwok-Chu, *The Chinese in the Philippine Economy, 1898-1941* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: Ateneo De Manila University Press), 16.

resistance, with nearly 7000 serving in various units of the US ground forces between 1899 and 1902.⁷

In the words of historian Edward Coffman, blacks "who went to the Philippines found that white Americans had already firmly established the color line."⁸ Many white soldiers and civilians referred to both the Filipinos and blacks as "niggers." The islands were seen by some American politicians as a dumping ground for blacks and the solution to the "Negro Problem" in the southern United States. Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama proposed that the Army garrison the islands with black troops whom he hoped would stay in the tropics after they were discharged, never to return to the continental US. Although this plan never became a reality due to opposition by the Army and the African-American community, many blacks stayed behind in the Philippines after their military service was completed, settling in regions adjacent to former American bases.

Over a thousand former black soldiers opted to stay in the islands, citing better economic and social opportunities due to the lack of institutionalized racial prejudice. Blacks in the Philippines often began new lives, raising families or living with women identified as Filipinas. Poor Filipinas who lived with American men benefited economically from these interracial relationships, as soldiers' and administrators' stable jobs and wages provided steady, reliable income in a local economy ruined by the Philippine-American War. George Priouveau, chaplain of a segregated African-American infantry unit in the Philippines, reported to a local black newspaper in the United States the numerous marriages he was asked to perform between African-American servicemen and native women. At the turn of the century, Priouveau informed his American readers,

⁷ Coffman, 47.

⁸ Ibid., 48.

"My second marriage ceremony was that of a corporal ... and a native woman, and before this will reach you, I will perform my third."⁹ An American schoolteacher in Tacloban personally saw the development of one of these relationships, remarking that "one of the best of our high school girls married a negro sergeant." The Filipina decided that life at Camp Bumpers, an American military installation, would be better than life in the postwar countryside, and left her home to live with the black soldier. The young couple caught flak from both blacks and Filipinos for the marriage, with a black dressmaker at the base telling the sergeant "we's gwine ostracize her," and a Filipino objecting to the wedding "because such weddings tend to darken the race which is dark enough already."¹⁰

White observers were clearly not blind to the emerging relationships between blacks and native women. American schoolteacher Mary Scott Cole, who had taken residence in the Philippines after coming to the islands aboard the transport *Thomas*, noted in a letter to her relatives the arrival of an African-American dinner guest in 1902. Using language typical of white Americans at the time, she remarked, "Just as we had finished dinner, a big black American nigger drove up. ... We gave him his dinner and it tickled him pretty much." More appalling to Cole than her guest's skin color was what she learned about him over their shared meal. "He has been over here about 4 yrs. and has a Filipino wife and child. I did not know this until after he had his dinner or I don't

⁹ Rene G. Ontal, *Fagan and Other Ghosts: African-Americans annd the Philippine-American War*, in Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis Francia, *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of the Imperial Dream* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 129.

¹⁰ Walter W. Marquardt, *Things Philippine*, scrapbook, 1922-1930, 6, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

believe I would have given it to him. I don't suppose he is any better than the rest of these niggers."¹¹

Whites noted that black civilians in the Philippines, who most often came to the islands aboard merchant ships, had become involved with Filipinas as well. One white schoolteacher remembered “an old negro teamster” who hung around the bars of Manila, asking passers-by for a dime “to buy a beverage stronger than either tea or coffee.” “When his first child was born to him out of wedlock,” the observer remarked after talking to the teamster, “he looked at it and said, 'Dat chile ain't no mestizeer.” According to the schoolteacher, “all of the mestizo children that the old darky had ever seen were light in color, and notwithstanding his own ebony skin, he had been looking forward to a mestizo, or a light child.”¹²

White Americans sometimes criticized blacks who raised families with Filipinas after the war. Frank Cheney, a schoolteacher hailing from Kentucky, penned many poems during his time in the islands, covering a whole gamut of topics from Chinese shop-owners, cooks, and gamblers to corrupt insular government officials. One of the topics he covered with his lighthearted and satiric verse was the life of “Brown of the Volunteers.” Following Cheney's poem line by line reveals much about what the early 20th century Philippines was like for African-Americans, their white observers, and the Filipinos, all of whom, after the Philippine-American War, lived in close proximity with one another:

¹¹ Mary Scott Cole to “Folks at Home”, letter, Palo, Leyte, Philippines, August 24, 1902, Box Number 1, Harry Newton Cole Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Emphasis in original letter by Mary Scott Cole.

¹² Walter W. Marquardt, *Things Philippine*, scrapbook, 1922-1930, 6, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Emphasis in original scrapbook by Walter W. Marquardt.

Various people of various kinds
 Live in this world the traveler finds
 Numberless shades of colors mix
 In language, religion, and politics
 And a man must stick, if he hopes to win
 To his color and kind 'til he cashes in

Brown came out in the early days
 When the insurrection was first ablaze
 He came from the South where they draw the line
 'Twixt a black and white man, pretty fine
 And he took his discharge when the war was done
 With twenty four notches in his gun

That's where history ought to close
 And that is all that his family knows
 Who waited and watched thru the weary years
 For the lad who went out with the volunteers,
 Dead, they suppose him now to be
 And relegated to memory

He took his discharge, as I said before,
 But said he liked the country more
 Than he'd thought he would, and would stay awhile
 And see if he couldn't make his pile.
 And that's where the sun began to go down
 On the promising life of "private Brown."

Booze had ever looked good to him
 And he licked it up with a soldier's vim.
 Women, he loved as he loved his booze,
 But being unmarried he had to choose
 'Twixt the virtuous life, and the other kind,
 And Brown began to get color-blind

Two more years of nameless yearning
 And he entered the lane that hath no turning.
 Married a woman whose skin was black
 And settled down in a nipa shack
 On a road that leads to Manila town,
 But the name he went by wasn't Brown.

At first he liked the long, lone lane
 'Til the honeymoon began to wane
 And in sober moments his thoughts would roam
 To the girl that was waiting back at home.

But the steps he had taken plainly showed
That the bridges were burned on the backward road.

He is keeping his wife and her next of kin.
Aunts and uncles too have crept in
And every night a score camp town
Under the sheltering roof of Brown.
He is suffering all the expression means
When we say "squaw-man" in the Philippines.

"And who is Brown?" Well you mustn't ask me
For I promised never to tell, you see.
When he gave me the story over a beer
In the "Silver Dollar" one night last year.
It wasn't the first he had had that night
For it takes him a dozen to start him right.

Various people of various kinds
Live in this world the traveler finds
Numberless shades of colors mix
In language, religion, and politics
And a man must stick, if he hopes to win
To his color and kind 'til he cashes in¹³

Accounts of "White" American Mestizos in the Philippines

For the hundreds of black soldiers and civilians who stayed in the Philippines, who may or may not have become "squaw-men," there were many more white American soldiers who remained stationed in the islands after the war or who made the decision to voluntarily stay behind. The early waves of bachelor colonization were soon joined by hordes of male government employees sent to fill roles in the early civilian colonial government established by the United States. Like their black compatriots, white Americans married or engaged in sexual relations with Filipina women, bearing "mestizo" children. American George Carrothers, arriving in the Philippines with the intention of working as a chemistry teacher, became an astute observer of the

¹³ Frank W. Cheney, "Brown of the Volunteers," undated, poem, Box Number 1, Frank W. Cheney Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

relationships between white American men and Filipinas during his tenure of government service in the Philippine province of Samar. Carrothers frequently encountered retired white American soldiers living on their military pensions during his time as a schoolteacher. On one occasion, he "learned of a discharged soldier living in the barrio," a small Philippine neighborhood. The soldier worked and earned his living in Philippine agriculture "buying hemp and growing cocoanuts." Hailing from Massachusetts, he lived with "his common-law Filipina wife" in a Philippine dwelling described as an "open shack."¹⁴ On another occasion, Carrothers encountered Oro, a "denaturalized American builder of small bridges," who lived with his "common-law wife and child" under similar circumstances.¹⁵

When Carrothers took up residence in Catarman, a Philippine town of ten thousand people, he was the only American living there. He interacted with the many white Americans who passed through the town on business, pleasure, or to simply gather supplies. "Almost every one of these men had been in the islands many years," the schoolteacher came to realize after numerous interactions with the sojourners. "Most of them had arrived as soldiers." Like most of the soldiers who stayed behind in the islands, these men did so by their own choosing. "When the war was over," Carrothers noted, "at their request, they had been discharged from the army 'for the good of the cause' and permitted to remain" in the Philippines. These Americans "wandered from island to island," with many of them accepting jobs "as linemen, camino helpers, caretakers of roads and trails, bridge builders, and other unskilled tasks." Former white soldiers

¹⁴ George E. Carrothers, "A Sojourn in the Philippines by a Hoosier Schoolmaster", undated memoir, 8, Box Number 1, George E. Carrothers Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹⁵ Carrothers, "Health in those Days", undated memoir, 3, *ibid.*

"selected common-law wives from among the Filipino women and tried to settle down, with limited wanderings of a few weeks at a time."¹⁶

American administrator John C. Early, upon seeing these ex-soldiers in Luzon, described the nature of the group in detail. "These were for the most part flotsam from the Western volunteer regiments," Early believed, "who remained in the country when their regiments returned." The administrator admired the men, adding that they "were highly intelligent floating laborers commonly found in Western mining camps a generation ago, laborers today and prospectors tomorrow." In terms of relations with the Filipinos, these white Americans had become "Filipinized" in every sense of the word. "This group got on marvelously well with the [indigenous] hillmen," claimed Early, "whose customs it understood, whose hardships it shared, and whose sisters it married."¹⁷ American mestizo children were born from these and the other common-law relationships between white Americans and Filipinas in the post Philippine-American war period.

Carrothers in particular was an observer of the more casual sexual relationships that occurred between white Americans and Filipinas while he lived in Samar. The aftermath of the colonial war, combined with the ever-present poverty among the lower classes, forced some Filipinas to prostitute their bodies in order to support themselves and their families. Carrothers noted one incident where a poor, illiterate, white American named Mr. Coby came to visit his residence one evening. An "unkempt, poorly clothed Filipino girl" came through the back door, telling the schoolteacher, "I want to stay with you tonight." Carrothers responded that he never kept any woman-- however, the Filipina was not referring to him, but to his "Americano friend." With the local economy

¹⁶ Carrothers, "A Sojourn in the Philippines by a Hoosier Schoolmaster," undated memoir, 14, *ibid*.

¹⁷ John C. Early, "Reminiscences of John C. Early", undated memoir, 15, Box Number 1, John C. Early Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

of the Philippines in shambles, even the poorest of Americans, such as Coby, who rode "into town on his bedraggled, half-starved pony," earned more money than the average Filipina. Carrothers, who by that point had understood the workings of the native economy, believed "in a few minutes that evening she could make more money than in two weeks of work." That night, Coby paid the Filipina not in cash "for services," but in a coupon to buy twenty-five cents worth of rice at the community store.¹⁸

Prostitution was common in the Philippines, occurring in areas with high concentrations of former and current American soldiers, such as the cities, larger bases, or the nearly 500 former military posts scattered throughout the islands. The depressed state of the local economy often made this one of the only means in which Filipinas could obtain money for the basic necessities of life. Many soldiers had casual sexual relationships with Filipinas, trivializing their abuse and financial power over poor women. One of the first things that Edgar H. Price, a soldier stationed near Manila, was told by a veteran upon arriving to his post was simply that "those girls are good looking and good screwing." Women charged between twenty-five cents and a dollar for sexual services, a small part of an enlisted man's paycheck. The veteran soldier continued to explain that many of the enlisted men lived off-post with Filipinas, with their unit's officers looking the other way. In fact, he was told, it was well-known that many of the officers had *queridas*, or sweethearts, of their own. Inevitably, children were born from these sexual relationships between white Americans with Filipinas. Despite his own visits to the brothels of Manila during his tour in the islands, when Price's unit finally left the Philippines, he ruefully noted the results of these casual sexual relationships-- the

¹⁸ Carrothers, "A Sojourn in the Philippines by a Hoosier Schoolmaster", undated memoir, 18, Box Number 1, George E. Carrothers Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

abandonment of poor Filipinas and their American mestizo children. With his conscience weighing upon him, Price was "appalled by the sad spectacle of these forsaken women, some of them with small blond or red headed children, saying goodbye."¹⁹

Yet, while there were many instances where American mestizo children were abandoned, in some cases American fathers provided for their Filipino families in life or after death. Take for example Mr. Masters, an American described as possessing many "sterling qualities." Masters suffered from malaria, a disease common in the Philippines. "Several children born to a Filipino woman" were rendered fatherless when Masters finally succumbed to the tropical disease. Upon his death, the American left behind specific instructions with a colleague to find his family in the Philippines "to hold up the distribution of [his] estate, amounting to ten thousand dollars." Masters' Filipina wife and American mestizo children were eventually found, and "although no marriage ceremony had ever been performed, the court had declared the union binding as a common law marriage and the mother and children inherited the [estate and pension] money."²⁰

Early Racializations of the American Mestizos According to the "One-Drop Rule"

Anecdotal evidence clearly establishes that an American mestizo population existed in the early 20th century in the Philippines. How was this group viewed by contemporary observers in both the United States and the Philippines? Racializations of the American mestizos began to appear in the American media almost immediately after the US began to administer its Philippine colony. Like previous interpretations of the Chinese mestizos, American mestizo racializations were influenced by contemporary

¹⁹ Coffman, 80-81.

²⁰ Marquardt, *Things Philippine*, scrapbook, 1922-1930, 2, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

circumstances, a history of established racial hierarchies, and the position and viewpoints of the particular observer.

The August 31, 1899 issue of *Life* magazine presented one of the most vivid depictions of the American mestizo for their readership, one consistent with the predominant American views of race and class at the time. The rich drawing on the periodical's cover depicted in its foreground a white Irish-American serviceman, "Corporal O'Toole," in a Philippine barrio with his Filipina wife and their young child. Like many actual American soldiers, the fictional O'Toole, "after leaving the Army, decided to remain in the Philippines." O'Toole had "gone native," shedding his US Army uniform and rifle in favor of a stereotypical Filipino's hemp skirt and bolo. Completing his indigenous warrior's attire was a wooden spear and shield. The only "American" article of clothing the corporal retained were his leather shoes.

On the corporal's arm hung a barefoot petite Filipina, wearing a "mestiza dress" adorned with flower print, common adornment among the women of the islands. The Filipina's black skin contrasted sharply with the pale whiteness of the corporal's shirtless chest. Her face was drawn according to the template used to depict African American women's facial features at the turn of the century, with comically oversized lips. The American mestizo child, holding his Filipina mother's hand, was illustrated almost exactly according to the "Picanninny" caricature archetype used to depict African American children in popular culture, with frizzy unkempt hair, dark skin, and a wide mouth. Like his father, the American mestizo was scantily clad, but even more so, wearing only a loincloth. There were no other similarities to corporal O'Toole, with all the American mestizo's phenotypical racial characteristics coming from his mother. The

“one-drop rule,” which determined that the offspring of any colored race and whites were colored, had been applied to miscegenation in the Philippines in this instance.

Completing the portrait was the rural background, drawn to emphasize how "Filipinized" Corporal O'Toole and his American mestizo child were. The amenities of modern American life, such as running water, roads, and modern buildings were nonexistent. O'Toole made his home in a nipa hut built not of lumber, but from bamboo and straw as Philippine provincial homes had been constructed for centuries. A single caribou, the omnipresent water buffalo and beast of burden of the Philippines, grazed in front of the nipa hut, along with a cockfighting chicken. O'Toole and his American mestizo child had been “nativized,” and were drawn like most Filipinos in the early 20th century-- simple, uncivilized, agricultural, poor, and needy of true American tutelage.²¹ *Life* magazine seemed to confirm that, at least in US based media, American mestizos with white fathers would be depicted as purely Filipino, in accordance with the "one-drop rule."

Americans are Introduced to a Colonialized Racialization of the American Mestizo Through the Trials of 1st Lieutenant Sidney S. Burbank

With the American mestizos, however, there simultaneously existed interpretations influenced by the Philippine racial schema, which had developed a unique, fluidic racial category for mixed-race peoples from 1600-1900. Some American journalists returning from the Philippines described the American mestizos not as picanninnies or dark savages, but as "American," with the traits of their civilized white fathers becoming predominant over the “colored” blood of their mother. Americans in

²¹ *Life*, Issue 8, August 31, 1899 (New York: Life Publishing Company), cover.

the metropole were first introduced to a colonialized racialization of the American mestizos through the sensationalized trials of 1st Lieutenant Sidney S. Burbank, an officer in the US Army. Unlike the fictional O'Toole, Burbank departed the Philippines instead of settling down in the islands. In 1903, after his unit's tour of duty in the Philippines was completed, Burbank was transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Upon his return to the United States, he soon became engaged to a young society woman. The couple was set to be happily married-- that is until Filipina Concepcion Vazques, upon learning about the engagement, claimed that she and Burbank were already legally married. Vazques claimed that, although she was Burbank's *querida*, upon leaving the Philippines he "abandoned her and made no provision for her support."²²

Vazques sought justice from the American colonial government, submitting documentation to the US War Department that proved the existence of the marriage. The War Department began a search for Burbank which led back to the United States. Upon being notified of the claim, Burbank's first reaction was complete denial. The Army officer would go one step further. Burbank, while still in the service, filed suit in Kansas civil court to set aside the marriage, asserting that the documentation Vazques had submitted were forgeries, "and that it was a plot to marry this Filipino woman to him or to extort money."²³

The Kansas civil court trial that Burbank initiated did not progress to his liking, for he underestimated the intellect, perseverance, and finances of the Filipina whom he was taking to court. With her family's wealth at her disposal, Vazques called the officer's bluff, making arrangements for travel to the United States so that she could defend her

²² "Army Officer Accused," *New York Times*, June 2, 1903, 6.

²³ "Wants No Filipino Wife," *Kansas City Star*, November 19, 1903, 4.

claims, a trip no poor Filipina could afford. Vazques' lawyer produced extensive documentation of the existence of the marriage, including the marriage license, the marriage certificate, love letters, and reports of investigations and testimony taken by other US Army officers confirming the marriage.

Burbank and his lawyers attempted to present reasonable explanations for the multitude of documents saying that he was married to Vazques. The marriage license, which had both Burbank's father's and mother's names written on it, could not be explained away as a forgery because it contained information that only the officer could know. Burbank defended himself by contending that the untrustworthy Filipinos had conspired against him. In Burbank's version of events, Vazques obtained his father's name from "an army register" that Filipinos had regular access to. His mother's maiden name was obtained more dubiously, through the theft of letters Burbank had written to his mother in the United States. This was because "he frequently addressed his mother by her full maiden name ... in corresponding with her, and as the Filipinos had control of the post office they probably got her name from this which they used to file on the alleged fraudulent license."²⁴

Most damning were the love letters that, upon examination by penmanship experts, were determined to be in Burbank's handwriting. Combined with internal War Department documents obtained by Vazques' lawyers that stated the officer was married to her, it became obvious to the court that Burbank's position was indefensible. Burbank was out of creative responses, and simply "refused to answer any questions touching [on] his two alleged love letters ... or his official communication with the War department." When Vazques herself finally arrived in Kansas City after the long steamship and

²⁴ "May Stop Burbank Case," *Kansas City Star*, October 20, 1904, 1.

overland journey from the Philippines, the jilted woman was called to testify against her former lover and husband. Vazques, in English, stated that Burbank had “acted in an unpardonable manner in denying the marriage and attacking her character and that she never desires to live with him again, but asks for \$50 a month alimony to support herself and child.” Among the stack of documents supporting her claims that the couple were legally married in the Philippines was the birth certificate of Burbank's and Vazques' American mestizo daughter.²⁵

The *Kansas City Star*, a regional newspaper covering the civil trial closely at the time, attempted to satisfy its readers' demand for information on the dramatic turn of events by dispatching a reporter to the town of Valladolid in the central Philippines, Vazques' hometown. The American journalist presented a far different depiction of the Filipina and her American mestizo child than the caricatured portraits on the cover of *Life* magazine a few years prior. The *Kansas City Star* reporter opined that, “The impression seems to prevail in the United States that Lieutenant Burbank's Filipino wife is a black, untamed, savage, fresh from the jungles.” The American public had conceptualized Vazques according to the predominant racializations of Filipinos at the turn of the century which portrayed them using stereotypes previously reserved for blacks and Native Americans.

The journalist, upon meeting the Filipina in person, described Vazques using complex racializations that showed he was cognizant of the history of the Philippines prior to American colonial rule. “Mrs. Burbank is a rather handsome Mestiza-Spanish and Tagalog with possibly a trace of the Mongolian,” the reporter wrote, “28 years old, with liquid black almond shaped eyes, a wealth of glossy black hair, the full red lips of an

²⁵ “An Officer's Love Letter,” *Kansas City Star*, March 10, 1904, 1.

Oriental and the graceful, sinuous, voluptuous form of her Spanish ancestors.” The reporter's assumptions that racial attributes are derived from specific races is obvious, but, unlike other descriptions of Filipinos at the turn of the century, does not imply a hierarchy of races or an automatic inferiority to the Anglo-Saxon race to which white Americans presumably belonged. The journalist continued with a description of Vazques and her town of Valladolid, writing that she “is a refined, modest, intelligent, educated young woman of excellent family and social standing in a city of 50,000 civilized people, and would in any country other than the United States be accepted as a social equal.” Contrary to popular belief, Vazques did not live scantily clad in a nipa hut, but was a person of prominent standing in a modern city.

The *Kansas City Star* reporter's racialization of Vazques' American mestizo daughter differed even more so from that of the baby's mother. The child was not described as black, as scholars who write of fears of miscegenation with Filipinos might well conclude, nor as a mixture of nonwhite races as Vazques was portrayed. Instead, the journalist described the American mestizo as “very much like any nice little dark-eyed, plump American baby, showing only a trace of the Malay blood of the mother, and is said to much resemble her American father.” The reporter racialized the American mestizo not according to the “one-drop rule,” which would determine that the baby was a savage Filipino because of the “Malay blood” that flowed through the little one's veins, but as white, the race of her American father.²⁶ This racialization, where the mestizo child was kept white, resembled the Filipinized racialization of the Chinese mestizos, who were often reclaimed by the Chinese immigrant community in the islands as culturally and ethnically “Chinese.”

²⁶ “Burbank's Filipino Wife,” *Kansas City Star*, October 28, 1905, 9.

After another lull in the Kansas civil trial, Burbank felt confident that he had dodged responsibility for Vazques and his Philippine-born daughter. Unfortunately for the young officer, when his Army unit was ordered to return to the Philippines for another tour of duty, his scorned Filipina wife, “upon learning of an attempt of Lieutenant Burbank to blacken her character,” filed a lawsuit against him in the Court of First Instance in Iloilo.²⁷ Thus began the second court trial involving Burbank, Vasquez, and their American mestizo child, this one taking place in the Philippines. Burbank paid no attention to the legal proceedings in the islands, and upon the advice of his lawyer, did not show up to the court to defend himself. The presiding judge granted Vazques 100 pesos a month alimony and custody of her American mestizo daughter.²⁸ The young officer's inaction proved to be his undoing, for soon after the verdict in favor of Vazques, the US Army court-martialed Burbank, finding him guilty of “conduct unbecoming of an officer in deserting his Filipino wife ... and making a false report denying the marriage.”²⁹ Despite pleas from his mother to President Theodore Roosevelt and the Secretary of War Elihi Root to pardon him of his crimes, Burbank was “shorn of his shoulder straps” and sentenced to fifteen months imprisonment at the military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.³⁰

Burbank's court-marshal was just one of many that the War Department initiated during the early years of the American occupation for similar conduct by American soldiers. The justification for the War Department was that such acts constituted “conduct unbecoming of an officer” and, if an enlisted man, the equivalent offense.

²⁷ “Prison for Lieutenant Burbank,” *Kansas City Star*, December 12, 1905, 2.

²⁸ “Verdict Against Burbank,” *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1905, 1.

²⁹ “Prison for Lieutenant Burbank,” *Kansas City Star*, December 12, 1905, 2.

³⁰ “No Pardon for Burbank,” *Kansas City Star*, January 15, 1906, 3, and “Burbank Goes to Prison,” *Kansas City Star*, March 11, 1906, 1.

Senator John Shafroth of Colorado noted in proceedings on the status of the Philippines that "the War Department took up several cases of that kind, and required the man to do something in the way of supporting his wife, soon after the insurrection." General Frank McIntyre, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, revealed that in cases "where the man is in the Army or employed as a civilian, and his wife complains to the War Department that he is not supporting her, ... the department takes means to call the matter to his attention and brings pressure to bear upon him, which has the effect that he does what he can to provide for his family." While other soldiers heeded the military's warnings to support their Filipina wives and American mestizo children, Burbank ignored them, which, combined with unfavorable reports of his actions in the American press, eventually led to his court-marshal.³¹

Burbank's trials received national coverage in the American media, with the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Atlanta Constitution* reporting on the legal and military proceedings at one time or another. In 1907, Burbank received national attention once again upon his release from federal prison for his scathing comments directed towards the US Army in the Philippines. "I am through with the 'Yankee Doodle army,'" the former officer told the journalists covering his release, "and would not wear the uniform of the officer again if I could." Asserting that he was a victim of a US Army conspiracy, Burbank believed he was convicted of "conduct unbecoming of an officer" because he lacked political influence in the islands. "There are dozens of army officers who are living with these Filipino women," a bitter Burbank-- subtly hinting at his guilt in the matter-- declared, "but they are fortunate

³¹ H.R. 18459, Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines, United States Senate, Sixty-Third Congress, Third Session, December 14, 1914 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 234.

enough to escape the clutches of blackmailers. I fell into their grasp.” Burbank promised reporters that he would one day tell the media his side of the story, and when he did, “it will cause one of the greatest sensations in army affairs in recent years.”³²

Despite Burbank lying about his Filipina wife and American mestizo child, there was an incontrovertible truth hidden within his final diatribe. It was a fact that there were numerous Army officers living with Filipinas throughout the Philippines, as many accounts of life in the islands reveal. Going unmentioned, but implied by Burbank's comments, were the even larger number of enlisted and civilian men living with Filipinas in the islands. And it can safely be said that many of these Filipinas were bearing American mestizo children. The result is that an undetermined number of American mestizo children were living in the Philippines by the first decade of the 20th century.

The Demographics of the American Mestizo Population in the Philippines

What were the demographics of the American mestizo population in the Philippines? The overall data on the American mestizos is fragmented and incomplete; however, it is worth exploring. Whomever was trying to gather the data, and how the information was interpreted at the time, reveals as much as the actual numbers.

The first attempt to conduct an organized census among the American mestizo population occurred in 1913 by a non-governmental organization known as the American Mestizo Protective Organization (AMPO), a group organized by white expatriate

³² “‘Yankee Doodle Army’ Roasted by Burbank,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 13, 1907, 1. In reply to Burbank’s diatribe, a reader wrote to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, “Burbank, old man, we are glad you have decided to have no more to do with the United States army. We really think it is better for you and for the army. ... The truth known, Burbank, it wants less of you than you do of it. If your fifteen months of enforced incarceration have inclined you any toward repentance, Burbank, don’t you think it would be a good idea to go back and try to do your duty by that Filipino wife and baby, Burbank, don’t you?” (“Burbank, We’re Glad,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, February 14, 1907, 8).

Americans who resided in the islands. The AMPO's stated purpose was "for the support, protection and education of abandoned half-caste children of white American fathers and Filipino mothers."³³ Although limited by lack of funds and the geography of the Philippines, the AMPO attempted to gather information on the American mestizo population by contacting dozens of colonial provincial governors and requesting them to administer individual censuses of the children living in their districts. With this information, the AMPO believed it could better conduct its mission to provide for the welfare of destitute American mestizo children the islands. This information, gathered almost a century ago, provides some basis for estimating the prevalence of American mestizos in the Philippines.

Because of the AMPO's reliance on the goodwill of the provincial governors for gathering data, accurately estimating the total number of American mestizo children proved problematic. The quality of the raw data was uneven in many respects. For some provinces, the governors simply notified the people within their jurisdiction asking them to personally write to the AMPO if they had American mestizo children. In a handful of other provinces, the figures provided by the governors were "merely estimates." In twelve provinces, including some of the most populous in the islands such as those surrounding and including the capital city of Manila, no children were reported, not "because there were not any, but rather because not enough interest was taken in the matter to report on them." From only two provinces, Cebu and Iloilo, could "the number of children so reported be considered to include the entire number of them living in said province at that time." In Cebu, the local census was taken by the schoolteachers through

³³ "Articles of Incorporation of the American Mestizo Protective Association" (Manila: 1913), 1, Pamphlet Collection, Perkins/Bostock Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (hereafter cited as Pamphlet Collection, Perkins/Bostock Library).

the efforts of the Division Superintendent of Schools, who found American mestizos scattered throughout twenty-eight towns in the province. In Iloilo, the provincial treasurer ordered the municipal treasurers to conduct the local census, finding that American mestizos lived in thirteen of the twenty-one towns that reported.³⁴

Although the AMPO made it clear in its census report that "the number of American-Filipina children in the islands is not definitely known," the organization estimated that there were at least 1400 children of American fathers and Filipina mothers throughout the Philippines. The AMPO based this estimate upon the data from the provinces of Cebu and Iloilo, which together reported nearly 200 children from a total population of 1 million. "Reasoning from probability," the authors contended, "it might be urged that results deduced from Cebu and Iloilo reports would be too high, because more Americans have resided, frequented, or been in stationed in these two provinces than in some others." However, the AMPO believed "that fourteen-hundred is not far from the actual number of American-Filipina mestizo children in the Philippine islands at this time," because "no conclusive data are available from Leyte, Cavite, Olongapo, Batangas, and more especially from Manila and its environments, where many American-Filipina families lived and where the relative number of Americans is appreciably larger."³⁵ Based on anecdotal data from historical records and an underestimate of American mestizos in Cebu and Iloilo due to the failure to include those living in the rural areas of these provinces, there were probably well over 1400 children, perhaps double, perhaps triple, who would be classified by AMPO as American mestizos by the

³⁴ Jacob Lang, "Statement on the Situation of American-Filipina-Mestizo Children in the Philippine Islands," report, February 9, 1915, Roll 49, Manuel Quezon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

time the 1913 census was conducted. Even the largest estimate, however, would make this population minute compared to the overall population of the Philippines, which at that time was constituted of at least eight million people. Whatever the actual number, there were American mestizos scattered throughout the islands, and something can be learned from the racial categorizations imposed upon them.

Living Conditions of the American Mestizos

The 1913 AMPO census, besides providing a baseline estimate for demographic data on the American mestizos, provides an opportunity for furthering our understanding of how the population lived in the early 20th century Philippines. Data compiled on the American mestizos' living conditions sheds light on the types of familial support systems these children had. 40 percent of American mestizos lived in "good homes" with "wealthy and influential" parents who were married and at the time of the census, "living together." 21 percent of the population was well-supported by their fathers, who provided monthly sums for the children to live with their Filipina mothers. In most cases, however, American fathers, by choice or by circumstance, did not support their American mestizo children in the islands. 1 percent of the fathers were "unable to support" their children financially, 4 percent of the fathers knew of their children and chose not to support, 16 percent of the fathers were "known to be deceased," 12 percent of the fathers had "whereabouts not known," and 6 percent of the children did not know who their fathers were.³⁶

American mestizos without support from their American fathers were supported to various degrees by their Filipina mothers and her extended family. 42 percent of

³⁶ Ibid., 2.

children unsupported by their fathers were determined to be "well supported," living with mothers "whom are stated to be of good character and reputation and possessing property or business ability." 5 percent of American mestizos were well-cared for not by their mothers, but "in most instances by parents, brothers, sisters, or other near relatives of the mothers." 14 percent of the children were supported by the daily labor of their mothers as "seamstress, laundress, etc.," with American mestizos in this category getting "as good care as the children of the poorer Filipinos." Another 15 percent of children were unsupported by their fathers and mothers, instead living "with distant relatives or pretended relatives of the mothers." In many cases, these children were "in the hands of more or less mercenary strangers in poor circumstances," begging or stealing for subsistence. The AMPO noted that "these are the children on whose condition a close watch should be kept" for "the lot of these children is not at all enviable and many of them may become public charges at any time." 24 percent of American mestizos were not supported by anyone, being "orphans, without parents or relatives known."³⁷

While familial support systems accounted for the care of 85 percent of the American mestizos in the census, the other 15 percent, the AMPO determined, "actually are, and such as at any time likely to become, objects of benevolence." Of the other 15 percent, "most of these children are orphans," with many of them being "soldiers' orphans." But, unlike other types of mestizo orphans in the islands-- the Spanish and Chinese mestizos in particular-- abandoned American mestizos had no social support systems in place to care for them. The AMPO hoped that census data could be used to implement a rudimentary social support network for orphaned American mestizo children throughout the Philippines.

³⁷ Ibid., 4.

American Expatriates Call for Support for the American Mestizos

The lack of a social support system for abandoned American mestizos was closely linked with the nature of American bachelor colonization. By 1913, the American presence in the Philippines was still less than two decades old, meaning that the American mestizo population was in the beginnings of its "first generation." Other mestizos, such as those of Chinese and Spanish descent, were by rough estimates, already in their 11th or 12th generations. While the Chinese and Spanish had developed methods of social support for abandoned mestizo children in their communities, the Americans had neither the foresight nor awareness to create an organization to deal the mestizo children among their own bachelor community.

The AMPO felt that after years of neglect, it had become necessary for the expatriate American community to work together in providing means of caring for the orphaned American mestizo children, although it represented only a small fraction of the American-Filipina children in the islands and quite closely correlated with poverty rates among "full-blooded" Filipinos in the islands at that time. It was, to the AMPO, a social problem that was important because they felt their American blood was somehow the cause of this destitution. "There is no person whose condition is more pitiful in the Philippine Islands," the AMPO contended, "than one of mixed blood without means or education, especially if it is a girl or a woman." Community support systems for mestizos modeled upon those created by the Chinese and Spanish were believed to be the answer for alleviating the problems of the destitute among the American mestizo population. For example, among the Spanish, "the shortcomings and misfortunes of

individuals ... were, and still are, generously made up by the [Catholic] Church, who in convent schools in Manila and other cities is educating and supporting Spanish mestizo orphans to this day." The Chinese had similar, perhaps even more effective, methods for caring for orphaned children in their community, such as sending abandoned children to Chinese language schools to assimilate them both socially and culturally into the Chinese immigrant and resident community.³⁸

The AMPO took some of the first steps in creating a social support system for the orphaned American mestizo children in the Philippines in the early 20th century. The AMPO, "sustained only by membership fees and voluntary contributions, almost entirely from resident Americans in the Islands and members of the Military and Naval forces stationed there," used these funds to subsidize the living expenses and education of American mestizo orphans placed with other institutions capable of their long-term supervision. Following the model of the Spanish, the AMPO contacted religious organizations in the Philippines asking for their assistance. Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, proved willing to lend their support. Some American mestizo children were "cared for and educated in convent schools" of the Catholic Church, while others were placed in the "Easter School at Baguio, under the auspices of the Right Reverend Charles Brent, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of the Philippine Islands." Although these efforts were noteworthy, the churches were "more or less handicapped in this work" and could not deal with the hundreds of orphaned mestizo children needing support.³⁹

A concerted effort was made to recruit governmental organizations, both American and Filipino, to assist with the work of the AMPO. The organization argued

³⁸ Ibid., 7.

³⁹ Ibid.

outright that the abandoned children of American bachelor colonization "have a special claim on the generosity of the people and government of the United States," and that "for the support and education of all of them, financial assistance may properly and consistently be solicited from Congress as well as from non-governmental sources and agencies."⁴⁰ Many of the "orphans of deceased American soldiers" whose fathers were "enlisted men who died in line of military duty" could "make claims for soldiers' orphans' pensions" with the assistance of the AMPO and government organizations. Other American mestizo "orphans of ex-soldiers" whose fathers were "honorably discharged enlisted men, some who died in the line of civil duty" should be entitled to "liberal" support. For the American mestizo orphans in the islands, "it should not be left to be born entirely by residents of the Philippine Islands, but aid should come from the United States, by Act of Congress, through the Benevolent Societies and Foundations, and from the American people generally, who from their bountiful wealth are now contributing millions to alleviate suffering," the AMPO argued.⁴¹

Filipino Racializations of the American Mestizos in the Philippines

In the responses to the AMPO's calls for the support for the small population of orphaned American mestizos, we encounter an issue much more important for historical study than simply the raw number of the population-- we can see how residents of the Philippines conceptualized the American mestizos, and how they attempted to fit this group into the racial hierarchies they were most familiar with. For many Filipinos, this

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., 8.

was the first time they had encountered the idea that an American-Filipino mixed race population even existed.

Racializations of the American mestizos by Filipinos came from all strata of Filipino society. Special efforts were made by the AMPO to enlist the help of the upper-class Filipino nationalist Manuel Quezon, the future president of the Philippines, to drum up Philippine political support. In the second decade of the twentieth century, Quezon was the most influential member of the Philippine Assembly and one of the two resident commissioners to the US House of Representatives. When Quezon presented a proposal to the Philippine Assembly to provide a small sum of money for the orphaned children, he was outright rejected by his fellow Filipinos. The upper-class Filipinos that comprised the Philippine Assembly questioned the premise that the American mestizo even existed. When the Philippine Assembly was "approached in request for financial aid of these children," these upper-class officials "assumed them to be Filipinos" and argued that "no discrimination could therefore be made in their favor." The American mestizos were not a separate racial group, in their minds, but Filipinos, part of the larger Philippine nation that nationalist politicians were seeking to construct. The Philippine Assembly's Darwinian response to Manuel Quezon, (which is representative of how upper-class Filipinos felt towards the lower class inhabitants of the Philippines at that time) was that American mestizos "would have to take their chances along with other unfortunates in the Islands."⁴²

Other racializations seemed to support the notion that upper-class Filipinos saw the American mestizos not as a separate racial group, but as Filipinos. When Concepcion Vazques went to trial against 1st Lieutenant Sidney S. Burbank, her ability to travel

⁴² Ibid., 6.

freely back and forth between the colony and the metropole to defend and hire lawyers demonstrated her upper-class status. When making her claims against Burbank, however, she did not even attempt to gain American citizenship for her child-- which the child was legally entitled to if Burbank was proven to be the father-- but rather sought child support to raise the baby in Valladolid in the central Philippines. Vazques had no intention of raising the child as separate from other Filipinos, nor was there any incentive for her to do so. To Vazques, her child was not an American mestizo, but a Filipino who would be raised to adulthood in the Philippines.

Anecdotal accounts of how lower-class Filipinos racialized American mestizos exist in American travel logs and diaries, giving us a glimpse into the peoples of the Philippines whose opinions were not written down. Biographical data from the 1913 AMPO census suggests that many lower-class Filipinos saw the American mestizos, who lived among them and according to their customs, as fellow Filipinos. Itinerant travelers who encountered American mestizos throughout their sojourns in the islands noted on various occasions that this was the case. When one American schoolteacher traveled to Banuae, a mountainous region of the southern Philippines, he encountered a young child named Fred Cappelman. Although Cappelman had an American name, he was culturally Filipino, attending the same school as the other Ifugao children in the town, living in “a house and rice paddy” that his father had bought for his family before he departed from the Philippines for the United States.⁴³

Fred Cappelman had been exposed only to the culture of the Philippines since his birth, as he was raised solely by his Filipino mother after his American father left the

⁴³ Marquardt, diary, March 14, 1917, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

islands. Contextual clues suggest that he lived like his fellow Filipinos in Banuae. Cappelman's mother clearly saw him as Filipino, and believed that Americans had no right to suggest that he was a separate race from the other children in town. The Filipina "refused to give up the child" for adoption to American expatriates who wanted to raise him in their community in Manila, believing young Fred's home was in the Philippine countryside. Racializing mestizo populations who lived according to native customs as Filipino was not a new phenomena, for this followed precedents set by the large Chinese mestizo population already present in the islands before the American community's arrival. Perhaps in the American racial structure, it was out of the ordinary, but in the Philippines, the rules were different, informed by a different national history. Lower-class Filipinos simply did not see their children as American mestizos, even if their fathers were American, and American expatriates were telling them so.

American Racializations of the American Mestizo Population

American racializations differed from Filipino views of the young American mestizo population in the early 20th century and are more easily tracked. Undoubtedly, some Americans in the Philippines supported the AMPO's efforts for primarily humanitarian reasons. Without distinguishing between orphans based on their particular blood quantum, they saw the American mestizos as needy children. Joseph Shearer became a supporter of the orphaned American mestizos, donating his time to researching their living conditions for the AMPO. As the organization's special agent, the American came across mixed-race children time and time again in his travels throughout the islands. On one occasion, he personally witnessed the abandonment of American

mestizos by their American fathers. Shearer “was reported to have shed tears when the transport *Logan* pulled out with American servicemen-- members of the Quartermaster Corps under strict military orders, who had to leave their Filipino wives and families on a moment's notice.” Sixty-five mestizo children were left behind, waving to their fathers as they sailed off to new Army posts in the islands. Shearer's “blood boiled when he saw that some observers were laughing,” and “deplored the fact that the Association had insufficient money to care for the children.”⁴⁴

Many Americans in the islands showed their sympathy for the population by donating what they could to the coffers of the AMPO. For example, agriculturalist Mack Cretcher, upon learning of the orphans in the care of the AMPO, donated the movie tickets he had won in a local Manila slogan contest to the organization. "To show that his heart is in the right place," a local Philippine newspaper wrote, "this subtle superintendent ... has delivered to the American Mestizo Protective Association the annual Empire Theater pass ... with instructions to make the best possible use of it." Eventually the movie tickets were raffled off, amounting to "over one hundred pesos for the orphans."⁴⁵ The anecdote and gesture were both small, but in the larger picture, they show awareness of this population among the inhabitants of Manila.

John Canson was another American who took up the cause of the American mestizos for primarily humanitarian reasons, although he would classify himself as more akin to a self-made businessman than anything else. The American came to the islands as a young volunteer in the Army at age 16, taking his discharge in 1901 after the conclusion of the major fighting on Luzon. Four years later, Canson had accumulated

⁴⁴ Lewis Gleeck, *The Manila Americans, 1901-1964* (Manila, Philippines: Carmelo and Bauermann), 97.

⁴⁵ Mack P. Cretcher, *A Tenderfoot in the Tropics* (Topeka, Kansas: Crane and Company, 1918), 68.

enough capital to purchase a bar in Pasig, and by 1910, he purchased another establishment in Manila, which became "one of the most popular institutions in the pre-war [World War II] community-- the Santa Ana Cabaret." Canson nightly played proprietor and host, serving spaghetti dinners to American families on one side of the haunt, and on the other side, making sure his G.I. customers were kept happy with intoxicating liquor served by Filipina "bailerinas." The bailerina half of the ballroom, with its imported mirrors from Europe, and its gorgeous chandeliers from Germany, dazzled visitors and made its owner "money by the hatful."

According to his customers, Canson ran a "straight house," and "never watered his liquor." More importantly, "his girls never rolled a customer. On the contrary, as a generation of American colonial males learned with heartfelt appreciation, his bailerinas were generous, loyal, and undemanding, often giving more than they were asked." This widespread fraternization between the two groups led to American mestizo children. "A good many of the mestizas were the offspring of Canson's Santa Ana bailerinas and American fathers," one Manila writer remembered, "some of them prominent in the community."⁴⁶ Canson, a businessman first, allowed the practices to continue, for the cabaret was wildly successful economically. But the American sympathized with the Filipina mothers forced to raise their American mestizo children without the support of their fathers, and donated large sums of money to the cause of the AMPO. Perhaps his conscience got the better of him, but whatever the case, he was aware of the issues and the problems his Filipina employees faced as a result of his business.

Shearer, Cretcher, Canson, and many other Americans would donate to the AMPO without revealing how they classified the group racially, although they seemed to

⁴⁶ Gleck, 98, 100-101.

make the assumption that all American mestizos were destitute. But there would be other Americans involved with the work of the AMPO who made their racializations of the American mestizo population clear. In April 1914, the AMPO announced plans “for a home for destitute mestizo children.” Contributions were sent to Roy Squires of the Manila business firm, Squires and Bingham. The businessman believed that the mestizos were not some pitiful population, but, with proper guidance, could become the political leaders of the Philippines upon maturity. Squires said he expected “generous support [for the home] from those who see in these mestizos prospective candidates for the Presidency some fifty years hence.” Colonial ambitions for the American mestizos seemed to have existed in some form among American expatriates in the Philippines.

As a population in its first generation, no American mestizo had the chance to rise to the political or economic eminence of Chinese or Spanish mestizos, but Squires believed investment in the AMPO's development could change all this in the future, a future that would ostensibly be more beneficial to American interests. The businessman expressed the view that the American mestizos were fundamentally different from the rest of the Filipino population, and that their American blood gave them advantages in intellectual and political acumen. To Squires and others who subscribed to this view, it was a travesty that children with American blood were allowed to remain in a disadvantageous position compared to other mestizos of foreign blood who held positions of economic and political prominence in Filipino society. In this instance, it was not the colonial state that was shepherding the developing of race, but the American business community.

When expatriate Americans interested in the welfare of the orphaned American mestizos made efforts to publicize their plight through the use of US based newspapers, alternative racializations to those of Squires became known. J. Dean Butler, a colonial official in the insular government, was appalled at the state of the American mestizo population in the islands and believed all of them were destitute, blaming not the lack of financial and parental support from the American community, but derogatory treatment from the Filipino community as the main reason for the children's poor living conditions. No one "cared for the American-Mestizo, or half-caste, who are ... cast out," according to Butler. Even worse was the fact that many "Filipinos do not care to provide for them on account of the animosity they bear the Americans."⁴⁷ In Butler's mind, all American mestizos were maltreated because they were jealously seen as American children in an alien, backward land.

Butler believed the work of the AMPO was "meeting with many drawbacks," for it was "difficult to find and secure these children in the provinces." Leaving any American mestizo child in the countryside in the hands of the Filipinos would be a grave mistake. "Many of them are sold and held as slaves, and to take them from their masters brings upon the society the wrath of the native populace," Butler told reporters, "who are always ready and eager to protest against anything which interferes with the customs and habits of the people." Although the AMPO stated that 85 percent of the American mestizo population was well-cared for by Filipinos, for Butler, "the situation of the mestizo [was] pitiful," with the primary cause being Filipino maltreatment.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ "Havoc Wrought By Democratic Rule," *Oregonian*, September 6, 1914, 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

US Notions of Race and Nationality Influence White Expatriates' Racializations of the American Mestizos

Butler's diatribe brings up another important question regarding the American mestizo population. Although Butler claimed the American mestizos were discriminated against for being "American," how did Butler define the term "American?" Just as the definition of who was "Chinese" in the Philippines was shaped by the immigrant community's relative homogeneity, the definition of what constituted an "American" in the islands was shaped by the fact that the majority of bachelor colonists from the United States were by those of European stock, or "whites." African-Americans were not seen as "American" in the Philippines, just as Mandarin or Cantonese speaking Chinese were not regarded as "Chinese" in the Philippines. "It may seem strange," educator William Marquardt remembered in his diary, "but I never thought of negroes as Americans until I heard the remark of the first American negress in Cebu." Filipino children on the island had, in the words of Marquardt, "never seen a negress before and naturally many of the youngsters considered her a great curiosity and followed her along the street." The African-American woman, annoyed at being considered a spectacle, replied to the children, "Didn't you ever see an American lady before?"⁴⁹ To the Filipino children, and the white American who documented the exchange, it was the first time all had considered that blacks, despite their phenotypical difference, were in fact, "American."

Other descriptions of the American mestizos showed how white American governmental officials conceptualized the population according to US notions of race in the early 20th century and furthered the idea that blacks were not "American." With the

⁴⁹ Marquardt, *Things Philippine*, scrapbook, 1922-1930, 6, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

American mestizos' white expatriate fathers gone, Butler observed that “many of [the Filipina mothers] began to cohabit with Filipinos, negros or anyone else who would help support them.” Butler betrayed his own notions of race, implying that when the American mestizos’ white fathers abandoned them, their Filipina mothers were forced to live with inferior, non-white races like African-Americans and Filipinos.

Butler's definition of the term "American" is important for understanding how he and other whites popularly conceptualized the American mestizo population in the Philippines in the early 20th century. American mestizos were not discriminated against for being any type of American, but specifically for being white Americans. “White” American phenotypical and cultural features, instead of the phenotypical and cultural features of Filipinos, were assumed to predominate among the population based on his limited exposure to the children.⁵⁰ Butler was not alone in this racialization of the American mestizos, for the AMPO itself specified that it sought to care for "the abandoned half-caste children of white American fathers and Filipino mothers," not just children with simply American fathers.⁵¹

Further Racializations of the American Mestizos and Colonial Government Interventions on their Behalf

The AMPO’s definition of the American mestizo-- which required them to have white American fathers and Filipina mothers-- contributed to an important statistical error in the AMPO census. The fact that many whites did not see blacks as "Americans" meant that mestizos from relationships between African-American men and Filipinas

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ “Articles of Incorporation of the American Mestizo Protective Association” (Manila: 1913), 1, Pamphlet Collection, Perkins/Bostock Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

were not included in the data. Anecdotal accounts show that mestizos from these relationships existed across the islands, the result of residue from the presence of African-American soldiers who made their way to the islands during the Philippine-American War. Although the number of mestizos from these relationships is unknown because no attempts were made to track the population, African-American mestizos are important for our understanding of how white Americans used racist notions of nation and citizenship and applied them to new groups in the Philippines.

While it is clear that many white bachelor colonials believed that the American mestizos were more "American" than "Filipino," not all shared Butler's views that the population's problems was the result of maltreatment by the Filipinos. Other Americans took a more nuanced view of the population, believing that the destitution among the American mestizos was caused not by Filipino prejudice, but by lack of economic opportunities for the poorer classes in the islands. Educator Jacob Lang, who came to the Philippines to work in the insular government's Bureau of Education, became a prominent advocate for the American mestizo children. Lang carried no animosity towards the Filipinos, testifying in US Congressional meetings on the political status of the Philippines "that it is absolutely misleading for anybody to try to create the impression that there is any ill-feeling between the pure-blood Filipinos and the Mestizos of any degree; there is no such ill-feeling; they are a homogenous people."⁵² While Lang glosses over class distinctions, he firmly believed that blood quantum were a non-issue for Filipinos residing in the islands.

Lang is notable for his involvement in the American colonial government's project to assist in the resettlement of American-Filipina families and their mestizo

⁵² H.R. 18459, 235.

children on homesteads in the southern Philippines. As president of the Mindanao Colonial Association (MCA), he was responsible for recruiting and organizing poor American-Filipina families for the government-aided relocation effort. Popular notions of the destitute conditions of the American mestizo population led to officials in the insular government taking actions which subsidized this endeavor. Racializations of the American mestizos, clearly in this instance, led directly to government action to alleviate an imagined widespread social problem.

At the time of the MCA's formation in 1914, economic changes in the Philippines had resulted in widespread unemployment among poor Americans who resided in the islands. When Woodrow Wilson emerged the victor in the three-way presidential election of 1914, the new Democratic administration in Washington embarked on a policy of "Filipinization" of the government in the islands. American employees were replaced with Filipino employees at all levels of government, especially in the Department of Public Works and the Constabulary forces of the provinces. When these Americans were let go from their positions, they began searching for wage work in the cities of the Philippines. Some of these men "came to Manila" hoping for employment, and "many of them did not have any savings, or, if so, had invested them in houses or lands out there [in the provinces]." However, investments in real estate did not yield steady income to support their Filipina wives and American mestizo children. Disgruntled Americans "began to make complaints" to the Insular government "and the newspapers took the matter up."⁵³

The MCA was formed to transition eligible unemployed Americans and the families they supported into new livelihoods in agriculture elsewhere in the Philippines.

⁵³ Ibid., 233.

The MCA petitioned Governor-General William Harrison to use money from the "insular colonial fund" in order to accomplish the task of relocating hundreds of American-Filipina families and their children. Lang knew of over 400 men "for whom no provision has been made" and as a result, were unable to support their Filipina wives and American mestizo children. Many chose to remain in the islands, while "some have come home, and some are coming home [to the United States]."⁵⁴ Of those who remained, the MCA requested "a sufficient sum... to locate one hundred American Filipina families to a colony on homesteads in Mindanao [in the southern Philippines]; to furnish them means to construct dwellings, purchase machinery and work animals and, if necessary, to defray their subsistence for one year."⁵⁵ A loan of one thousand pesos, or at the time, about five hundred dollars, was requested per family, which was to be paid back as soon as the families' homesteads became productive and profitable.

With minor modifications, the petitions of the MCA were granted by the Insular Government. To make the colony more manageable, the number of families was reduced from 100 to 60, and the maximum amount allotted per family was increased from one thousand pesos to twelve hundred pesos. The colonial administration also specified that if needed, further assistance would be furnished after the harvesting of the first crop. The final contract provided that after the harvest, twenty percent of the yield would go to the insular government to defray the general expenses of the colony's administration. The colonists were then "to retain a sufficient quantity to subsist him and his family until the harvesting of the next crop," with the remainder applied as payment on the twelve

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁵⁵ Lang to General Frank McIntyre, letter, February 18, 1915, 1, Roll 49, Manuel Quezon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

hundred peso loan. This process would continue with each succeeding crop "until the total debt should have been paid."⁵⁶

A forward team of colonists left Manila in April 1914, surveying the terrain of Mindanao for a suitable place to establish the MCA's colony. Although generally assumed to be empty, the region was full of indigenous peoples who looked upon these potential "colonizers" with weariness. While traveling through the province, the explorers were not always welcomed with open arms. In some regions, they encountered established settlements of Christian Filipinos and Moros who understandably expressed reluctance that an organization from Manila wished to establish a new colony of Americans and their families in territories they already claimed as their own. In one instance, the colonists even came across two Americans and their Filipina wives who had already settled in a region of the province who "did all they could to discourage its location there."

On their return to the capital one month later, the team of colonists expressed interest in building a settlement in Mumongan, located in the district of Lanao in the southern islands. Conditions in this region "if not ideal, were highly favorable" to the relocation project. Unlike other locations in Mindanao, the local population "was enthusiastically in favor of having the Colony." American businessmen and the native population there "promised ... aid and cooperation" and "welcomed the Colony for the trade it would bring." By July 1914, the first wave of 34 families had begun their expedition to their new homesteads, bringing with them the work animals that were

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1-2.

necessary to help clear the land. In the upcoming months, they would be joined by the other 26 families sponsored by the insular government.⁵⁷

Life for Americans, Filipinos, and American Mestizos in the Mumongan Colony and the Colony's Fate

What was life like in the Mumongan colony? Anecdotal data reveals that many of the prominent colonists felt that they were "better off in a community by themselves" rather "than they would be scattered over the Islands." In the aftermath of the Philippine-American War, racially mixed families had taken up residence throughout the islands. There were already small pockets of American mestizos that had grouped together for one reason or another. At Cuyo, in the island of Palawan, travelers "noticed a large number of American mestizo children." Some of them "belonged to ... [an American] teacher who died," others to a "cable surveyor [who was] formerly teacher in the Bureau of Education." Another American official, "the ex-treasurer ... of the province" had "a large number of children" in the town. There was even "an American mestiza by the name of Jones whose father is in the States and who expects to go the States soon, having been there once before."⁵⁸ The settlement in Mumongan differed from the Cuyo pocket in that it marked the first time that a numerically significant mestizo community had been so geographically concentrated, reminiscent of the Chinese mestizo Binondo colony on the outskirts of Manila in the early 1600s which had also been the result of colonial state intervention.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁸ Marquardt, "Notes on Southern Trip on 'Corregidor' leaving Manila June 16, 1917, 4, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Colonists believed that the Mindanao colony was a region full of promise, a place where they could begin their lives anew on what they saw as the frontier of Philippine society, an empty area ripe with economic opportunity. Manila and other inhabited areas were seen as limiting, with an "atmosphere of prejudice and personal politics," as Lang put it. Wealthier middle-class expatriate Americans in the islands expressed the belief that any American who married a Filipina was of a lower class than themselves. When Americans traveled in the Philippines, they were often welcomed into each other's homes, for "an American's house was virtually a hotel for traveling Americans. In case the owner was not at home, the stranger was expected to take possession of the house and servants." These rights were available for nearly every American, except those married to Filipinas. "There were a few ex-soldiers married to the low class of natives scattered about the country who were not allowed these privileges," schoolteacher Walter Marquardt observed. One ex-soldier, "who lived up the coast [of the town of Oroquieta] with a native wife," was disdainfully referred to by locals as "the lowest of the low and ... an affliction to the Americans ever since the earliest days."⁵⁹

Not only classist, but also, moral arguments were used to deride American-Filipina marriages and the Mumongan colonists. Bishop Charles Brent, the leading Episcopalian preacher and "conscience" of the American expatriate community, argued in his sermons that Americans and Filipinos were far too different culturally to successfully raise racially mixed children. Brent was "strongly opposed to intermarriage," an issue described as "a question which was frequently the subject of agitated discussion in the community." For the preacher, "it was not a question of color,

⁵⁹ Louis Lisk, Supervising Teacher to Walter W. Marquardt, Director of Education, September 27, 1913, 4, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

except so far as color is an index of fundamental differences, but of blood, temperament, education, [and] interests.” Bishop Brent used examples from the British colonies in Asia as evidence, arguing that “this has been amply and painfully illustrated in India.” The preacher's views echoed those of wealthier Americans in the islands when he concluded his moral attack on mixed marriages. “So that in considering the risks of intermarriage between American and Filipino,” the preacher noted, “we are basing our logic on large and indisputable experience, and are weighing in equal balance the happiness of two peoples.” Brent did acknowledge that intermarriage was not always terrible in its results, especially when among upper-class Americans and Filipinos, remarking, “I leave room for exceptions, some of which are notable indeed.”⁶⁰

The colonists believed that, with sufficient help, they had the possibility of being considered one of the Bishop's “exceptions,” and that the Mumongan settlement would allow American-Filipina families to “lead better lives, make better homes for their families,” and above all, allow their children to “grow up in better surroundings and under better influences and get better training and education.” American mestizos in this community were not abandoned, but raised by their American fathers and Filipina mothers. Their fathers, contrary to the opinion and insinuation of local Manila newspapers and other expatriate Americans in the islands, were neither poor vagabonds nor morally corrupt. MCA documents noted that “95 percent of the men were honorably discharged soldiers of the U.S. Army, most of them volunteers,” and that many had been recently laid off or anticipated being laid off from their positions in government service.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Gleeck, 77.

⁶¹ Lang to McIntyre, 4, Roll 49, Manuel Quezon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Many Americans in the Philippines believed that a colony full of “lower class” ex-soldiers and their American mestizo families was destined to fail miserably. “The [Mumongon] colony is situated on the . . . road,” an American traveling to Mindanao noted in his diary. “Here the government tried to establish a colony of 'squaw-men' but the type of American who marries a Filipina is,” the writer wrote with disgust, “generally worthless, and the colonists proved no exception to the rule. Work is the last thing they wanted and the colony is a failure as far as the American residents are concerned.”⁶² However, some Americans, including J. Dean Butler, a government educator and private lawyer in the islands, believed that the Mumongan colony was a worthy endeavor. Butler described the colony as “progressing favorably” and possessing “very productive” land. In a local American newspaper in Oregon, the educator praised the colonists as “men who could not give up their families and who were not yet down and out.” In Mindanao, Butler believed, “the pioneers of America's last great frontier may hope to raise their families, market their produce, and live in peace, removed from . . . the Tammany-trained and Filipino-bossed administration.”⁶³

Despite the social prejudice directed toward them by their fellow Americans, the colonists held themselves in high regard, especially when they compared themselves to the Filipinos already inhabiting the area. While there are clear indications that the Mumongan colonists may have viewed themselves differently from the rest of the Filipino population, the effects of these feelings on the American mestizo children's racial identity is unknown. The American settlers expressed the desire to “live on their own standard, exempt from the isolation and monotony of the ordinary Philippines

⁶² Marquardt, diary, August 8, 1918, 30, Box Number 6, Walter W. Marquardt Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁶³ “Havoc Wrought by Democratic Rule,” *Oregonian*, September 6, 1914, 9.

community.” But these views could not deny the reality that Americans in the colony lived according to the customs of the Filipinos, eating native staples and living in houses constructed of Philippine hardwoods. When it came to raising their American mestizo children, these children were brought up not according to American standards of living, nor a distinct hybrid, as was another possibility, but the living conditions of the local lower-class Filipinos.⁶⁴

After 1915, there is no information available about the outcome of the MCA's colony in the southern Philippines. The organization officially adjourned once the final American-Filipina families were settled at Mumongan, and in an act of kindness, its members agreed to donate what little funds they had left to the American Mestizo Protective Organization. The AMPO itself too seemed to fade away at nearly the same time, most likely due to its core membership leaving the islands for one reason or another. The American mestizo population in the Philippines, however, still remained. Views of the group would continue to vary, dependent on the particular observer's vantage point. Imposed racializations of the American mestizos by both Americans and Filipinos from 1915 on will be examined in the next chapter.

⁶⁴ Lang to McIntyre, 5, Roll 49, Manuel Quezon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Chapter Three: Competing American and Filipino Racializations of the American
Mestizos and Government Interventions on their Behalf in the 1920s

In 1921, Major General Leonard Wood arrived in the Philippines as the military and political commander of the American colony. A former Army surgeon who had graduated from Harvard Medical School, he had risen in command largely through the support of his friend and patron, Theodore Roosevelt. Wood served in Cuba, becoming military governor of the island following the Spanish-American War, and later, served as governor of Moro Province in the Philippines. From 1910-1914 he was Chief of Staff of the US Army, and, as a highly partisan officer, openly joined the Republican challenge to the nation's state of military preparedness when Democrat Woodrow Wilson stood for re-election in 1916. Wood himself had aspirations for the presidency, and in 1920, he was one of the main candidates for the Republican nomination for president, running a “law and order” campaign.¹ After Republican Warren Harding went on to win the election, Wood was dispatched to the Philippines as the new Governor-General of the islands.

During what could be appropriately termed his political exile to the Pacific, Wood became concerned with the islands’ public health and social issues, including what he felt was the “plight” of the American mestizo population, a view popular among many in the American expatriate community. Upon arriving in the Philippines, the general spent five months touring the islands, visiting forty-seven of its forty-eight provinces, and stopping in 449 municipalities, traveling a total of 15,000 miles by land and water.² Americans he encountered from all walks of life, including former soldiers, civilians, colonial officials,

¹ For more on Leonard Wood, see Jack C. Lane, *Armed Progressive: General Leonard Wood* (San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1978), and Jack McCallum, *Leonard Wood: Rough Rider, Surgeon, Architect of American Imperialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

² McCallum, *Leonard Wood*, 289.

and doctors, were married or living with Filipinas. Wherever there were Americans and Filipinos, there were American mestizos.

Leonard Wood's Encounters American Mestizos as he Tours the Philippines

Within the first week of Wood's journey throughout the Philippines, he would see interracial evidence of the now decades long US presence there. At Pangasinan, Wood encountered an American insular government supervisor "who had married a Filipino."³ At Nueva Viscaya, Wood met former US Army sergeant Beucler, who, after his discharge from the service, had taken up residence in the town. The ex-soldier "married an Ilocano woman," becoming a "successful businessman and proprietor."⁴ Two Southern American doctors approached the general while he visited the town of Laong, and, according to Wood, they were "well meaning, but not of the best type to inspire respect for American leadership." Both men had "Filipino wives."⁵

As he continued to tour the islands, Wood even ran into old acquaintances who had settled down and married Filipinas. While in the mountain province of Abra, more specifically the town of Bucay, the general met "Mr. Smith, who used to be in D company of the 5th Infantry and played on the scrub football team with me at Fort McPherson." Wood affectionately remembered Smith for serving with him during the US Army's actions at Santiago, Cuba, during the Spanish-American War. Upon the beginning of the Philippine-American War, Smith was transferred to the Philippines "with the 5th Infantry and fought through [Abra]; in fact, one of the hardest fights of his

³ Leonard Wood, diary, May 15, 1921, Box 14, Leonard Wood Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

⁴ Wood, diary, May 18, 1921, *ibid.*

⁵ Wood, diary, May 24, 1921.

Company was in the immediate vicinity of his new house.” While still in the service, “he married a Filipino woman, and after leaving the Army studied civil engineering.” Upon dining with the ex-soldier, Wood discovered that Smith's wife was not a poor Filipina, but one of the most politically connected women in the town, owning “much land thereabout” in the province, in addition to being related to “one of the principal men of the town.”⁶ Further along the general's tour, while in Aroroy, Wood met another ex-soldier whom he knew “from his days at Presidio,” a North Carolinian by the name of Mr. Corn. Corn, along with “one or two other old soldiers,” had “married native women and settled here.”⁷

Many of these American-Filipina relationships resulted in American mestizo children, whom Wood encountered along his travels. Associate Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, George Malcolm, “was living with a native woman, by whom he had had children,” according to his fellow Associate Justice, E. Finley Johnson. Malcolm was not married to the Filipina, which Wood, Johnson, and another Associate Justice felt “disqualified him for holding a position on the Bench.”⁸ Near Tacloban, the General personally met another American mestizo. While at a town gathering in which Wood sought to gauge the Filipinos' desire for independence from the United States, he witnessed a speech by a young Lily McGuire, who “made a very straight statement ... to the effect that [the Filipinos] were not ready for independence.” “I thought [McGuire] was a Filipino,” Wood remarked in his diary, but upon further inquiry, “she proved to be one of the daughters of a former soldier by the name of McGuire who came out here with the First Infantry.” Mr. McGuire was “married to a Filipino woman,” and he, his wife,

⁶ Wood, diary, May 26, 1921.

⁷ Wood, diary, June 20 1921.

⁸ Wood, diary, June 5, 1921.

and his daughter Lily owned and ran “a typical New England store.” Wood was particularly impressed with the little establishment, noting “there is nothing you can think of that you cannot buy here, from a hairpin to a fiddle, automobile tire, or a tennis racquet.”⁹

The more the general toured the islands, the more he met American mestizos who blended in with the larger Philippine population rather than identifying with a separate American mestizo racial group. These local people thought of themselves as Filipinos rather than American mestizos. After taking dinner with local Filipino officials in Mandaue, in the province of Cebu, Wood “went to the local Coliseum to see some boxing between Filipino boys, more or less of the amateur type.” The general enjoyed the bouts, impressed that the young men “showed a willingness to go in and take punishment, ... were decidedly aggressive, ... [and] gave good indications of possessing very good fighting qualities.” The boxer that impressed Wood the most was “the last number on the bill, ... an American mestizo boy who put up a particularly good exhibition, defeating his rather heavier, older antagonist, a Filipino.” While the general may have believed that the boy was racially distinct, the rest of the Filipino spectators probably saw the young boxer as no different from the other full-blooded Filipino contenders.¹⁰

There was, however, one man and his American mestizo family that would have a lasting effect on the general. In Bogo, Wood met Dr. Edward Link, an American from New Orleans whom he had served with but never known personally during the Spanish-American War. Link had “married a native woman of good type, with much property-- a large sugar plantation and various other interests.” Link and his Filipina wife had no

⁹ Wood, diary, June 30, 1921.

¹⁰ Wood, diary, July 9, 1921.

American mestizo children of their own, but they had “taken care of, raised and educated and put on their feet five mestizo children, children of American fathers who were stationed here during the war, married, and afterwards deserted the native women.” Link's adopted children had become part of the local Philippine community, involved in organizations that sought to improve the living conditions of the entire town of Bago. “One of the young women on the Women's Club,” the general noted, “quite conspicuous for her good sense and intelligence, was one of these children, and is now one of the most successful schoolteachers in the town.” Wood had nothing but praise for the doctor, remarking that he “has done some very good work here” and “deserves a great deal of credit for what he has done.”¹¹ The general's encounter with Link would be Wood's first contact with the perceived social problem of abandoned American mestizos in the Philippines. Wood saw firsthand how one man attempted to alleviate the suffering of the discarded children of imperialism, and this struck a moralistic chord within the General as he continued his travels. Wood's view, however, was biased, for he began making a false association, being that anyone who was an American mestizo was destitute or in need of some type of aid.

Wood Encounters the Mumongan Colony and General John J. Pershing's American Mestizo Children

Less than a month later, Wood arrived in the Mumongan, the town with one of the greatest concentrations of American mestizos in the islands, and encountered the “settlement of ... the American Colony.” Although it had existed for over five years, there had been little information reported about the colony since its establishment in

¹¹ Ibid.

1915. Wood described Mumongan as “principally of Americans who married Filipino wives, most of them old soldiers or old employees of the Army.” The MCA's belief that Mumongan would be a safe haven for American-Filipina families and their mixed race children had, by 1921, been replaced with demoralization and a bleak outlook for the future. “We met about six members of the colony at the colony store,” Wood recalled. “They are a woebegone lot, badly dressed and evidently down at the heel and down in spirits.”¹²

In the meeting with the General, the colonists revealed that “only two or three of them had paid off their indebtedness, and all of them seem discouraged.” The total debt of the colony was over 120,000 pesos. Worried about the poor conditions of the Americans, Filipinas, and their American mestizo children, Wood sought explanations as to why the colony was failing to thrive despite supposed government subsidies. “It is managed, or, rather, mismanaged by the Bureau of Agriculture in Manila,” the General quipped. The Bureau had sent “a good deal of unsuitable machinery,” the most poignant example of this being a rice thrasher that cost the colonists 4000 pesos, “although there is no rice.” Despite the colonists imploring the government not to send any more supplies for a crop they did not grow, Mumongan received two hundred bags of rice fertilizer shortly thereafter, with another charge of 2400 pesos against the colony. “They have had one impractical manager after another,” Wood noted with disgust. The most recent manager of the colony “was a broken-down man from Manila, well-meaning but without much agricultural experience.”¹³

¹² Wood, diary, August 3, 1921.

¹³ Wood, diary, August 3, 1921.

Besides wasteful spending, basic economic processes pushed the Mumongan colony into a state of perpetual indebtedness to the insular government. Everything required to run a community, such as foodstuffs, clothing, and agricultural implements had to be purchased from vendors in Manila. It was determined that “to the cost of purchase is added the cost of transport and then a profit of 20 percent.” This meant that “things are sold at the counter at double what they are in Manila.” Usurious prices, combined with the post-World War I recession that drove agricultural prices (the principal source of income for the colony) down from their wartime highs, made it impossible for the families in Mumongan to pay off their debts. A horrified Wood “asked them to submit a statement of conditions,” which he vowed would “be taken up with the Secretary of Agriculture” in Manila.¹⁴

Wood's experiences with abandoned and destitute American mestizos at Bogo and Mumongan led him to begin inquiring specifically about this population as he continued traveling across the Philippines. In Zamboanga province, Wood asked local officials “if any efforts were being made to look after American mestizo children whose fathers had deserted them, and their mothers.”¹⁵ To the general's dismay, no organization existed to care for the needy American mestizos in the southern islands. Officials told Wood that a poor example had been set for caring for the population by ex-American soldiers, and in particular, by General John J. Pershing, who less than a decade and a half before, was merely a young officer stationed in the province. Wood was already intimately familiar with some parts of the story, for at one time Wood was Pershing's superior officer, but

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Wood, diary, August 17, 1921.

the general had never fully heard the tale from the local Filipinos' perspective until he traveled to Zamboanga in 1921.

When Pershing arrived in Zamboanga in the first years of the American occupation, the officer was “rarely lonely,” as his biographer, Frank Vandiver, put it. “Each place he went brought comrades, each place the excitement of women,” Vandiver wrote of Pershing's first experiences in the province, as “racial blends resulted in uncommonly beautiful females.” Along with two fellow officers who stayed with him in the Army's bachelor quarters, Syd Cloman and Tom Swobe, the “redoubtable huntsmen ... built a quick and lusty reputation among Zamboanga's girls.” The young soldiers were most often seen frequenting “a small canteen for officers run by the four fetching Bondoy sisters,” described as “old hands at handling young men.” Pershing became enamored with “one of the sisters, Joaquina Bondoy Ignacio, of striking dark-eyed beauty and graceful figure.” His friends “laughed approvingly at his infatuation with this wise and winsome woman,” as “Joaquina touched that hidden spirit which made him wholly masculine” and “sparked his powerful sexuality.”¹⁶

The full extent of Pershing's and Ignacio's relationship was eventually revealed, first to his family, and then to the public, during his briefly contested promotion to brigadier general in 1906. A private letter by retired Lieutenant General Henry Corbin meant as a heads up to Pershing's supporters warned “his character will be assaulted-- and with facts. He has two half breed children in Zamboanga-- I know of one but a non-com officer of the Inspector General Department tells me there are two by two different women.” Corbin saw the children as half Filipino and half white, but never explicitly

¹⁶ Frank E. Vandiver, *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 352.

refers to Pershing's illegitimate children as American mestizos. Referring specifically to Joaquina, Corbin continued, "The one is well-known to all the Army and Army women who have served there." The old general hoped Pershing would get the promotion, but admitted at the letter's conclusion, "I like P., but deplore this fool business."¹⁷

Pershing ultimately received the promotion, but facts about his illicit relationships with Filipinas and illegitimate American mestizo children followed him when he made his return to the Philippines in late 1906. Philippine and American newspapers began publishing the accusations, which were denied as being made up by those jealous and envious of Pershing's extraordinarily speedy rise in military rank at such a young age. The *Manila American*, one of the leading English newspapers in the Philippines, published that upon its reporters speaking to the Bondoy sisters, they learned that Pershing "built a house for Joaquina on Santa Maria Road in Zamboanga" and "that he continued to support his two children" by her. "Salacious hints of Zamboanga could almost be felt in the Manila air," Pershing's biographer wrote. "They would haunt every meeting with army folk, would poison conversations, strain relations both public and private."¹⁸ We do not know what became of the children.

It was at this time that Wood, then commander of the Philippine Division-- at the young officer's behest-- became involved in lessening the impact of Pershing's sexual affairs. Pershing looked to his elder for advice on diffusing the matter within the War Department, for any blight on his service record threatened to derail a promising career within the Army. From their conversations, Wood suggested that the young general go on a counterattack "designed not to punish liars, but to save his job." Pershing did this

¹⁷ Ibid., 398.

¹⁸ Ibid., 404-407.

fervently and methodically, beginning by obtaining legal rebuttals of the accusations, including an affidavit from Joaquina “denying the alleged relationship, the children, the house, everything, all properly attested by court officials in Moro Province.” The mistress stated that from 1904-1907, “various Americans ... have offered me various sums of money in consideration of ... making a written statement to the effect that one John. J. Pershing had lived with me during the period of his residence in Zamboanga” and that “an alleged representative of the *Manila American* ... offered ... fifty dollars gold per month in consideration of my making a statement to the effect that John J. Pershing was the father of my two children.” Joaquina's affidavit, combined with statements from her husband as well as Pershing's friends stating that the accusations against the general were the result of a vast conspiracy to defile his honor, were bundled together and sent through the division headquarters to the Secretary of War, William Howard Taft.¹⁹

Pershing, according to his cover letter to Taft in 1907, was “very glad to have the opportunity of thus presenting ... proof of the falsity of these reports.” General Wood, “softened by consultation [and] fully aware of Pershing's maneuvers,” endorsed the letter as a matter of courtesy. “The within enclosed declarations of the woman and her husband,” Wood remarked to the Secretary of War, “establish in my opinion the falsity of the charges published against General Pershing and should end the matter.”²⁰

Wood had never actually gone to Zamboanga to conduct a personal investigation of the matter, simply taking the affidavits and other evidence gathered by Pershing at face

¹⁹ Zeller H. Shinn Affidavit, January 18, 1907, and Joaquina Ignacio Affidavit, January 19, 1907 in Francis Emory Warren Papers, Volume 44, Western History Research Collection, University of Wyoming, Laramie in Vandiver, 406-407.

²⁰ John J. Pershing to William Howard Taft, letter, February 2, 1907 in Applications, Commissions, and Personal File of John J. Pershing, in Vandiver, 407.

value. Nor was it the general's intent in 1921 to ascertain new facts about the relationship between Pershing and Joaquina over a decade prior. New facts are, however, what came to light after Wood began inquiring into what support systems were in place for the destitute American mestizos in Zamboanga, a subject in which he seemed to be actively investigating. "One thing led to another, and [the Filipino governor] brought up the case of General John J. Pershing, who lived for a long time with a girl named Joaquina Ignacio," Wood wrote in his diary. Information undisclosed in Pershing's affidavits arose from his conversation with the local Filipinos, such as the fact that Joaquina "had a daughter ... who was singularly like [Pershing] in appearance." As for the daughter, it was too late for Wood to meet her, "for she had lived to about 13 years of age and died in Bishop Brent's Hospital."²¹

From the Filipinos' perspective, Pershing had purchased the statements of the people necessary to clear his name, including those of his mistress Joaquina and her husband. "The governor said it was generally understood in Zamboanga that when she signed a declaration before a Justice of the Peace that Pershing was not the father of this girl she received a very considerable sum of money," a disappointed General Wood noted, "and there was every evidence in her method of living, etc., that she had received such a sum of money." It was not the *Manila American* who sought to buy Joaquina's story in gold, but Pershing who used money to ensure his mistress's silence. The young general clandestinely supported his American mestizo daughter until her death, sending money "from time to time to take care of the child." Upon the little girl's passing, because the child was not acknowledged by Pershing and therefore, the insular government, Joaquina had "not received any [government] pension since the death of the

²¹ Wood, diary, August 17, 1921.

girl,” for there would have to be legal proof that the child was Pershing’s. Local Filipinos believed “there was no question at all in Zamboanga about the fact of his being the father of this child or his relations with this woman.”²²

Wood was especially alarmed when Filipinos added that Pershing routinely used his position as military governor of Moro Province from 1909-1913 to ensure that his American mestizo child and the full extent of his relationship with Joaquina would continue to be denied by all parties involved. The retired American soldier who had married Joaquina, Zeller H. Shin, agreed to take in Pershing's children as his own, raising them along with the children he already had with Joaquina. When Shin, a municipal treasurer on the island of Jolo, “was short in his accounts” and then “tried and sentenced,” the adoptive father was “pardoned by General Pershing” instead of being sent to prison. It was within Pershing’s power to pardon Shin, as he was the highest ranking official in the province at the time. “The moral tone of the people had been very much lowered in his administration,” Wood was told by the locals, who believed “his administration had been very disastrous for the best interests of the Filipinos.”²³

Wood takes Action on Behalf of the American Mestizo through the Formation of the American Guardian Association

Whether all elements of the story about Pershing's American mestizo family were true or not, Wood believed them, and was disgusted at the thought that one of the highest ranking American officers in the Army was involved in what he now believed to be a widespread social problem throughout the Philippines. The realization that immorality

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

was pervasive throughout the American colonial endeavor-- whether that meant illicit sex, racial intermingling, or the denial and abandonment of children-- was of great concern to the General. Wood once told his friends that “if we found an officer of the Army guilty of immorality we got rid of him; at least we sent him before a court martial.” Immorality was an amorphous term, as there were no specific regulations regarding illegitimate children in the Army, but Wood believed it was an embarrassment for the American military. No doubt, the general would have applied this logic to Pershing had he unearthed these startling facts while he was commander of the Philippine Division so many years before.²⁴ After Mindanao, the general became committed to creating an organization dedicated to helping destitute American mestizo children, many of whom were in their situation as a result of outright abandonment by their American fathers. Upon arriving in Manila, Wood asked local officials about the condition of American mestizos in the capital. To the general's dismay, the chief of police informed him that there was “considerable traffic in [American mestizo] girls” there, and that the situation was getting worse every day.²⁵

The circumstances in Manila led Wood to begin his own investigation of the condition of the American mestizos, not alone, but with the help of his most trusted aide, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Johnston. Originally from North Carolina, Johnston followed in the martial tradition of his grandfather, US Civil War Confederate general Robert Daniel Johnston, becoming an officer in the armed forces of the United States at a young age. Gordon knew the terrain of the Philippines well, having served with the US Army during the Philippine-American War, where he was awarded the Medal of Honor for

²⁴ Wood, diary, November 29, 1921.

²⁵ Wood, diary, November 18, 1921.

bravery in combat against Filipino nationalist forces. Johnston's numerous contacts in the Philippines-- Wood continually noted in his diaries how many locals liked and respected the officer-- made him the best choice to conduct an investigation into the subject. Although seemingly unlikely considering his cultural background as a white American raised in the American South, Johnston was to become one of the most important advocates for American mestizos in the islands, a true believer in the cause.

Working with local authorities, Johnston uncovered alarming data concerning the American mestizo population in Manila. "Investigation has ... brought to light hideous pictures of tiny girls of twelve or fourteen exploited and taught to lead immoral lives for the profit of their own mothers," Johnston reported in 1921. "The number of girls-- mere children-- so engaged, is appalling. They have never had a chance to know what they were doing." The lieutenant colonel blamed both their Filipina mothers and their American fathers for these extreme cases of exploited American mestizas. "In these cases the mothers are completely immoral, the fathers have died," or, as was the case with many American soldiers, "left the islands without making provisions for their families, or have become utter degenerates themselves."²⁶

Already disgusted by his initial findings, the Southern officer embarked on an even more intensive investigation, discovering that the sex traffic of American mestizas was very real. Girls were being sold "for as small a sum as 60 pesos-- about the price of a caribou calf." To Americans and Filipinos unfamiliar with the situation, Johnston knew that this information would seem unbelievable. The officer sought to prove or disprove

²⁶ Gordon Johnston, "The American Guardian Association," *The American Oldtimer*, September 1939, 11, American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines. The editor noted that the article "was written in 1921, but no better statement of the purposes of the Association has since been offered."

the allegations by creating a sting operation to catch sex predators, enlisting the help of a member of the US Congress visiting the islands at the time. In a carefully planned operation, the congressman “brought to the verge of completion the purchase of an American girl for the above sum; the contract was ready for signature and the girl for delivery-- needless to say he had convincing evidence.”²⁷

Johnston reported his controversial findings back to his commanding officer, Leonard Wood, urging that some type of social welfare organization be created responsible for “devising preventive as well as palliative measures for conditions resulting from dereliction of duty on the part of parents.” Wood understood something had to be done to combat the abandonment by their American fathers he had seen multiple times throughout his travels through so many regions of the Philippines. Upon reviewing the data, the general sought out assistance from social welfare organizations already well-established in the islands. The Catholic Church would be the first to offer help with what was to become an enormous effort for the American mestizos. Archbishop Daugherty, the highest ranking Catholic official in the Philippines, upon hearing of the findings, came to Wood's office “to offer his cooperation in the handling of the mestizo girls.” The Archbishop, speaking on behalf of the entire church community, was “very glad to take in thirty of forty of the Catholic girls-- or for that matter, girls of any religion-- into the House of the Good Shepard at Santa Ana.”²⁸

Encouraged by this immediate support, Wood and Johnston sought to build a coalition of already existing organizations willing to lend assistance to American mestizo children. After “discussing certain features undertaken to safeguard the interests and take

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Wood, diary, November 18, 1921.

care of the many American mestizo girls who are scattered throughout the community,” Wood, that same day, began personally advocating for the children at the masonic “meeting of the Knight Templars at their temple in Manila.”²⁹ The formula in which he approached the Knights that day, making a “short talk, speaking with reference to the work [people] are doing on behalf of the abandoned American mestizas, ... bespeaking their support,” would be repeated again and again to gain support for the cause.

Soon thereafter, a dozen more chapters of expatriate American masonic organizations joined the coalition for the American mestizos. Other fraternal societies in the islands, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Elks, and symbolically, six chapters of the United Spanish War Veterans, followed suit. Professional organizations, including the Association of American Nurses, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, and the National Federation of Federal Employees, and businesses, like the Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Company and the Pacific Commercial Company, signed up at Wood and Johnston's urging. “Charitable organizations, the Y.M.C.A., and the leaders in educational institutions,” Johnston revealed, “signified their strong approval and active support.” Most importantly, however, was the widespread support of “all [christian] churches and religious societies,” despite personal differences among their members as to the proper house of worship.³⁰

The outpouring of support led to Wood and Johnston forming an umbrella organization officially charged “to guard and care for children wholly or partly of American blood in the Philippines who are without proper protectors,” important considering that the American Mestizo Protective Organization had been rendered

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Johnston, “The American Guardian Association,” p. 1.

defunct by the conclusion of the First World War.³¹ On November 18, 1921, the American Guardian Association (AGA) was created, a new comprehensive welfare organization for the American mestizos, that Johnston believed-- based upon his personal research and experience in the islands-- was long overdue. "The urgent need for such an organization," the Southern officer implored to a local Manila newspaper, "is and has been for a long time past well known to every American familiar with conditions here."

American Expatriates Support the American Guardian Association's Agenda

Johnston felt that "proof of [the need] may be found in the immediate and spirited response of the American community to the call for members." Within a day, donations to the AGA amounted to 4000 pesos. "The work of the American Guardian Association is going ahead very rapidly and with great interest," a proud General Wood noted in his diary. "I believe we can do some good work for these American Mestizo girls."³² Only a month after the AGA's formation, there were 541 charter members and a total of 10,000 pesos in its treasury, due in part to "the press, both American and Filipino," who were "active and generous in its encouragement." Six months later, there were 788 members, a figure that represented 14 percent of the 6000 expatriate Americans residing in the islands. "The names of the incorporators, headed by Governor-General Leonard Wood, who willingly pledged themselves to support," Johnston said of those individuals who came forward to volunteer their time for the AGA, "and the promptness with which

³¹ Ibid., 9-10.

³² Wood, diary, November 20, 1921.

warm-hearted American women came forward to offer, and are giving their loyal services, still further attest to the soundness of the purpose of the organization.”³³

Motivations for joining the AGA surely varied, depending on the viewpoint of the individual, but Wood and Johnston felt it was obvious to all that “conditions not only warranted but demanded that proper steps be taken to provide for many children of American blood in these Islands.” Humanitarian concerns for the American mestizos were believed to trump all others. “Probably the most impelling motive which stirred people to action was the feeling that at present and in the past these children have not had a fair chance in life; and also the feeling that they are a peculiar charge on us because they were brought into existence by American fathers who, through death, misfortune, or other reason, failed to provide the protection and care to which every child is entitled,” an emotional Johnston wrote in the “First Call” to arms for the AGA. “It isn’t fair and it isn’t right-- and those who learn of such conditions cannot fully enjoy comfort, luxury, and ease without holding out a helping hand to these unfortunate children who are suffering through no fault of their own.”³⁴ It seems that the expatriate community was embarrassed that so many of their countrymen had left illegitimate mestizo children in the Philippines, which emboldened them to lend their support.

Although encouragement and support from individuals in the American and Filipino communities seemed promising for successfully engaging many of the problems the American mestizos faced, the AGA needed all the help that it could muster. By 1921, there were, according to the most recent Philippine census, 18,000 American mestizos geographically scattered throughout the country. Some mestizos were older, as Leonard

³³ “Roster of the American-Guardian Association” (Manila: Manila Bureau of Printing, 1922), 12.

³⁴ Johnston, “The American Guardian Association,” p. 9-10.

Wood and other Americans' travel diaries revealed, but according to Johnston, “a great majority [were] naturally, still young.” Like the old survey the AMPO conducted to ascertain the condition of the American mestizos a half decade prior, the AGA was in the process of carrying out their own in 1921. Preliminary findings indicated that “while numbers of [American mestizos] are well-cared for by loving parents or have succeeded in making their own way, there are far too many who are existing under most distressing and demoralizing conditions.”³⁵ Marguerite Wolfson, an American woman prominent in the AGA, revealed that “police and constabulary reports showed that at least eight thousand of the eighteen thousand American mestizo children were in a sad plight,” numbers in line with the levels of poverty that the AMPO had estimated for the population years before.³⁶ These reports, for many expatriate Americans who supported the AGA, confirmed what they already believed-- this was a population that needed aid, guidance and assistance.

The AGA embarked on an ambitious agenda to alleviate the suffering of the most destitute of the American mestizo population, hoping that support at a young age would translate into the creation of productive adults. The stated purpose of the AGA was humanitarian, to “insure, as far as funds will permit: A decent moral environment and suitable care for American-Mestizos in their early childhood: in their growth, an education (under American supervision) including a trade or occupation by which an honorable living can be made, with the end in view that they become self-respecting and worthy citizens of the Philippines.” The AGA had high expectations for the futures of the American mestizos it assisted, based closely upon assumed gender roles for males and

³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³⁶ *Asia*, Volume XXIV, Number 1, January 1924 (New York: Asia Magazine Inc.), 62.

females in the early 20th century. American mestizo boys “must feel under the necessity of 'making good' and commanding their fellow citizens,” necessary if they were to be among the next generation of leaders in the Philippines. American mestizas were to be given feminine roles that middle class American and Filipina women of the time period were expected to fulfill, “educated for business, nursing, teaching, etc.,” and “if they show aptitude, ... will be so trained that they will develop into good, capable wives of honorable men.”³⁷

New American Racializations of the American Mestizos

The AGA racialized the American mestizos in the Philippines in new ways, while maintaining some of the old prejudices and assumptions that Americans in the islands had from the previous decades. Blame was not placed directly upon nationalist Filipinos for racism towards the Americans, but upon their complicated racial framework that had been fluctuating since the arrival of the Chinese and the Spanish and the creation of new mestizo populations. “Spanish and Chinese mestizo children in the social organization of the Islands have a definite status,” Johnston argued to Americans as he tried to garner support for the AGA. “The case of American mestizos is often quite different,” he believed. The American mestizos simply did not have enough time to find their place in this new order, but, it was hoped that with the help of a benevolent organization, their niche in Philippine society-- hopefully middle class, and maybe even upper class society-- could be found. Because of their lack of recognition in the Philippine racial framework, the AGA believed “boys are kicked out to scuffle for themselves” and “girls

³⁷ Johnston, 11.

are most frequently considered legitimate prey,” especially “when neither their natural protectors nor a good home exists.”³⁸

It becomes obvious that the AGA made a direct connection between race and phenotype concerning the American mestizo population. “They cannot be lost in the multitude, for freckles or clear-cut American features often mark them out only too visibly,” the AGA argued to potential supporters. Even more than physical appearance, other purportedly “American” racial attributes made them stand apart from ordinary Filipinos. “Their quickness of mind and body, their energy and activity and spirit of adventure stand out too conspicuously for their own good when not controlled or directed by those who understand them,” AGA proponents argued. The mixing of American and Filipino had highly unusual repercussions for American mestizos, especially the younger girls, for “they have a very high-strung nervous organization and are unusually emotional, so the poor little girls need the closest supervision and care lest irremediable harm come to them.” With the intervention of the umbrella of social welfare organizations under the leadership of the AGA in the American mestizas' childhood, however, “investigation shows that, having safely weathered the dangerous period and having arrived at mental and moral as well as physical maturity, they make fine women and are particularly sought after in marriage by self-respecting and ambitious Filipinos who appreciate their qualities.”³⁹

Old prejudices concerning the parents of the American mestizos were still widely held among the Americans who supported the efforts of the AGA. Marguerite Wolfson, head of the organization's Woman's Advisory Board, maintained that most of the

³⁸ Ibid., 10.

³⁹ Ibid.

children's American fathers and Filipina mothers were of lowest moral character.

Wolfson believed people of the lower classes were attracted to each other, whatever their race, making “such marriages ... inevitable, ... [as] there has always been many more American men of the uneducated kind in this country than American women of the same class.” Wolfson chided the fathers, arguing that “in many cases the American father, either an ex-soldier or a civil employee, had abandoned the native woman and the children and returned to the United States or had died without leaving them any means of support,” but reserved the most scathing criticism for the Filipina mothers. “The mothers, often not women of good character in the first place, had drifted into a life of prostitution, to which their daughters, generally light-haired and particularly attractive to Filipinos and Chinese, were doomed to succeed.” The lack of morality was feared to have spread unwillingly to the next generation, for “many of these young [American mestizo] girls are openly sold into concubinage by their mothers and Filipino relatives.”⁴⁰

Despite her biases against the lower class, Wolfson believed that there were many Americans and Filipinas of the good type in the Philippines who raised their American mestizo children properly. “Everywhere in the Islands,” Wolfson held, “there are numbers of respectable Americans married to decent, self-respecting native women.” However, these examples were few and far between for the AGA Women's Advisory Board member. The abandonment of many American mestizos and their lack of a prominent position in the Philippine racial schema led AGA members to conclude that all the children, whatever their social status or status of care, “are adversely affected by the

⁴⁰ *Asia*, 61.

stigma laid on the American mestizo,” which was of an abandoned child born to degenerate parents, an embarrassment to the American colonial endeavor.⁴¹

How did Wolfson, a white American middle class woman, racialize the American mestizo population that the AGA was to care for? She believed, like others in the AGA, that race, phenotype, and blood were all directly connected. American mestizos, because of their “white” blood, should have been revered for their unique racial admixture. Wolfson held that “in Spanish days, of course, the same conditions existed, but then the awe and respect for whites were so great that white blood gave mestizo children the advantage over the pure native.” This reflected a common belief among Americans in the Philippines in the 1920s, that Filipinos simply did not respect the natural superiority of whites in the world's racial paradigm as they supposedly did centuries prior.⁴²

Wolfson's concern with the Filipinos' perception of the mestizos' “white” blood showed that not much had changed regarding how members of the American community defined what an “American” in the Philippines was in the early 20th century. Many Americans still held that the belief that there was a one to one correlation between “American” and “white.” Of course, African-Americans who settled in the Philippines had numerous mestizo children of their own, but these were of no concern to Wolfson, probably because she believed that blacks in the Philippines were of the unsavory, lower class type she so despised.

Black Americans' Reactions to the American Guardian Association and their
Racializations of the American Mestizos

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Although the AGA official believed that blacks were not Americans, hence could not bear American mestizo children, the African-American community, still very present in the Philippines, felt otherwise. Unbeknown to Wolfson, the Colored American Community League (CACC) was one of the leading supporters of the AGA, donating money and services to help the distressed among the American mestizo community, not distinguishing between mestizo children with black or white American fathers.⁴³ Late in 1921, black residents in the Philippines approached the newly appointed Governor-General Wood offering to assist with the ambitious efforts of the AGA. “A delegation of colored Americans, ... all old soldiers and sailors, ... came in to pay their respects and appreciation and satisfaction in the way things are being done,” Wood remembered in his diary. African-Americans in the islands sought official recognition from General Wood's administration in the Philippines, presenting him with a formal letter offering their help in the running of the island's affairs.⁴⁴

T. Nimrod McKinney, the Vice-President and General Manager of the Philippines American Company of California “took great pleasure in introducing those gentleman who are officers of the Colored American Community League of the Philippine Islands” to Leonard Wood. Many of the members of the CACL reflected the fact that after the Philippine-American War, significant numbers of black servicemen made the islands their new home, foregoing a return trip to the continental United States in favor of the country's new colonial possession. L.E. Young had served in the US Navy, and followed the path that many sailors took after their retirement, becoming “a businessman of this city [of Manila].” F.C. Jones served in the US Army's 26th Infantry, and after retirement,

⁴³ “Roster of the American-Guardian Association”, July 31, 1922 (Manila, Philippines: Bureau of Printing), 3.

⁴⁴ Wood, diary, November 29, 1921.

became prominent in veteran's organizations, rising to the position of "Senior Vice-Commander of the Philippines Department of the United Spanish War Veterans." Other members of the CACL reflected that there had been new influxes of black servicemen within the African-American community in the Philippines after the first decade of the 20th century. Chester Sanders was one of the CACL's younger members, a recipient of many "distinguished honors and decorations" for his service as "a Captain in France" in the segregated US Army during World War I. Upon Sanders' retirement, he too explored commercial opportunities in the Philippines, becoming a "business man of Manila as well." Moses Montgomery, another younger member of the CACL, served in France as a Lieutenant, retiring from the Medical Department to settle down in the islands.⁴⁵

McKinney, "spokesmen of this delegation," extended "greetings from ... [the African-American] community and our best wishes" for Wood's "continued good health and success." The CACL wanted to make it clear to the Governor-General that they should be considered valuable resources by his administration. "We bring no protest, nor ill will to register against anyone, however we are of the opinion," the African-American businessman stated using carefully crafted, but forceful language, "that our community equaling any other commercially, morally and otherwise, should be extended the same official courtesy that others enjoy." There were a wide variety of endeavors in which the CACL could assist the insular government, McKinney argued. "On committees for the general welfare of the country, and on matters American," he continued, "we feel that members of our community should be included by your excellency."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Members of the CACL had many objectives, but most important of these were the welfare of the “American” community. McKinney informed Wood that “the league was organized for the purpose of taking care of the members of our community, socially, commercially, morally, and otherwise.” Their community faced a special problem, however, one in which they shared with white Americans in the Philippines. “We are paying special attention to the children of our group without parental care,” the African-American businessman revealed to Wood. “We offer our assistance to you in any capacity.” It would only make sense for Wood to include the CACL with the other groups who had already pledged their support to the cause of the American mestizos in the Philippines, and he immediately took their offer. Taking the offer, however, required Wood to acknowledge that not all American mestizos in the Philippines had fair skin, blonde hair, and freckles.

The CACL, unlike many white Americans who offered to assist the AGA, had a broadened view of what defined an American mestizo, based on their definition of what an “American” actually was. For blacks in the Philippines, anyone born in the United States, not simply those with white phenotypes, were American. Consequently, this altered definition contributed to another version of how American mestizos in the Philippines were racialized, and, just as importantly, forced Leonard Wood to recognize that other types of American mestizos existed. It still remained to be seen if other members of the AGA would embrace this new racialization, which included mestizos with black fathers as part of the larger American mestizo population.⁴⁷ It is also unclear whether African-Americans who lived among Filipinos reidentified themselves in any way: in this instance, they were making a claim to “Americanness.”

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Filipino Racializations and Reactions to the American Guardian Association

Filipino racializations of the American mestizo could best be exemplified in the Philippine Assembly's reaction to Quezon's proposal, which "assumed them to be Filipinos."⁴⁸ The rhetoric and actions of the American Guardian Association, however, sparked a debate within the Filipino community about the nature of the actions taken by American expatriates for the welfare of the American mestizos in the islands. Filipino nationalists, seeking to gain independence from the United States, were especially distrustful of the intentions of the colonizers.

The Filipino community was divided in their feelings about Leonard Wood's actions and the American Guardian Association. "Before the report of the Wood-Forbes mission was given to the public," Dr. Serafin M. Macaraig wrote in the periodical *Isagani*, *De "El Filibusterismo Por Jose Rizal*, "the class of American mestizos in the Islands did not amount to very much in the economic and social life of the community." The Filipino professor at the University of the Philippines argued that based upon their upbringing and immersion in Filipino culture, "they are natives at heart and their lot was with the average Filipino." Leonard Wood and the AGA's language about the American mestizos suggested something different, the sociologist contended.⁴⁹

Although Macaraig was uneasy about the AGA, he could not deny the fact that it was primarily a welfare organization for indigent and abandoned children, referring to it as "an honest, charitable undertaking, for which the American community should have

⁴⁸ Jacob Lang, "Statement on the Situation of American-Filipina-Mestizo Children in the Philippine Islands," report, February 9, 1915, Roll 49, Manuel Quezon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan), 6.

⁴⁹ *Isagani*, Volume 1, Number 5, "Junio" June 1925 (Manila, Philippines), 9-10.

been congratulated.” The professor, however, warned that the ulterior motive of such an organization for the American mestizos was sinister, aimed at transforming this segment of the “Filipino” population into something detrimental to the Filipino nationalist project, simply proxies of the American colonizers. “Its ultimate aim is of such nature as to arouse suspicion and hatred,” the outspoken academic believed, “and to foster race prejudice; because the main tendency of its work is to alienate this people from us by educating them in American ways.”⁵⁰ As historian Paul Kramer notes, a common Philippine identity and nation-building were being constructed in the 1920s; any argument that the American mestizos-- or any mestizo-- were not part of the new nation was contrary to the goals of these unifying paradigms.⁵¹

To Macaraig, the language that the AGA used to describe its goals for the mestizos betrayed the organization's true intentions. When Americans in the AGA stated that they “intended that education and supervision [of the mestizos] should be under American ways, as transmitting the ideals and traditions of our country to those that come under our charge,” the sociology professor was outraged. Macaraig came to the conclusion that, “in other words, they want the Filipino American mestizos to become Americans.” Technically, because of parentage and citizenship, the American mestizos already were Americans, if American parentage could be proven. However, Macaraig was more concerned about the cultural implications if American mestizos decided to embrace a culture other than the one Filipino nationalists were attempting to create. The implications of this, according to the academic, were wide-ranging and potentially

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See Chapter 3 “Representative Men: The Politics of Nation-Building” in Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006) for more on the construction of the Filipino nationality under colonial rule.

disruptive to the evolution of Filipino society. The Americans “may be sincere in their purpose and unaware of its consequences, but the disastrous results are apparent to anyone, and proofs are already abundant to prove the alienating effects of their activities.”⁵² Arguing that the American mestizos were not Filipinos held the possibility of jarring open a Pandora’s Box for the nascent Philippine nation. If other mestizo groups, regional groups, or even language groups claimed they were not Filipino, then the nationalist project could be stymied at the crucial time when the indigenous politicians were arguing that the homogenous Philippines was ready for independence.

The sociology professor believed that the AGA was drawing the mestizos toward the American orbit at the expense of their common Filipino heritage. “Cases are known now where children under the care of the American Guardian Association will not recognize and admit their parentage to their Filipino mothers,” Macaraig learned upon personal investigation of the organization. The professor believed that the “race work” of the AGA must either be altered or stopped altogether. “The American mestizos are now undergoing a transformation, and it is not with a prophetic vision, but with a sense of duty that I venture out with the statement,” the academic boldly declared, “that if the work of the American Guardian Association is not properly directed for the interest of the Filipinos, there will be a time when the American mestizos will constitute a social class” in the Philippines, a class antagonistic to Filipino nationalism and identity.⁵³

Macaraig's understanding of the broader history of the Philippines and the past and present racial framework of the islands led him to believe that American mestizos occupying a separate social class would be a detriment to future generations of Filipinos.

⁵² *Isagani*, 9-10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The Philippines' history of racial mixing prior to the arrival of the Americans weighed heavily on the academic's conclusions. Spanish mestizos, in most cases, identified politically and culturally with the Spanish colonizers during their time as administrators of the Philippines, looking down upon the “Indios.” The Chinese mestizos, for a time, believed themselves as culturally distinct, monopolizing the islands' business and economic opportunities for those whom they believed to be of the same class. Macaraig feared that the rhetoric of the AGA would spark the creation of a new American mestizo class following these examples, a group “conscious of their feigned superiority and differences from the Filipinos.” The Chinese mestizos had come to believe their fate lay with aligning themselves with the larger Filipino population, becoming nationalist Filipinos themselves. The sociology professor believed the American mestizos might never make this turn, becoming “a perennial source of problem in making the inhabitants of the Islands a homogeneous people.”⁵⁴

Debates over the American Mestizos Spill over into the Education System

The existence of the American mestizo proved controversial to both the expatriate American and Filipino community. Debates about how the American mestizos fit into the Philippine racial framework, or the American racial framework for that matter, manifested themselves not just within the confines of AGA meetings and academic publications, but within the local school system of Manila. When American families began arriving in the islands at the turn of the century, schooling became one of the most important social issues. Where were American children, assumed to be superior in capabilities than Filipinos, supposed to receive instruction fit for the future leaders of

⁵⁴ Ibid.

civilization? For the many Americans who sought to help their mestizo offspring under the banner of the AGA, there were others who held them as too racially distinct to be considered American, tainted by the blood of their Filipina mothers. American parents in Manila taught their children an important lesson in the Philippines-- that they were superior to the Filipinos they were meant to tutor in civilization-- and as a result required separate schooling.

Numerous “American” schools were created in the first decades of the 20th century, the largest being Central High School, a public high school which opened its doors to the students in 1914.⁵⁵ The school was unassuming, its architecture resembling other American-built structures at the time, minus a few stark Philippine features. “The school building was a modern, red brick one much like other school houses,” one observer described it, “except that the windows were made of shell.” The advantages of this unique construction were that the windows “admitted the light, but prevented the heat from getting into the building.” Nor was the curriculum and schedule out of the ordinary; like other schools from the same period, Central was regimented and Spartan, opening at 7:30 in the morning and closing at 1:00 in the afternoon.⁵⁶ Within its walls, however, debates about social policy came to a head. “For the first few years, it was reserved for American students,” defined as the children of one or more white American parents, a Manila community correspondent documented. “As a consequence, [Central] was also referred to as the American School,” despite the fact that no blacks or descendants of blacks who resided in the islands were allowed to attend.

⁵⁵ Gleeck, 153-154.

⁵⁶ “As Others Do It,” *The Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, October 13, 1937, 5.

Filipino students were banned from attending Central because of the demanding curriculum, which “was developed primarily to prepare its students for further education in the United States.” The teachers themselves reflected this as well, and “nearly all of its teachers were Americans.” The segregated school system in Manila would exist in various forms until World War II, when the Japanese occupiers of the Philippines forcefully abolished the education system in the islands, replacing it with their own.

Central High School was reflective of the American community in the Philippines with many “children of Army personnel” and the “sons of prominent business families” attending. In the 1920 academic year, there were around 625 students at Central, “nearly all of whom were American citizens.”⁵⁷ At first glance, this data seems little worthy of analysis, but combined with the fact that “only 275 had American parentage on both sides of the family,” it deserves further review. Indeed, the students prided themselves that Americans and American mestizos were educated there. One of Central’s female students, Amy Rae Gillis, who attended Central for five years before resettling in the United States, described the facility’s workings in the *Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, the local newspaper of Brainerd, Minnesota. “White persons and mestizos (those who are half white and half Philippine) are the only ones allowed in this school,” Gillis relayed to the paper’s predominately white readers.⁵⁸ If Central reflected segregation among the American and Filipino communities in the important respect of educating the next generation, it also reflected the nature of bachelor colonization and the widespread occurrence, even among the middle and upper classes, of intermarriage between American men to Filipinas and creation of large numbers of American mestizo children.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. The article makes no note as to whether Amy Rae Gillis was a “white person” or a “mestizo.”

Although Central was supposedly only for “American” children, many in the expatriate American community believed that their mestizo children were eligible, not believing that Filipino blood was worthy of disqualification for a college preparatory education. In Central High School, mestizos fell on the American side of the racial binary. For many in the expatriate community, American mestizos were American, as long as they were raised according to American cultural and educational standards. It would seem that in the Philippines, definitions of “American” narrowed, with many not believing blacks should be classified as such, but definitions also widened, with many of the same people believing that American mestizos-- as long as they had a white parent--deserved American privileges, such as a college preparatory education.

Along with the more inclusive definition of “American” came the strict constructionist interpretation. There was an equally strong sentiment in the American community that defining the mestizos as American, and therefore allowing them to attend Central High School, was far too liberal a racialization. American mestizos belonged in Filipino schools with Filipino schoolchildren, not commingling with fully white American boys and girls in the classroom. This view was reflected in the *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, which in one of its early issues, “insisted that public school or not, Central should be exclusively reserved for 'full blood' American children.”

Three prominent members of the American community, E.E. Elser, C.W. Rosenstock, and Bishop Mosher (the last of which supported the AGA) were appointed to study the question, their conclusion being that the already segregated school system should be further segregated, and that the mestizos should be sent to other schools specifically for the children of Filipinos. It was suggested that the government “willingly

set aside the Central School for the exclusive use of the American community for the primary education of children,” for “the American community should not be forced to maintain a school of its own.” American mestizos, in the conservative formulation of what constituted an “American,” were not included in this definition, therefore removing the majority of children who actually attended Central from eligibility.⁵⁹

The conservative and liberal formulations of what constituted an “American” in the islands would come to blows when members of the American Chamber of Commerce approached the Bureau of Education demanding the mestizos be removed from Central High School at the end of the academic year. After heated debate about why it was necessary to further segregate the school system, the argument for expelling the American mestizo student population was eventually lost, with the “strong-minded” Director of Education, Dr. Luther Bewley, rejecting the proposal. As head of the Bureau of Education, it was ultimately his decision alone in how to organize the school system of the Philippines, and he “refused to reserve Central exclusively for ‘full blooded Americans.’” The American mestizos would be allowed to stay at Central High School as long as Bewley remained in his influential administrative position, although his exact reasoning for such a stance remains undetermined. The fact that American mestizos were granted automatic US citizenship if they were claimed by their fathers is one possible reason-- technically, the American mestizos would be “American” by the letter of the law.⁶⁰

For the American Chamber of Commerce, a public school for full-blooded American children was now out of the question. A private school, however, funded

⁵⁹ *American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, in Gleeck, 155.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

solely through donations and tuition payments of like-minded Americans, was still a possibility. The desire for a separate school became a reality in 1920, when the new, appropriately named “American School,” based upon the conservative definition of “American,” was opened in response to failed attempts to convince the Bureau of Education of the necessity of another segregated publicly funded school that would duplicate services when already existing structures had enough capacity. The new American School “lived a hand-to-mouth existence,” changing its location multiple times until sufficient enrollments allowed it to overcome its early financial difficulties.⁶¹ This was but a small price to pay for the advantages of educational purity and future control of the economy and race of the American empire.

It was not surprising that the American School was to form a “rivalry, at times fierce, with the many times larger Central High.” For our purposes, it is interesting to see how differing racializations of the American mestizos contributed to each school's reputation in the local community. Both schools gained reputations in part based upon their admittance or non-admittance of American mestizo children. “Central's student body, almost 500 strong, was still almost entirely composed of American citizens, a majority of whom were children of American-Filipino marriages,” compared to American's student body of less than 50 white American children. As Central was supported by public funds, the school had “a good many more students than could be admitted [who] wanted to attend,” consequently making its “standards ... high and discipline strict.” The American School's enrollment process seemed haphazard at best in comparison, for the school admitted every white American child whose parents were willing to pay tuition. “Those who were resentful of the usually high-status families

⁶¹ Ibid., 155-156.

whose children attended the American school accused its students of being less talented,” one Manila observer noted.⁶²

For allowing American mestizos within its walls, Central “had the name for being less snobbish and less anti-Filipino than the American School.” The American School, on the other hand, tried to foster an image that it was an elite college preparatory institution, insisting that its purpose was to create “a thoroughly American atmosphere, requiring high competence in the English language and exclusively geared to further education in the United States.” This argument seemed like one created after its actual establishment, not the real reason for the school's creation, for “no one disputed the fact . . . that pro-segregationist considerations had played a large part in accounting for its independent existence.”⁶³ Simply put, the school existed solely to produce a particular set of students that could be molded into white middle class Americans.

Filipinos were divided over the measures taken within the Manila school system in regard to the American mestizos. The private American School was de facto off limits to Filipino students even if they were fluent in English and competent in their studies. More vexing was that the public Central High School, supposedly open to everyone, was de facto segregated as well. Some Filipinos questioned why the American mestizos received special treatment in regards to public education simply because of their American parentage when the group was culturally Filipino.

In the early 1920s, it is clear that the American expatriate and Filipino nationalist communities saw the existence of the American mestizos as a controversial issue, with disagreements as to what “race” or nationality the group were, debates that spilled over

⁶² Ibid., 156-157.

⁶³ Ibid., 157.

into the local school system. Wide-ranging and varied racializations of the American mestizos, a relatively new population in its first generation in the Philippines, is something to be expected, considering that not enough time passed for one interpretation to emerge dominant. Whether the observer was American or Filipino, competing racializations coexisted in the islands. Imposed racializations of the American mestizos followed some precedents set by earlier mestizo populations in the Philippines. At the same time, however, differing definitions of the term “American” led to completely new conceptions of race never before seen in the islands. The story of American mestizo racializations does not stop in the Pacific, however. When Leonard Wood attempted to garner help for the American mestizos from his friends and colleagues in the United States, he had to explain to Americans what an American mestizo was. Americans in the United States soon proved that they had their own notions of race and the peoples of the Philippines, some of them contradictory to those proposed by Wood. The myriad of racializations of the American mestizos in the United States will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Clashing Racializations of the American Mestizos in the United States,
1925-1935

Year after year, General Leonard Wood, the white colonial champion of the American Guardian Association, sought ways to help the organization achieve its cultural and humanitarian agenda. Wood initially believed that the American population in the Philippines could provide enough support to enable the AGA to accomplish its work for the American mestizos. Every promising outlet was used to advocate the cause, even if it meant using his annual reports to the US Congress as the mouthpiece of the organization. In the “Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippines, 1922,” Wood wrote that “the object of this association is the care of the children, one or both of whose parents are Americans.” In the same report in 1923, he wrote the AGA “has made substantial progress during the year and is doing splendid work in the care of American mestizo children whose fathers have died or have abandoned them.” His 1924 and 1925 reports argued that the “work of the organization is deserving of the highest praise.” Despite Wood’s efforts, the organization was facing a serious shortage of funds which threatened its very existence by late 1925. Wood decided it was time to expand beyond the borders of the Philippines to garner support for the American mestizos, looking towards the people of the United States.¹

¹ Leonard Wood, “Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands, 1922” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924); Wood, “Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands, 1923” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925); Wood, “Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands, 1924” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1926); Wood, “Annual Report of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands, 1925” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927)

Leonard Wood makes an “Appeal to the American People for Children of American Blood”

“The American people have been so generous in their response to the cries of children all over the world that I have no hesitation in appealing to them for children of their own blood who are in need of help,” Leonard Wood declared in his 1925 “Appeal to the American People for Children of American Blood.” Wood, for the first time, would introduce residents of the metropole to the colonized racialization of the American mestizo formulated in the Philippines. “In the Philippine Islands,” the Wood continued, “there are at present about two-thousand five hundred children of American fathers and Filipino mothers who have been either abandoned or who are growing up in pernicious surroundings.” These American mestizos “show markedly American physical and mental characteristics, which in a measure unfits them for the environment in which they now live.”²

Wood argued to the residents of the metropole that the American mestizos deserved to be saved from lives of destitution and without middle class values. As children of white American blood, “they have, as a rule, active intelligence and a natural love for adventure which, unless properly controlled leads to mischief for want of proper supervision and direction.” Without help from American role models, “the boys are apt to become vagabonds and the girls a prey to immoral influences while still of tender years.” But with American assistance, “when properly guarded and educated, these children show every sign of becoming useful and desirable citizens.”³

² Leonard Wood, “American Guardian Association of Manila,” November 23, 1925, Box 1, Hanford Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa (hereafter cited as Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library).

³ Ibid.

Wood had laid out his case for supporting the American mestizos in the Philippines, but for scholars, his “Appeal for the Children of American Blood” raises many more questions than it answers. What exactly was Wood trying to accomplish in making an appeal to citizens in the continental United States to help these children in the Philippines? How would the General's argument, that the American mestizos were essentially innocent American children trapped, though no fault of their own, in a terrible economic and social situation, be received by the people of the metropole, who were hearing about this population for the first time with stereotypes and prejudices about Filipinos already in mind?

The question as to why Leonard Wood was making his 1925 appeal is the easier one to answer. Wood was frank as to why he was telling the story of the American mestizos to new audiences across the Pacific Ocean. “American residents in the Philippines, realizing the poignant problem of these children, have exerted every effort to help them,” Wood believed. “At my invitation, leading citizens of the Islands, in active cooperation with every church established in the Philippines, with the Army, the Navy, and commercial and fraternal bodies founded the American Guardian Association to guard and care for children of American or half-American blood.” Genuine support for the AGA by expatriate Americans was extensive, one of the major points the general sought to convey. “In schools and homes established by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Protestant Episcopal and Union Churches of the Philippines and the Agricultural Schools of the Islands, it has been possible to care for one hundred and

thirty-five half American children [out of thousands] in the past four years,” Wood revealed.⁴

There were, however, fundraising issues within the organization that Wood feared would make this effort unsustainable, like the American Mestizo Protective Organization (AMPO) before it. The most prominent problem, in the general's opinion, was the lack of sufficient funds. “The whole financial burden, which amounts to some fifteen thousand dollars a year, has so far been borne by the small and heavily taxed American community of the Philippines.” The AGA needed new donors to lend support if the organization's efforts were to continue. “It is impossible for the Association to assume further responsibilities with its present inadequate and hand-to-mouth resources,” Wood pleaded to the readers of his 1925 appeal. “The care of these children costs fifteen dollars per month for each girl and twelve and a half for each boy,” a sum that included “board, lodging, clothes, and education.” Because of the need for thrift, “the children are brought up in the simplest way, with the object in view of becoming self-supporting at the earliest possible date.” With the guidance of the AGA, these children were steered towards occupations which were in high demand in the Philippines, at least according to the expatriate Americans and colonial officials involved with the organization. The American mestizos were to be directed towards “the needs of the Islands for Agriculturalists, nurses and teachers, and children with any kind of aptitude are directed towards these vocations.”⁵

After extolling the efforts of the AGA, Leonard Wood made a nationalistic pitch to the American people. “If the citizens of the United States will contribute, the work of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

the American Guardian Association can be continued and enlarged,” and this, he promised, would bring great prestige to the United States, for “many more of these half American children can be saved from the fate that threatens them and can be converted into citizens who will be a credit to their fathers' race.” From the last chapter, we deduced that General Wood, when referring to the race of the fathers of the American mestizos, was referring to white Americans. We also have evidence that Wood encountered African-American mestizos because of his contact with the Colored American Community League (CACL). By 1925, however, it seems that contact with the CACL had made little to no impression upon his classification of American mestizos.

Upon examination of the most prominent supporters of the AGA’s fundraising drive in the metropole, all were white. Wood told his audiences that “among the distinguished Americans who have lived and served in the Philippines and who know intimately and endorse the work done by the American Guardian Association and who are keenly aware of the necessity for its continuance, are Chief Justice Taft [and] Ex-Governor W. Cameron Forbes.” There were religious and military officials too who supported their work, including “Bishop H. Brent, General James. H. Harboard, General Hugh L. Scott, General W. M. Wright, [and] Governor-General James F. Smith,” as well as those in the business community, including “Mr. Martin Egan of J.P. Morgan Company and hundreds of others.” Neither the CACL, or for that matter, the larger African-American community that resided in the Philippines received notice.⁶

Expatriate Americans Bring Colonial Concerns and Colonialized Racializations of the American Mestizo to the Metropole

⁶ Ibid.

“It is my belief that thousands of my countrymen and countrywomen will join with the small body of Americans resident in the Philippines in holding out a helping hand to these children of our own race,” General Wood boldly declared as he ended his appeal.⁷ But the question as to why Wood was making his appeal, which seems to be focused on raising capital, is more complicated than simply hosting a fundraiser for economically “disadvantaged” children. Another perspective on the issue, one from Colonel Gordon Johnston, Wood's trusted aide, sheds further light on what the appeal was trying to accomplish.

“Were we as a people more interested in, or familiar with, colonial affairs, such statements would not come as a surprise,” Johnston lectured audiences unfamiliar with the liaisons that occurred in America's colonies abroad. “Wherever the white and brown or yellow peoples have come into contact this situation exists,” he continued. “It is true now in every colony or possession where European nations have established themselves.” There was a significant difference between America's colonies and those of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, however. “The really astonishing thing is that all the other nations have met the situation, have gone intelligently about the work of eliminating the bad features, making the best of the advantages that it may offer, while we, who avowedly undertook the colonial enterprise with fine motives and high ideals, have failed in this respect.”⁸ The living conditions of the American mestizos were an embarrassment to the American colonial endeavor, according to Johnston. After nearly three decades of colonial rule, the American presence had not transformed Philippine

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gordon Johnston, “American Guardian Association of Manila, Philippine Islands, Bulletin No. 7: International Aspects,” February 13, 1926, Box 24, Commerce Papers, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa (hereafter cited as Commerce Papers, Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library).

society into a vibrant democracy. From the perspective of Johnston and other American expatriates, the islands had become a place where thousands of half-white children resided, living among the poorest strata of Filipino society.

Johnston argued that “other nations have recognized that children of their blood are worth salvaging, and are entitled to a peculiar sympathy and friendly assistance,” while the United States had, for three decades, shirked its responsibility to the children of its colonies. “Though some have been born under very unfortunate circumstances, we cannot deny to innocent children a certain inalienable right to some happiness and a fair chance to make something worthwhile out of their lives.” His justification for why these children deserved to be cared for betrayed his feelings toward race and class, however. Even though Johnston pursued humanitarian intervention on the children's behalf, he believed the children deserved assistance because of their biology. “It is an interesting fact that these children, who are partly American, become anemic on a diet upon which the Filipino children thrive,” Johnson wrote, making a clear connection between biology and race. He warned that “it is also biologically true that in such mixtures of races the inherent qualities of both are present. Abandoned and neglected in childhood, uneducated and without moral and religious guidance, it is almost certain that the worst qualities of both parents will predominate.”⁹

Fortunately, because of these children's American blood, there was hope, for “the contrary is likewise true. Accordingly, from the standpoint of human salvage, it is all the more incumbent on the superior race to endeavor to bring out what is best in these children.” In Johnston's mind, there was a clear racial hierarchy in the colonial world, with whites on top and Filipinos and other non-white races below them. Making this

⁹ Ibid.

investment in the American mestizos' livelihood would pay dividends in the future. "Not only is it just and humanitarian, but it is extremely profitable," Johnston pointed out, "for these people constitute an invaluable buffer group, proud of their white blood and the traditions that go with it, and at the same time capable of reaching and understanding the native population through their mothers' relatives." When making his justification for helping the American mestizos, Johnston makes clear that to be worthy of the organization's investment, the child's parentage has to be white, not simply American. For the first time he suggests an alternative option for the American mestizos; that these children could form a mediating buffer group to diffuse tensions between white Americans and Filipinos in the Philippines, a proposal Filipino nationalists rallied against (as shown in the previous chapter).¹⁰

Johnston believed that helping children with superior blood was not only necessary from a humanitarian standpoint, but also for the development of a positive political future between Filipinos and Americans. According to the white expatriate, there was evidence of a desirable outcome whenever the superior race assisted the mixed parentage children of their colonies, especially in the Pacific. "Though private charity and help from the good people 'back home,'" Johnston explained, "other nationals, living in colonies, have taken care of this situation and turned it to their own advantage; for these yellow and brown people are capable of high cultivation and inherent valuable traits, many of them from a long line of ancestors, who consider their civilization and culture superior to that of any European nation."¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Four examples throughout the history of the European colonization of the Pacific stood out to Johnston for the Americans to emulate-- the British in Singapore; the French in Indochina; the Dutch in the East Indies; and the Spanish in their former Philippine colony. “The British, French, Dutch, and Spanish have all had a national pride which would not permit children of their blood to be a discredit to them,” Johnston argued. “The Dutch in Java have in this manner built up a most valuable class of citizens who are very loyal to Holland, proud of their Dutch blood,” an envious Johnston declared. “In government and business they occupy important positions and fill them most efficiently.” From Johnston’s research, this was true in the Philippines for the descendants of the other races, “where a check of the Philippine Legislature would not show 5% of the elected members as pure [Filipino]. They are either of Spanish or Chinese mixture.”¹²

Johnston, after explaining the value of this group to Philippine-American relations, argued that the time had come for the residents of the United States to heed the call that other nations had already answered. “These children are American citizens by the right of their fathers and the fact that they were born in a country under our flag,” the officer declared. “The people of the United States have sent money by the millions to all parts of the world to relieve distress,” and Johnston was appalled that, “we have, however, never made an organized effort to help these, our own people.” Here, Johnston presented yet another possibility for the American mestizos, that they were in fact American

¹² Ibid. For more on the ways race and identity were contested and reformulated in Southeast Asian colonies and their respective metropolises, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) and Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars Over Cultural Identity* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).

people, not solely a buffer group to be used as an advantage in improving relations between the residents of the metropole and the colony.¹³

Johnston, after presenting his views on the subject, explained that the best way to help these children was by using the already established American Guardian Association. The officer pleaded for Americans to support “an endowment fund of \$2,000,000, to be invested in this country, under proper trustees, the income to be used to relieve distress, to care for little children who are orphaned or abandoned and destitute, to give them an elementary education and teach them trades or occupations in which they may become self-supporting.” The white expatriate continued, “it helps the [Filipina] widows of Americans to bring up their children properly; it prosecutes exploitation, gives legal advice and medical attention, offers a refuge for those in need and, in fact, acts as a guardian to all who are of American blood.” Its goal could be no more noble, and was far more important than simple aid, for according to Johnston, “its purpose is to help them to become self-respecting, worthy and loyal American citizens of the Philippine Islands.”¹⁴

“If our citizenship is worth anything,” Johnston demanded of his audiences, “if our blood is any good-- let's give these boys and girls a fighting chance! Let's take care of the odds against them!” The officer wanted Americans to understand that underneath their “Filipino” phenotypical features lay white American children who deserved US financial support. “If their hair is jet black-- many have steady grey eyes. If their complexion happens to be very ‘tanned,’-- there are many with Yankee noses, and chins that stick out in front,” Johnston pointed out. The American mestizos were the products of Manifest Destiny, for “they mark the forward reach of our last wave of restless

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

pioneers which has pushed steadily westward. Now it has swept across the Pacific Ocean. Should we let them drift as flotsam and jetsam on the tides? Or should we help them to stand as sturdy men and women on the furthestmost shores of our Western civilization?”¹⁵

The Metropole’s Reaction to Colonialized Racializations of the American Mestizos on the East Coast of the United States

How would the call to help the American mestizos be received by Americans residing in the metropole? Certainly, the word of the much respected and admired Leonard Wood was enough for many prominent upper-class Americans to lend their support and take the argument “that the American mestizos were a population worthy of assistance because of their Anglo-Saxon blood and parentage” at face value. “I am very glad indeed that an effort is now being made to raise funds for the American Guardian Association in the United States,” Secretary of War Dwight D. Davis wrote in a candid letter to Gordon Johnston. “I wish to express my interest and sincere wishes for the success of this undertaking; I am sure that our generous people will hear and help a plea for children who were born and live under our flag.”¹⁶ Secretary of Commerce, and future President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, wrote that he took “pleasure in endorsing the campaign you have put on to raise two million dollars for the American mixed blood orphans in the Philippines.” Hoover declared he was with the organization in spirit as well as financially, “hoping that the people of this country will generously answer the call of Governor-General Wood to enable the Association to carry on its very

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis to Colonel Gordon Johnston, letter, November 25, 1925, Box 1, Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

necessary work for these unfortunates.”¹⁷ Himself a leader of relief efforts, most famously for his work in post-World War I Belgium, the Secretary of Commerce attached to his letter a check of one hundred dollars for the cause.

One of the loudest and most famous supporters of Leonard Wood's AGA appeal was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and former President, William Howard Taft. “There are sufficient reasons which prevent me from taking an active part in any such enterprise, however worthy,” Taft stated. He believed it was a worthwhile cause however, writing, “At the same time I feel at liberty to express my sympathy and interest, with sincere wishes for the success of the undertaking.”¹⁸ Taft cited his long service in the Philippines as why he has “a deep interest in all that concerns them,” which had given him “a most sincere desire that our government should acquit itself worthily in this fine and unselfish undertaking for another people.” The Chief Justice was “sure that our people, so generous to every call from all parts of the world, will not fail to hear this plea for little children who were born and who live under our flag. Certainly it is not their fault that they have been so unfortunately placed.” Taft wholeheartedly supported the efforts being made to assist them, believing their situation was no fault of their own, and that it was “all the more reason that these little waifs should be given some sort of a chance to make their lives worthwhile.”¹⁹

Taft, however, expanded beyond Leonard Wood's and Gordon Johnston's characterizations of the American mestizos and added his own opinion and reasoning as to the value supporting them. “Wherever the white and other races come into contact,

¹⁷ Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover to the American Guardian Association, letter, November 20, 1925, Box 24, Commerce Papers, Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

¹⁸ Chief Justice William Howard Taft to American Guardian Association, letter, cited in “Cabinet Members Indorse Campaign for Philippine Fund,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1925, 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and particularly in the tropics, there is a no-man's land between them in which many children of mixed blood are born," the former President noted. "Such children are capable of great good or evil." To the arguments made for supporting this group, Taft added a religious element, arguing that "their lives, undirected and without Christian influence, are most liable to go astray. On the contrary, when brought in tender years under a fine influence, there are seeds of character capable of accepting Christianity and making fine men and women." Teaching the "American" brand of Christianity would assist in saving the children not only in the economic sense, but in the moral one, allowing them to be valuable members of civilized society.²⁰

A coalition of organizations and individuals from different segments of American society came together willing to work with the fundraising drive. Protestant and Catholic churches throughout the United States offered their support, declaring December 13, 1925 "American Guardian Day," helping to raise awareness of the campaign.²¹ The American Red Cross, the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, Daughters of the American Revolution, Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, and the American Legion all lent their public support.²² Support came from states across the Union, with the governors of Georgia, Vermont, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Arkansas, Virginia, and Kentucky all supporting the campaign.²³ By 1926, the American Guardian Association had opened offices and was accepting donations for the American mestizos

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Seek \$2,000,000 to Aid Waifs in Philippines," *New York Times*, December 3, 1925, 3.

²² "Philippine Drive Aided By Major General Barnett," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1926, 10, "Join Drive for Child Aid," *New York Times*, January 3, 1926, E3, and Colonel William Edens to Colonel Hanford Macnider, letter, January 8, 1926, Box 1, Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

²³ Colonel William Edens to Colonel Hanford Macnider, letter, January 8, 1926, Box 1, Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

in Eastern and Midwestern cities across the nation, including New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago.²⁴

Despite the fanfare surrounding the support of the most prominent white Americans with connections to the Philippines, the appeal for the American mestizos immediately raised doubts in the metropole about whether the group was truly “American” and if the American Guardian Association was a worthy cause. For the American expatriate community in the Philippines, the AGA was a legitimate charity with lofty goals. In the metropole, however, the American mestizos were an alien people in far-off colony. In order to convince residents of the metropole that the American mestizos were deserving of care and education, AGA representatives initiated a massive publicity effort using American newspapers aimed at presenting the American mestizos in the best possible light to a skeptical public. What better way to gain support for the American mestizos than by showing pictures of them to the masses, using modern photography to illicit an emotional response?

Analyzing the American Guardian Association’s Publicity for the American Mestizos

The American Guardian Association’s strategies were not new; by the 1920s it had become a well-established practice to use photography to gain support for charitable causes. Historian Peter Hales once wrote of Jacob A. Riis, the trend-setting urban photographer from the early 20th century, “because of Riis, social reformers from 1890 to the present would look to photographs as the logical source of publicity for their efforts, as the imperative part of every report, call for funds, discovery of inequity, or

²⁴ “Navy Assist Drive Under General Wood to Help Children,” *Washington Post*, January 24, 1926.

angry polemic aimed at the public or even their own ranks.”²⁵ This logic is evident in the photographs of young American mestizo children that graced the covers of the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Chicago Daily Tribune* in order to gain sympathy for Leonard Wood's cause. These photographs-- one of which contains a dozen or more “saved” American mestizo teenage girls, the other, which shows two small American mestizo boys-- were disseminated throughout mainstream regional newspapers, accompanied by captions designed to solicit sympathy and funds for the AGA's campaign.

Some of the messages contained within the photographs of the “saved” American mestizo girls, which appeared in the *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, were fairly obvious. The smiling girls are sitting properly with hands folded and legs crossed, exhibiting attributes that middle-class American parents could respect and would require for their own children. These young girls, wearing clean white ankle length dresses, look innocent in every way, a far cry from what the “destitute” American mestizos and Filipino children were presumed to look like without the care of the AGA. The success of Jacob Riis’ famous work on urban poverty, *How the Other Half Lives*, had, by 1925, greatly influenced reform uses of photography.²⁶ Riis “successfully manipulated the principal symbols of the Victorian age to his purposes: the child, womanhood, motherhood, the home, privacy, separation of the sexes, and the virtues of work.” The photograph of the American mestizo girls portrays more than simply smiling, well-mannered children; they are the products of successful reform efforts, getting proper care, and being raised by American standards. The accompanying caption,

²⁵ Peter Hales, *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 163.

²⁶ Hales, *Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915*, 164.

“SEEK \$2,000,000 TO SAVE THESE GIRLS,” suggests that without the help of the American public, fewer mestizo children would be molded into honorable citizens, harbingers of American civilization.²⁷

A common fear during this time period was that children without proper guardians would fall into a life of immorality. The photos used by the AGA to promote their cause were reminiscent of the fears of vice and crime evoked by Riis' portraits of abandoned children in American cities. This logic, typical of reformers of the time, resonated with American audiences, and became a hallmark of the AGA campaign. The articles accompanying these photographs suggest that the necessary resources for the American mestizos were lacking, that “the big hearted American women of Manila break into tears as they tell of the horrors from which little ones have been rescued. But the problem is beyond them. It is a national [American] obligation.”²⁸ The happy American mestizo girls, without financial assistance to ensure their proper care, could easily fall into a life of vice and crime, the polar opposite of the innocent children shown in American newspapers. Audiences at the time would have readily grasped the message, as it was common for social reformers and child welfare organizations to solicit funds in such a way.²⁹

The photographs of the American mestizo boys appearing in both the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* in 1925 convey similar messages to their audiences, albeit in a slightly different manner. Photos of two American mestizo boys under the age of ten, one without shoes, both in ruffled clothing, were accompanied by two captions in the

²⁷ “Seek \$2,000,000 to Save These Girls,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 25, 1925, A12.

²⁸ “Seeking Funds to Aid Children of American Blood in the Philippines,” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 1925, SM6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Washington Post, the first being, “NEGLECTED AMERICAN DESCENDANTS; the second, “Only two of the 18,000 neglected and abandoned children of American blood in the Philippine islands.” The article in the *Los Angeles Times* contained two more captions, describing the children as “Typical Filipino Boys of American Blood” and the efforts to save them as “NATION'S CHARITY WAIFS' RELIANCE.” The articles describe the American mestizos as “capable of great good or evil,” with two possible paths, the first, of vagabondage; the second, “excellent possibilities.”³⁰

The integration of photographs and text to tell a larger story was a method pioneered by Lewis Hine, who, like his contemporary Jacob Riis, was another influential photographer who dealt with child welfare issues during this time period. Although both Hine and Riis were manipulators of images, Hine felt that photographs “needed to be seen as parts of larger, constructed realities.”³¹ Hines’ photographs of children were often accompanied by text to make his messages more targeted and dramatic. American mestizo portraits from the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* are part of a larger story being told to the reader in combination with the text; not requiring the reader to infer meaning or to draw his or her own conclusions, for they are already provided. The American mestizo children are portrayed as innocent victims, harmless “blue-eyed, light-haired, freckled-faced boys.” However, it is warned that if they are not properly cared for, the children are capable of becoming “evil... and without Christian influence, are liable to go astray.”³² Depictions of the American mestizos in American newspapers

³⁰ “Cabinet Members Indorse Campaign for Philippine Fund,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1925, 20; “Nation's Charity, Waif's Reliance,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1926, B6.

³¹ James Guimond, *American Photography and the American Dream* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 95.

³² “Cabinet Members Indorse Campaign for Philippine Fund,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1925, 20.

aimed to influence the metropole's reception of colonialized racializations of the American mestizos.

American newspapers, even when they were not using the children's photographs, promoted them in articles aimed to inform the public of the American mestizos in the Philippines. In an article titled "The American Mestizo" that ran in the *New York Times* early in the fundraising drive, and which was reprinted as "American Mestizo Unusually Bright" a few months later in the *Los Angeles Times*, the children were introduced as a group with great promise for the future of both the continental United States and its Southeast Asian colony. "To the varied mixture of races in the Philippines," the article began, "American occupation has added a new blend, not without promise of social and political value." These American mestizos were compared to the other mixed-race children of the colonial powers, and it was reported that "like the Eurasians of India, they are 'unusually bright.'" In the Philippines, it was believed that mestizos of other nations had gotten off to a head start and had greater social standing, for "in the life of the islands, Japanese and Chinese mestizos have taken a leading part-- not always, as yet, a beneficial part."³³

The American mestizos were depicted as a special group, but it was implied that the peoples of the Orient had little inking as to how unique and talented their American blood made them. "In the American mestizos, Caucasian predominates over Malay traits-- light hair and blue eyes, comeliness among the girls and high-spirited energy among the boys," with the same type of slippage occurring between the terms "American" and "Caucasian" as did in previous characterizations of the group. "Surely

³³ "The American Mestizo," *The New York Times*, October 16, 1925, 20; and "American Mestizo Unusually Bright," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1925, A9.

they have a nearer and a stronger claim upon us than the children whom we have so liberally aided, belonging to wholly alien races and to nations for whom we have no governmental responsibility,” it was urged. “Yet the very existence of the American mestizo is unknown to most of us.”

Colonial interest in the development of the American mestizos becomes apparent in the publicity efforts of the American Guardian Association. Colonial administrators were said to believe that the American mestizos “when properly protected and educated ... are destined to form a stabilizing element in the native population, a means of introducing salutary ideas of self-rule and administrative efficiency.” The American mestizos, because of their inherent superior traits, could be teachers of democratic ideals, for “so long as our responsibilities continue, they will be an invaluable means of commending progress to the other natives.” When self-rule to the Philippines was eventually given, “they will greatly increase the likelihood of carrying on effectively,” and the American transformation project would continue into the next generation, even when the United States ceased to administratively rule the region. Creating citizens valuable to the future of both Philippine and American society-- and who would be likely to support pro-American military and economic policy in the Pacific-- was one of the long-terms goals of those who primary concern was developing the American mestizos into American proxies in the Pacific.³⁴

Influential individuals on the local level sought to inform the American public of Leonard Wood's appeal and the work of the AGA. In the *Christian Science Monitor*, Mrs. Hazel-Nolting White told audiences in Boston, Massachusetts of her experiences among the American mestizos in the Philippines. It was reported that Bostonians were

³⁴ Ibid.

“listening with interest to stories of the work among the children.” For Mrs. Nolting-White, “the problem of the children, their care and development into useful citizens, is always interesting.” One of her solutions was to ask American citizens to help the AGA, “knowing that from it will evolve in these young citizens something splendid, rooted in the ideals and the sturdy qualities and ambitions that were the foundation of New England and of the American nation.”³⁵

In Chicago, similar declarations were made about the benevolence of the AGA and the promise of the American mestizos they took in as their wards. With the support of “both senators from Illinois, as well as practically its entire House representation,” Leonard Wood's campaign was promoted to new American audiences in the Midwest. It was reported that Senators William B. McKinley and Charles S. Deneen “generously” gave “their active efforts in this country-wide endeavor to save these boys and girls from becoming the human dregs of the Orient.” The children, “living likenesses of those found in our own public schools,” needed the assistance to Americans abroad in order to be saved from being the flotsam of society in their adulthood. “General Wood's appeal lays upon us a national obligation,” asserted Senator McKinley. “Other nations have like problems in the Philippines, but their mixed-blooded children fit in with native conditions.” Proud of his Anglo-Saxon heritage, McKinley argued “the children of our blood have every American characteristic-- mental and physical energy in activity, and the imagination which seeks to cope with life in a real way.” Usually these characteristics were assets; however, in the undeveloped colony of the Philippines, they

³⁵ “Filipino Welfare Program Outlined,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 26, 1925, 5B.

were detrimental, “for that very activity, without proper guidance, often leads to their undoing.”³⁶

Other supporters rehashed the familiar argument that the American mestizos were important to the future of the Philippines and its relationship with the United States. In American newspapers, however, this argument was backed by modern social science data and theories of biological determinism to suggest there was an implicit threat if nothing were done to help the American mestizos at an early age. The group, “according to sociologists,” could be “a future menace unless immediate steps are taken to save that child from exploitation and vagabondage.” The children had great potential, but being “blue-eyed and light-haired, the mestizo child does not look like its Filipino cousin,” and therefore received different treatment from Philippine society at the onset. Biological arguments were central to this position, for it was proposed that “unlike that cousin, the mestizo is energetic and progressive; more alert physically and mentally. In fact, in both boys and girls, American characteristics appear to predominate.” These assertions were backed by social science data which suggested “teachers and workers in the islands comment upon the difference in response made to educational stimulus by the full-blooded Filipino and the mestizo.” Apparently, Filipino children, like their parents, did not have the same mental capacities of white Americans. “Whereas the former is often indolent and lacking in all initiative, the latter is invariably active, industrious, and eager to learn.”³⁷

Teachers and observers were said to have noticed firsthand that “there is in this tendency and ... power for both good and evil,” the *New York Times* article continued.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Our Mestizos Ask Help: Hundreds of Children of American Fathers and Filipino Mothers Are Made Homeless by Economic Changes,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 1925, XX4;

“The alertness of mind and spirit of adventure found in the mestizo, unless intelligently handled during immature years by those who understand the child, does not always produce good results,” it was warned. But, if provided the American standard of child care, “the mestizos or mixed-blood children of the Philippines develop into faithful workers and industrious scholars.” Evangelical Christian missionary and amateur sociologist Frank C. Laubach, author of *The People of the Philippines*, was cited for his argument that American blood could transform the backwater colonial possession into a modern democratic state. “I believe that one of the great contributions America is making to the Philippine Islands is the mingling of the two peoples,” Laubach believed, in the most literal sense possible. “The mestizo children have tremendous possibilities. Unhappily, a large percentage of them are not properly cared for, and in a good many instances they are going into evil ways.”

Laubach continued that “it is important that these children be cared for in a proper way,” arguing that “they are bound to have an influence in the future of the Philippines.” With these statements came the ominous warning that “it may be an influence for limitless good, or it may be an influence that will make us ashamed of our part in these islands. Which it will be depends on us.” For the missionary, the American mestizo issue had much more to do with redeeming American colonialism, honor, and prestige in the Philippines, than simply providing financial support for a group of unfortunates.³⁸

Laubach’s views on the issue were cloaked with the air of authority, especially when he cited the latest social science literature on the topic of race. “There is much discussion from the scientific point of view about the intermingling of blood of different races,” the missionary declared, adding that “the testimony of a specialist in sociology

³⁸ Frank C. Laubach, cited in *ibid.*

may be helpful.” With the available data, he concluded that “the mingling of some races does seem to prove detrimental to both. The mingling of other races results in an improvement. Which result will follow can be determined only by experimentation.” To further argue his point, Laubach added his own expertise on the subject based upon his time in the Philippines. “My own observation of the Philippine Islands convinces me that the mingling of [Filipino] and white blood, as well as [Filipino] and Chinese blood, has been beneficial,” for “many of the leaders of the Philippine Islands have been, and undoubtedly many will be, mestizos.”³⁹

Despite efforts to present the American mestizos positively using innovative methods pioneered by early 20th century photographers, modern mass media, and in some cases, modern social science theories, the residents of the metropole remained unconvinced about whether these children were deserving of American charity. During an executive meeting of the fundraising campaign in early 1926, Gordon Johnston and others became aware that their efforts were being met with general apathy, and even worse, scathing criticism. “It was reported that a common objection to the campaign is that the government should appropriate the money,” Johnson explained to the executive committee. The residents of the metropole thought that the American government should provide the necessary resources to care for the American mestizos, especially since the problem was occurring in the Philippines. The worst criticism of the campaign, however, came from residents of the metropole who questioned the virtues of the American mestizos. “An argument against the campaign was reported, namely, that these American children are illegitimate,” the executive committee was told, “and the question raised, why should the general public be asked to educate them?” The worst fears of the AGA

³⁹ Ibid.

campaign-- that the American mestizos would be seen as unworthy vagabonds and tramps, the product of illicit liaisons between lower class Americans and lower class exotic Filipinas-- had materialized.⁴⁰ The argument that the American mestizos' white blood made them worthy of support did not achieve the impact that their supporters had hoped for.

In response to these criticisms, it was decided to intensify and further tweak the messages of the campaign. Doing this required altering how the American mestizos were presented to the larger public. "It was pointed out that the great majority of these children are children of legally married parents," and the executive committee decided it was necessary to "stress this point in future publicity." The origins of the American mestizos would have to be depicted as cleaner and "whiter" than they actually were. Efforts to sanitize the children were to be increased, including the use of new visual propaganda, such as having "lithographed some poster illustrative of a child in the Philippines." The US Congress was to be asked what they could do for the children, and "it was decided to proceed with the Congressional inquiry" into the subject. The executive committee asked the clergy of all Christian denominations "to cooperate by making announcements regarding our campaign," and asked the newspapers for continued coverage of "speaking appointments in clubs and societies" receptive to the fundraising drive.⁴¹

The process of making the American mestizos more palatable to the residents of the metropole is seen in the declarations made by AGA supporters in the months

⁴⁰ Gordon Johnston, Dr. H.S. Cumming, Admiral Albert Gleaves, Dr. Joseph M. Heller, Mr. Charles W. Warden, "American Guardian Association- Meeting of the Executive Committee," January 16, 1926, Box 1, Macnider Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

⁴¹ Ibid.

following the early 1926 planning meeting. At a gathering held at the Murray Hill Hotel in New York City in March of that year, Admiral Bradley Fiske, supporter of Leonard Wood's drive, "recommended that the children be taught economic and political facts and that they be educated as good American citizens so that they might not be deceived by the unrest of a few in the country." This implication, that the children's Filipino heritage should be disowned for their own safety, posing the risk of polluting their character, was new to the AGA. The belief that these children held within them the possibility of being "good American citizens," embracing the citizenship and culture of their fathers, was also a novel argument.⁴²

Colonel Peter E. Traub, an Army officer who had recently returned from the Philippines, chimed in on the subject, expressing "surprise to find people in this country questioning the legitimacy the children the Guardian Association is trying to help." Traub countered these assertions by arguing that "most of the children were born in wedlock, but that the foundlings were equally needful," essentially denying the unsanitary origins and sensationalized accounts of the daily life of the American mestizos. The officer was ashamed that the origins of the children were under assault. "Relief organizations for other nationalities," he declared, "did not ask questions about the legitimacy of charges." For the American mestizos, there was no infrastructure in existence that could provide them with care and tutelage, except that which the AGA possessed. "There was not an orphan asylum in the Philippines. ... The Government could not be looked to for aid because of its slow-moving machinery, and also it would establish a difficult precedent to handle," Traub argued.⁴³

⁴² "Admiral Fiske Wants the Children Taught to be Americans," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1926, 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Colonialized Racializations Transplanted to the Metropole Encounter Resistance in the West Coast of the United States

Looking at how colonialized racializations of the American mestizos were received in the American racial framework poses an important question that should be further investigated. Did the various responses to colonialized racializations of the American mestizos clash with any others that may have already existed in the United States? On the East Coast, where the American mestizo campaign was focused, there had been little miscegenation between Filipinos and Americans: representatives from the two groups rarely came into contact. How American mestizos would be racialized on the East Coast was an open question. Americans on the West Coast, however, proved they had their own notions of race and the peoples of the Philippines, some of them contradictory to the colonialized racializations proposed by the supporters of the American Guardian Association. On the West Coast, Americans had formulated vastly different attitudes towards the Filipinos, and by extension, towards the American mestizos. In California, Oregon, and Washington, white Americans had encountered and reacted to the Filipinos who had migrated from the colony, influencing how an American mestizo population there would be received.

Filipino migrants, for an intents and purposes, were invisible to the vast majority of the metropole's residents for much of the early 20th century. Despite the Philippines being an American colony, and despite a protracted and bloody struggle to secure that colony, continental Americans knew little about the Southeast Asian people over whom they were imperial wardens. Americans were unaware that "bachelor colonization" in

the aftermath of the Philippine-American War had led to the “bachelor migration” of cheap colonial labor, with Filipinos going to other spaces in the American empire, such as Hawaii and mainland California, in search of economic opportunities lacking in the islands. Sociologist Bruno Lasker, a contemporary observer of Filipino immigration to the United States during this period, argued that “most Americans do not recognize a Filipino. Until about 1927 or 1928, only a small minority of them had become aware of the fact that tens of thousands of Filipinos were living in this country.” A single idea of what a “Filipino” was had never coalesced, he argued, “for over 90 per cent of the population a 'Filipino problem' exists only through hearsay.”⁴⁴

Lasker touched upon a key point-- the importance of taking a regional perspective on how Filipinos were viewed by Americans-- that seems to be forgotten in modern literature. In the metropole, migrants from the Philippines were a group with no clear racial niche in American society. In some regions, like on the West Coast, they were seen as the “Third Asiatic Invasion,” as academic Rick Baldoz most recently described them.⁴⁵ And yet, in other regions, this characterization may not have been applicable. On the East Coast, for example, “those Americans who have known Filipinos only in the eastern part of the country are sometimes puzzled to understand what the difficulties reported from the West are about.” In the East, contact was made with small numbers of Filipinos who were college students, politicians, or individuals who may have been

⁴⁴ Bruno Lasker, *Filipino Immigration: To Continental United States and to Hawaii* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 3.

⁴⁵ Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

interpreted as members of other Asian or Latin American nationalities-- foreigners, to be sure, but not a disruptive social problem.⁴⁶

However, on the West Coast, where a sizable Filipino immigrant population had formed by the late 1920s and whose members were lower-class wage laborers rather than well-groomed college students, whites perceived these migrants as a threat to their economic livelihood, their culture, and most importantly-- because of their concentrated numbers-- to “their” women. These Filipino immigrants, which by 1930 consisted of over 45,000 individuals-- of which ninety-three percent were males-- were a bachelor society, with far fewer females immigrating to the metropole.⁴⁷ With a lack of females among their group, interracial relationships with Mexicans, blacks, and other “colored” races were common. But what irked white Californians were not the relationships with “non-whites,” but the relationships that occurred with “white women,” a tenuous definition to be sure, as many scholars have noted in the field of “whiteness studies.”

Because of Filipino writers, such as the immigrant Carlos Bulosan, we do not need to extrapolate how Filipinos who were seen with white women were treated, for the repercussions have been recorded by the eyes of the direct observers themselves. Furthermore, because of laws and statutes initiated against Filipinos to deny such relationships, we have the evidence of what the possible outcomes-- both judicial and extrajudicial-- would be if these liaisons continued.

Racializations of the American Mestizos by Americans in the West Coast of the United States

⁴⁶ Lasker, *Filipino Immigration*, 4-5.

⁴⁷ Leti Volpp, “American Mestizo: Filipinos and Antimiscegenation Laws in California,” *University of California- Davis Law Review*, Vol. 33, No. 4, (Summer 2000): 804.

Reexamining the narratives of Filipino immigrants in the United States from the 1920s and 1930s allows us to explore how the children of Filipino-American relationships-- whom in the Philippine racial framework, would be classified as American mestizos-- would be racialized in the United States within the American racial binary, one originally articulated and dominated by a color line between whites and non-whites, not a hierarchy influenced by Spanish and Chinese intermixture.

In many ways, Bulosan and other Filipino immigrants were similar to their white bachelor colonial counterparts who traveled to the Philippines after the Spanish-American War and Philippine-American War as they too were observers of the alien customs that differed so greatly from the places they called "home." While white expatriate observers in the Philippines could write from a position of dominance, Filipino immigrants wrote from the viewpoint of the subjugated. Americans in the Philippines, as bachelor colonials, formed relationships with Filipinas throughout the islands. Bachelor immigrant Filipinos in the metropole formed relationships with the native women, too. "The dance hall was crowded with Filipino cannery workers and domestic servants," Bulosan wrote of one of his early experiences in the dance halls in California, a palace designed to entertain and profit off the immigrant community's labor. "But the girls were very few, and the Filipinos fought over them," he continued. One of his acquaintances was dancing "with a tall blonde in a green dress, a girl so tall that [his friend] looked like a dwarf climbing a tree."⁴⁸ Encounters like these, harmless as they might be, were perceived by white males as an insidious threat, adding the anxiety of cultural pollution to an already existing fear of economic competition that only intensified as jobs became scarcer and scarcer due to the worldwide economic depression.

⁴⁸ Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946), 105.

Despite the anti-Filipino attitudes, marriages and common-law relationships occurred between Filipinos and lower-class white women in the Western United States. Bulosan became acquainted with more than a few couples who fell into this category during his travels, documenting them in his memoirs along with his other observations about life in the United States. His memoirs contained anecdotal evidence of a small “American mestizo” population in the United States, albeit formed under different historical circumstances.

It was clear that the reception of these mixed Filipino-American children differed greatly from how American mestizos were viewed by the American Guardian Association. On one occasion, Bulosan observed that a Filipino had come to Holtville “with his American wife and their child.” The couple, seeking to feed the baby, were refused service as the “American mestizo” child began to cry with hunger. “It is only for the baby,” the Filipino told the proprietor when he requested milk to feed the little one. “If you say that again in my place, I’ll bash your head!” the owner yelled in response. “You goddamn brown monkeys have your nerve, marrying our women. Now get out of this town!”⁴⁹ Many mixed-race couples felt that California was a dangerous place to raise a Filipino/American family, and feared that if their children were racialized as Filipino, they would suffer harmful consequences. “I am going back to the Soviet Union,” a white woman, bearing an American mestizo child told the writer. “I have always wanted a Filipino child. It wouldn’t have a chance in America,” just as her husband, a Filipino, “never had a chance.”⁵⁰ It is clear, at least to the parents, that the children of Filipino and American relationships were not viewed as “American

⁴⁹ Ibid., 144-145.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 227.

mestizos,” as the American Guardian Association would have racialized them, but as Filipinos. The colonialized racialization that East Coast residents had been exposed to was not a possibility in the Western United States. In the West, the “one-drop rule” and the hardened racial color line would emerge as the dominant racialization applied to the progeny of Filipino immigrants and the metropole’s white women.

Alternative Racializations and Fears of the American Mestizos Lead to State and Extrajudicial Intervention

On the West Coast, there did exist alternative racializations for how a mixed Filipino/American group would be interpreted in the American racial framework (influenced by previous waves of immigrants from Asia) which ultimately led to government intervention. The pervasive anti-Filipino atmosphere in the Western United States led to spokesmen throughout communities in California denouncing intermarriage between America's colonized immigrants and white women. The Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce argued that “if the present state of affairs continues there will be 40,000 half-breeds in California before ten years have passed.” Representatives of local organizations perceived this new group as a possible social problem, warning that a “new type of mullato” was forming because of the “race mingling” between Filipinos and whites. Ironically, anti-Filipino advocates referred to this mixed racial group as the “American Mestizo,” wholly unaware that this term was already in widespread use throughout the Philippines and among the expatriate American community on the East Coast of the United States.⁵¹ The fear of racial hybridity had its roots in West Coast

⁵¹ Megumi Dick Osumi, “Asians and California’s Anti-Miscegenation Laws,” in Nobuya Tsuchida, *Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women's Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Asian/Pacific American Learning

Americans' previous experiences with the first two Asiatic invasions, the Chinese and the Japanese.

The Filipino social problem became a legal problem in the 1920s. Anti-Filipino advocates opposed to intermarriage, and fearing exaggerated estimates of racially polluted American mestizos in their midst, argued their racist theories in California courts with much success. There had already been numerous laws that forbid intermarriage between non-whites and whites. Nor were these laws a recent phenomena, for they had existed for over a half-century. "The issue of sexual relationships between whites and Chinese," legal scholar Leti Volpp writes, "functioned as a prime source of hysteria." By 1880, the California legislature had amended its antimiscegenation laws, which had previously been aimed towards preventing marriages between "white persons" and "negros or mullatoes," to target the Chinese. The product of these interracial relationships were feared as "a hybrid of the most despicable, a mongrel of the most detestable that has ever afflicted the earth," as one California state delegate put it.⁵² Decades later, when large numbers of Japanese immigrated to the West Coast, they became subject to the same fears, and subsequently, the same laws, albeit amended so they would apply to them. Relatively soon thereafter, these laws were applied to Filipino migrants.

Filipinos, seen as a local menace to Californian men as threats to their economic livelihoods and women, became subject to numerous restrictions on their actions and movement, and eventually, calls for outright banishment and deportation. The American

Resource Center, 1982) and C.M. Goethe, "Filipino Immigration Viewed as Peril," *Current History* (1931), cited in Volpp, "American Mestizo," p. 809.

⁵² Osumi, "Asians and California's Anti-Miscegenation Laws," p. 6, cited in Volpp, "America Mestizo," p. 802.

Legion offered one telling example of how different the climate towards Filipinos was on the West Coast. White Legionaries in the East supported the American mestizos and the American Guardian Association's fundraising campaign; West Coast members led the charge to exclude Filipinos, passing resolutions for Filipino exclusion at their national conventions in 1927, 1928, and 1929.⁵³

In January 1930, with the support of local judge D.W. Rohrback, California's Northern County Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution in support of Filipino exclusion in the area.⁵⁴ After anti-Filipino lobbying convinced the state legislature of the utility of passing the measure, California antimiscegenation laws were amended to include Filipinos among the groups not allowed to intermarry with whites in 1933, and in the process, "retroactively voided and made illegal all previous Filipino-white marriages."⁵⁵ Similar antimiscegenation statutes were passed in nearby states-- Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming-- and in the segregationist South, including the states of Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and South Dakota, effectively making it illegal for Filipino bachelors to have a legal relationship with white women in large swaths of the United States.⁵⁶ Laws and statutes could be enforced by local police and the criminal justice system with some success. For example, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that local police conducted raids on parties where Filipinos and white women congregated, with the police chief instructing officers to take into custody all involved in such activities.⁵⁷ "Beyond the town [of San Luis Obispo], at a railroad crossing, highway

⁵³ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1955); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1998).

⁵⁴ Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 113.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁶ Barbara Posadas, *The Filipino Americans* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 20-21.

⁵⁷ Volpp, "American Mestizo," p. 808.

patrolmen stopped our car,” Carlos Bulosan observed during his travels along the West Coast. His Filipino companion, angered by being halted, believed that the “bastards probably want[ed] to see if we have a white woman in the car.” The writer noted, with a twinge of disillusionment, that “I came to know afterward that in many ways it was a crime to be a Filipino in California. I came to know that the public streets were not free to my people: we were stopped each time these vigilant patrolmen saw us driving a car. We were suspect each time we were seen with a white woman.”⁵⁸

The courts of law became a battleground where Filipinos and anti-Filipino forces clashed over the newly passed racial statutes. The most effective means of enforcing antimiscegenation laws against Filipinos, however, was not through legal recourse, but through extrajudicial violence, the tried and true method of dealing with unwanted racial minorities in the United States since the “Reconstruction” of the American South. The earliest recorded riot against Filipinos occurred in Yakima, Washington, in what would be the first of many, sparking a regional debate about whether America's colonials belonged in the metropole. In late 1927, white males initiated a campaign of violence to expel Filipino workers from the rich farmlands of central Washington state. Whatever the legal status of Filipinos, it proved to be a moot point as armed mobs descended upon the immigrants angered by labor “competition” and “improper relations” with white girls and women. In the town of Toppenish, Filipino laborers were attacked by armed assailants that smashed up Filipino belongings and bodies with makeshift clubs. The mob then warned Filipinos “to leave the valley as soon as possible under threat of violent death.” It was not local police, but vigilantes, who “forcibly deported” Filipinos from the area, threatening those who remained that “they would be hung if found in the valley

⁵⁸ Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*, 121.

after dark.” If not for the local county sheriff, who dispersed a “heavily armed” mob “apparently determined to kill every Filipino they found” in the neighboring town of Wapato, this riot could have easily turned into a massacre.⁵⁹

Conditions for Filipinos became progressively worse in Washington state as vigilantes terrorized Filipino agricultural workers in Cashmere, a town where agriculture made up a large part of the local economy. In 1928, a mob made up of local citizens forcibly detained and escorted local Filipinos across their city's borders. At around the same time, in Wenatchee, Washington, Filipino factory workers at the Wenatchee Packing Corporation were threatened with expulsion by irate white mobs. As sociologist Rick Baldoz notes, “expulsion campaigns carried out by local citizens groups became commonplace in the region for the next few years.”⁶⁰

Extrajudicial violence spread across the Western United States from 1928-1930. By January 1930, worsening economic conditions made Filipinos a prime target for violence in California. After confrontations in Dinuba and Exeter, Watsonville became the next locale of anti-Filipino hysteria based on perceived threats to employment and white manhood. Migrants from the Philippines were depicted as savages, a “menace to white labor,” and as people who would pollute the white race with their backwards Asiatic blood through miscegenation with American women. Filipinos responded to the accusations, with local immigrant organizations publishing *The Torch* to espouse their views in response. They pointed out that the United States had established American schools throughout the Philippines, and that Filipino immigrants had been taught about the cultural values and heroes of white Americans. They also pointed out that they only

⁵⁹ Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 136.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

were asking for rights that were afforded the white bachelor colonials in the Philippines, who “freely dated and married Filipinos without fear of reprisal.”⁶¹ While this intellectual argument made sense for Filipinos, angry mobs rarely listened, or cared, about the values that American democracy was supposed to have instilled in the Philippines.

After each side verbally sparred in the local media, the opening salvo of violence broke out when local whites attempted to raid the Monterrey Bay Filipino Club in Palm Beach because of rumors that Filipinos males and white girls were commingling. When the club's armed guards turned away the mob, “carloads of vigilantes roamed the streets looking for Filipinos, and police broke up a number of large brawls.” Local media continued to fuel the violence, and “Filipino hunting parties, running in groups from 35 to over a hundred persons” began to rampage across the Watsonville area looking for their targets. The heavily-armed mob drove out to McGowan Ranch, a place that reportedly housed Filipinos, indiscriminately firing upon the bunkhouses. By January 21, all-out war had been launched with a group of five hundred whites “on an open warpath against all Filipinos.” The Palm Beach dance hall was the next target, with a white mob, armed with Molotov cocktails, attempting to burn down the structure. After local police, or as the mob called them, “Goo-goo lovers,” stymied these efforts, smaller groups set out to find Filipinos with much success, attacking houses and ranches where it was believed the immigrants were being harbored, with gunfire even being exchanged at a local boardinghouse. One group of Filipinos was found and thrown off a bridge. Another

⁶¹ *The Torch*, January 1930, 1-4; *Three Stars*, February 5, 1930, 1, 4, cited in *ibid.*, 140.

group was assaulted with pistols and clubs. Other Filipinos were dragged into the street and beaten.⁶²

What extrajudicial enforcement of racial norms meant for Filipinos, their white wives, and their “American mestizo” or “hybrid” children, is that these families lived in a state of unpredictability, with violence interrupting the rhythms of day to day life. Selective enforcement and the failure of criminal justice systems in the Western United States to stop regular violence against America's colonials resulted in pervasive disillusionment in the Filipino community. It was obvious to the Filipinos, who migrated from a region that had been under colonial control for decades at that point, that a double standard existed in terms of treatment and acceptance. Journalist Jose Bulatao wrote that although Filipino men in the United States “take care of their families and will never become social burdens,” many American men in the Philippines had abandoned their children and Filipina wives. The “American soldiers going to our country ... marry our women and then leave their children to be cared for by our government-- thousands, tens of thousands of fatherless children are left by the Americans of cultured mentality,” Bulatao continued. “And our people are still jungle folk and of Primitive Moral Code?”⁶³

Unbeknownst to the supporters of the American Guardian Association, who had focused their efforts on convincing Americans that the American mestizos in the Philippines were civilized, white, and one of the United States' greatest assets in the Far East, those in the American West had little room for positive views of hybrid Filipino children. The existence of the mixed race Filipino/American children represented the failure of local communities and immigration law to enforce cultural and sexual mores.

⁶² Ibid., 142.

⁶³ *San Francisco Philippine Advocate*, July 1, 1931, 4, cited in Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 115.

“American mestizos” were what anti-Filipino advocates were trying to stop. What the formation and recognition of these populations meant was that Filipino men had impregnated American women. Even though there existed thousands of American mestizos in the Philippines born from relationships between white men and Filipinas, anti-Filipino advocates had little time to make such distinctions.

The Effects of Filipino Repatriation on Filipino-American Families and their Children

Government officials in the United States had much in common with their colonial administrative counterparts in the Philippines. Like in the Philippines, the US government sought to use legislation to correct a perceived social and economic problem. The narrative of Filipino exclusion in the United States has been well-documented by scholars and will not be discussed again in-depth here. However, the campaign for Filipino repatriation to the Philippines is worth reexamining, with an emphasis on its effects on Filipinos and their American families, especially the “American mestizo” children who would return to the islands with their fathers. In Filipino repatriation, which was supported by a variety of anti-Filipino interests under the guise of giving unemployed migrants a chance to return to the Philippines, we see a moment when racializations of the American mestizo population intersected once again.

Multiple attempts were made to repatriate Filipino migrants in the United States in the 1930s until HR 6464-- a Congressional bill which ensured repatriated migrants would not have the right to return to the United States at a later date-- was signed into law on July 10, 1935. Passed because of exaggerated fears that unemployed Filipinos were inundating California, it was expected that many Filipinos would take advantage of what

the government saw as a generous proposal. The federal government offered to send unemployed Filipinos back to the Philippines at the taxpayer's expense, as long as it was a voluntary decision. Immigration officials believed the offer so enticing that they estimated as many as 40,000 Filipinos would make the return trip to the islands.⁶⁴ Major regional and African-American newspapers believed the policy could alleviate local cities from the random outbreaks of violence that had been occurring across the West Coast. The *San Francisco Chronicle* editorialized that Filipinos would be "happier in their own land and California would be better off;" the African-American *Chicago Defender* argued that repatriation would be beneficial for black communities, eliminating Filipinos as a labor threat.⁶⁵

Nearly half a million federal dollars were initially allotted to the repatriation scheme. However, when the Filipino community was surveyed and only a thousand individuals showed any interest, the Depression-era program was cut by 80%. Because the program was not compulsory, Filipinos who were not interested could not be rounded up and put on steamships bound for the Philippines.

40,000 Filipinos would prove to be a wildly optimistic estimate by American government officials. By the end of 1936, for all the resources and time spent trying to get Filipinos to repatriate, only a handful took the offer. An extension was requested in order to try to salvage the highly publicized program. Although the program was characterized as "the most considerate piece of legislation of the type ever conceived by government," the Filipino community argued HR6464 was simply a "disguised form of

⁶⁴ U.S. Congress, *To Return Unemployed Filipinos to the Philippine Islands*, House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Hearings, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, DC: GPO, 1933), 7-9, 36, cited in Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 188.

⁶⁵ *Chicago Defender*, February 23, 1935, 4, cited in *ibid.*, 189.

deportation.”⁶⁶ Probably the most important reason that small numbers of Filipinos took the offer is that they many were not bachelor immigrants anymore, but family men. Filipino men and women, including white women, had relationships and bore children from these liaisons. Although the number of intermarriages and children are impossible to accurately determine, case studies by scholars in the 1930s give indications that the practice was more widespread than previously thought. One poignant example; sociologist Serverino F. Corpus, in his study of 95 Filipinos who had married in the United States, found that 70 (74 percent) had intermarried. 33 of the 95 marriages (35 percent) were with white women, with 26 “American mestizo” children born from these relationships. 10 of the 95 marriages (11 percent) were with black women, with 19 children born from these relationships.⁶⁷

Miscegenation had clearly occurred, a fact that enraged anti-Filipino advocates. Although government officials proposed that Filipinos could take their families with them if they were willing to pay the extra fees, according to Baldoz, “the issue of wives and children of Filipino immigrants became an unexpected quandary for West Coast officials, who discovered that a number of their potential targets were unwilling to leave the United States without their families.”⁶⁸ Because of the failure of the federal repatriation program to entice unemployed Filipinos to return to the Philippines in an exodus, local agencies like the Los Angeles County Welfare Department sometimes paid the additional fares for American mestizo children in order to get their fathers to return to the islands. Furthermore, according to one official, “no provisions had been made for

⁶⁶ Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 191.

⁶⁷ Serverino F. Corpus, “Second Generation Filipinos in Los Angeles,” *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. XXII, No. 5, (May-June 1937): 447, 450.

⁶⁸ Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 192.

white wives of Filipinos,” which proved a strong deterrent to those who sought to keep their families together.⁶⁹ After spending \$250,000 and extending the program multiple times over the span of five years, only 2064 Filipinos took the offer to return to the Philippines, far short of the massive exodus that was expected.⁷⁰

HR2424 was enacted to encourage return migration to the Philippines; it had the unexpected consequence of causing American mestizo children to be among the returnees. According to research of historian Mae Ngai in the passenger manifests of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, “of couples traveling together, approximately one-quarter were Filipino-American marriages,” with over two hundred children returning to the Philippines with their parents.⁷¹ The return of Filipino-American families and their American mestizo children through the repatriation act sparked the ire of Philippine colonial officials, who used the same arguments that American officials used against unemployed Filipinos. The Great Depression was, after all, a worldwide depression, and the Philippines were affected through loss of demand for its agricultural products. The local economy, already stagnant with high employment and regular demand for social services, was put under even more of a strain during the economic downturn. The then Governor-General of the Philippines, politician and future Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy, “lodged a strong protest at the repatriation of American-

⁶⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1936, 1-2, cited in *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Unsigned memorandum, “Filipino Repatriation Acts,” August 24, 1940, file 55883/412-C, United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, Central Office, Washington DC (hereafter cited as INS), cited in Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 122. See also Benicio T. Catapusan, “Filipino Repatriates in the Philippines,” *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, (September-October 1936): 72-77, who offers a broader formulation of the term “repatriate.” Catapusan used the term “repatriate” in his study to refer to all “returned Filipinos” to the homeland,” citing statistics from the United States Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service, correspondence material file 12005/464. Under his definition, 4,986 Filipino repatriates returned in 1934 alone. While not the subject of this dissertation, the implications of those who study labor and migration flows between the Philippines and the United States during this period are significant and should be further explored using this broader formulation.

⁷¹ Passenger Manifests, file 55853/412-A, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and “Statistics regarding Filipino Repatriates,” January 27, 1938, file 55883/ 412-B, INS, cited in *ibid.*, 123.

born wives and children” in October 1935. According to documents analyzed by historian Mae Ngai, Murphy “believed such families were destitute and would become public charges in the Philippines, and he threatened to return them to the United States,” voicing his concern to the Secretary of War and the War Department, under which the Philippines, now a protectorate of the United States, was administered.⁷²

According to Ngai, by March 1936, “the Philippine government softened its position, at least towards the American-born children of Filipinos,” who were American citizens by birth.⁷³ These American mestizos would return to the Philippines, a country as alien to them as the Philippines was to their white mothers. The white mothers, however, were not always welcome, for they were seen as “outsiders and of low class.” Immigration of this group was discouraged by the INS through a policy that did not provide federal funds for the transportation expenses of Filipino repatriates’ families. It was acknowledged, however, that there was no way to “prevent anyone from buying a ticket to go to Manila, and if the white wife of a Filipino purchases a ticket, there is nothing to prevent her from traveling on the same ship with her husband” and American mestizo children.⁷⁴

Colonialized racializations of the American mestizo in Manila, where the majority of the American mestizos had American fathers and Filipina mothers, differed from imposed racializations on the West Coast, where Filipino bachelors and American lower class women produced a numerically small, but theoretically feared “American mestizo” population. But by the end of the 1930s, the United States would no longer be a place

⁷² Edward J. Shaughnessy, INS circular letter, October 26, 1935; radiogram, Governor-General Frank Murphy to Secretary of War, April 6, 1936, file 55883/412, INS, cited in *ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Cahill to E.M. Kline, August 23, 1937, file 55883/412-B, INS, cited in *ibid.*

where formulations of the American mestizo were a matter of anyone's concern. The American Guardian Association's dreams of raising two million dollars for an endowment fund, to be invested in the United States, and to help the American mestizos "become self-respecting, worthy and loyal American citizens of the Philippine Islands" were shattered by the Great Depression. The resulting economic downturn and stock market free-fall destroyed whatever monies were raised and invested.⁷⁵ Colonialized racializations of the American mestizos in the metropole would end when the AGA concluded its fundraising efforts. Fading away from the consciousness of most Americans, the organization would continue to work with the American mestizos in the Philippines without being scrutinized by residents of the metropole. Similarly, as outright racial violence against Filipinos died down on the West Coast due to improving economic conditions, the issues of miscegenation and calls to prevent racial intermixing between Filipinos and white women faded away from the public consciousness.

Following clashing colonialized and imposed racializations of the American mestizos, while taking into account regional specificities, illuminates processes of racial formulations that were taking place in the metropole that do not fit the standard mold of how scholars see the 1900-1930 period in American history. Contrary to speculation by scholars that fears of American/Filipino miscegenation would mean that a mixed race "American mestizo" group would be racialized as non-white, white expatriate Americans argued that there was space in the American racial framework for American mestizos to be interpreted as white proxies, at least in the colonial setting. If, as many scholars suggest, white Americans in the metropole accepted the "one-drop rule" during this

⁷⁵ Johnston, "American Guardian Association of Manila, Philippine Islands, Bulletin No. 7: International Aspects," Box 24, Commerce Papers, Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

period, following imposed racializations of American mestizos as they were transplanted to the metropole shows that whites did not apply this binary uniformly to every circumstance and to every offspring of interracial union. A colonialized permutation of the “one-drop rule” occurred-- white blood took priority over “colored” blood, making these products of miscegenation white proxies in the Pacific.

Scholars emphasize that during this time period, European immigrants were homogenized into a white race, with all other races excluded from being white.⁷⁶ The histories of Filipino migrants and their offspring show that different possibilities existed. The American mestizos, a non-European group from the islands of the Pacific, were racialized, in the eyes of expatriate white Americans, as their colonial proxies, superior to Filipinos by virtue of their white blood. This opens up an entirely new area for the exploration of predominant racial attitudes in the United States in the early twentieth century-- attitudes toward the children of Americans and non-American women in the outposts of the overseas US empire, and those who traveled between the colony and the metropole. Predominant racial attitudes in the United States may not have been as rigid as is often believed. The “one-drop rule,” and American racial attitudes in the early twentieth century, were not all-encompassing in regard to non-white races and miscegenation.

Following imposed racializations of “American mestizos” born in the United States, but forced to sojourn to the Philippines because of their father's repatriation, provides additional avenues to study the flexibility of racial formulations in the twentieth century. In the following chapter, we will return to the Philippines, studying how race

⁷⁶ See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998) and Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation By Design: Immigration Policy and the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006).

was remade and redefined during the Great Depression and World War II in America's, and soon thereafter, Japan's, colonial possession in the Pacific.

Chapter Five: Imposed and Self-Ascribed Racializations of the American Mestizos in the Pacific during World War II

While the white expatriate community remained concerned with the American mestizos in the Philippines, other individuals in the islands had also taken an interest in them by the late 1930s. Social scientists in the Philippines conducted studies that included maturing American mestizos, giving us the ability to ascertain their self-ascribed identities for the first time. Sociologists and psychologists in the Philippines, themselves trained by American social scientists, sought to explain a whole gamut of questions relating to racial, ethnic, and minority groups, and took interest in the American mestizos. Their findings and raw data, and the construction and design of their studies, reveal how professionally trained scholars interpreted American and native-born American mestizos in the Philippine racial framework. More importantly, these studies are the only primary sources in existence that enable us to explore the group's lived experiences and identities.

Social Scientists Document the American Mestizos in the Philippines

Fern Burnett Adams, a specialist in psychology and educational attainment, explored intelligence among the American mestizo community while doing research in the Philippines in the late 1930s. Born in Oklahoma in 1909, she and her family moved to Los Angeles, California, while she was still a youth. After her primary schooling, she was admitted to UCLA for her BA, with a focus on education. Upon graduation, she became a teacher in the Los Angeles school system during 1932-1933, after which she departed for the Philippines to teach the children of servicemen in the American Navy Yard School in Cavite from 1935-1939. While working towards her MA at the

University of the Philippines in Psychology, she completed “A Psychological Study of Filipino-American Children” to complete the requirements of her graduate degree.¹

Adams' study was “concerned with the mixture of the Filipino race and the American race,” using “only those children who had one parent from each race,” with “all others discarded when upon investigation they were found to have parents who were themselves of mixed blood.”

Adams categories included both race and cultural qualifications, but even she understood that using racial characteristics for the basis of her study was problematic for the definitions of “Filipino” and “American” were themselves slippery. “One may ask, 'What is a Filipino?'" mused the social scientist. “This study considers all those who are native to the country, and whose genealogies, as far back as the parents know, in many cases only to the third or fourth generations, included no mixture of foreign blood.² More interesting is how she defined what an American was, for Adams defines them like many white expatriates in the Philippines would at the time. “As for the term 'American,' we have taken it to include those belonging to Caucasoid stock, and who were at least born or raised from early childhood in the continental United States.” Adams, in her construction of “American,” takes into account both race and culture, as well as the black/white binary. In her study, American mestizos are constructed in a particular way because of her settling on a definition of “American” that included only whites,

¹ Fern Bernett Adams, “A Psychological Study of Filipino-American Children,” (MA Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1940), University Library, University of the Philippines-Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines (hereinafter cited UP-Diliman). The only copy of the manuscript exists in the University Library at UP-Diliman, which requires the scholar to travel to Manila, as it is not available via interlibrary loan.

² Ibid, 2-3.

neglecting the fact that blacks and Filipinas had offspring in the islands, something that white Americans regularly failed to acknowledge.³

The subjects of Adams' study were "the children of Filipino-American and of American-Filipino parentage, comparing the intelligence of these groups with that of the pure American and pure Filipino groups." Filipino-Americans were defined as being born in the metropole to Filipino fathers and American born mothers. American-Filipinos were defined as being born in the colony to American born fathers and Filipina mothers. Because Adams distinguished between American mestizos with American fathers/Filipina mothers and Filipino fathers/American mothers, her study allows us to track the lives of individuals in both these groups and understand more about their circumstances and self-racializations at the ground level, something that cannot be ascertained from other sets of primary sources.⁴

Adams' study would have been even more robust for gleaning data if not for the intervention of the American Guardian Association and its allies, who perceived that her findings could ultimately threaten their efforts to assist the American mestizos in the Philippines. The AGA, when they learned of Adams' research, was disturbed that her conclusions would cause Filipinos and Americans to conceptualize the American mestizos negatively. "The gathering of data would have been greatly facilitated but for some unfortunate newspaper publicity during the latter part of April 1940 which caused certain influential organizations handling the affairs of some of these children and acting as guardians for others, to refuse and withdraw their cooperation," she revealed, an obvious reference to the AGA. Although this forced the researcher to look elsewhere for

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Ibid., 12.

data, Adams accomplished her goal, “depend[ing] upon the schools, the interested parents, and guardians of these children for the securing of cases qualified to be included in the study. It is an interesting fact to note that in all cases except three, instantaneous cooperation of the parents was received.” 293 children were eventually included in the study, 54 with Filipino fathers and American mothers, and 239 with American fathers and Filipina mothers, “ranging from one child in Kindergarten to one taking graduate work, with the largest number in the primary grades.”⁵

Details were provided concerning every aspect of her subjects' lives that could possibly affect intelligence, including living conditions and educational attainment. Of the 239 American-Filipinos, 126 were male and 113 were female, ranging from 5 to 24 years of age, with the average age being 12 years old. Of the 54 Filipino-American children, 24 were male and 26 were female, ranging from 2 to 21 years of age, with the average age being 9 years old. The difference in average age was due to the children with Filipino fathers and American mothers being “a more recent development, whereas the American-Filipino mixture has been started from the beginning of the American occupation of the Philippines.”⁶ Most of the Filipino-American children in Adams’ study were born in the United States and had returned to the Philippines when their fathers repatriated, accounting for some of the difference in average age between the two groups.

A Glimpse into the Lives of the American Mestizos in the Philippines

Adams’ study provides us with a portrait of the American mestizos beyond imposed racializations and mere statistics. Unfortunately, due to privacy concerns at the

⁵ Ibid., 16; 26.

⁶ Ibid., 26-27, 29.

time the study was conducted, names were omitted, making it impossible to track these participants in any way. Adams referred to her subjects only by case numbers. Case No. 190 is a boy with an American father and Filipina mother, the ninth child of a family of ten children. "Because of the occupation of the father, with an accompanying large annual income," the boy was substantially better-off than the vast majority of American mestizo children in the study. While the educational attainment of his parents was not included in the study, the father had supposedly "advanced through ambitious efforts." The American mestizo's "parents were married a number of years ago in Manila, and although a number of advantages are found in the home" observers believed that parents were neglectful in properly raising their large family. The study described the mother as giving "little time to the family group" and gave "loose discipline."⁷

Illustrating the differences in lived experience from one American mestizo to another, Case No. 56 followed an American mestizo girl who was physically handicapped with a cleft palate and hare lip. According to her teachers, "she spends two years in every grade, and is promoted each time at the end of the second year so to keep her in school." The girl "likes to come and there is little else for her to do." Her American father died in 1938 of heart disease at the age of 65, and was a fairly educated man in comparison to other bachelor colonials. He had gone to public school through the advanced elementary grades in the United States. The girl's 45 year old mother was in good health and had two years of public schooling. The girl had three other siblings who were older than her, "all healthy and normal in physical appearance." Upon the death of the father, the oldest brother, who was a semi-skilled laborer, used his annual income of 3400 pesos (1750 American dollars during that time) to support the family. In addition,

⁷ Ibid., 78.

the girl's family had assets left to them from their American father, including the home in which they were raised.⁸

Cases No. 90 and No. 91 were of an American mestizo brother and sister living in the provinces near Manila, the children of a common-law marriage between a career American soldier and a Filipina. The marriage became legal before the death of the father, making the family eligible for a small US Government pension for their father's military service. Years had passed before the rights to the pension had been established, resulting in a time period when the mother, "having physical deformity and being uneducated," was forced to be a pauper, "taking the children along with her for decoy." In order to survive, the American mestizo girl was "sent begging to saloons so as to get possible donations on pay day." The young boy "usually went along and between the two they managed to maintain a form of existence." After coming to the attention of charities, which made repeated efforts to apply for their dead father's pension, it was granted, with the "funds administered by authorities who see the children are maintained out of this sum." Adams and her informants felt "there apparently is little future for these children," based on their woeful situation and the mother's indifference towards their education.⁹

Other cases sounded like pages out of the American Guardian Association's ledgers. Case No. 126 and No. 130 were an American mestizo brother and sister who were part of a larger family that included another younger sibling. The father of these children, an American, was "unknown, except that it was a case of desertion and then death." The children themselves were cared for by their Filipina mother "until about a

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 79-80.

year ago, when she disappeared, leaving the children to shift for themselves.” The children were taken in by a neighborhood charity, who re-enrolled them in school with assistance of the local school authorities. “Their low intelligence levels are no surprise,” the social scientist mused, “when the background and environment have offered so little.”¹⁰

Another case of note, Case No. 80, was of a 16 year old American mestizo girl born to an American father “who died some years ago.” Her father had been a “professional man who had been married to the mother who was a taxi-dancer.” Upon his death, her mother, unable to provide any other way, “returned to her former occupation of dancing and started traveling with the shows.” The girl, who had then been only three years of age, was placed in a convent to become a Catholic nun. However, at age 14, she ran away from the Church, seeking to reunite with her mother whom she had contacted. Upon the American mestizo daughter's return, the mother put the young girl to work “as a dancing girl,” taking the girl's earnings for herself. Soon after working in the taxi-dance hall, the American mestizo girl became involved with a much older “professional American,” which resulted in her giving birth to a child, that soon thereafter, passed away. When the American mestizo daughter finally refused to give her earnings to her mother, the Filipina retaliated, placing her “in an institution as a delinquent.” Soon after, the American expatriate who impregnated her left the islands for the United States. Emotionally distraught, Adams commented that “there are many causes for the situation, chief among which, [was] the mother. ... At present, the girl has no outlook for the future and only one feeling, that of hate for her mother.”¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid, 80.

¹¹ Ibid.

Adams' observations of children with Filipino fathers and American mothers, all of which had immigrated to the Philippines after living in the United States, are especially valuable for there are no indicators that a distinct racial identity had formed among the group. Biographical data on this group during this time period is extremely rare, so any information that can be gleaned from Adams' study is valuable. Case No. 264 and Case No. 266 were two brothers in a family of four children, headed by a Filipino father and an American mother. All the children were highly educated, testing at the genius or superior level in the IQ test. Their family does not fit the negative picture portrayed by West Coast anti-Filipino advocates, of uneducated Filipinos impregnating white taxi-hall dancers and young girls. "Both parents are college graduates," Adams noted, "having met and married in America." These children, whom the American Guardian Association would racialize as American mestizo, lived in a two-earner household, with the "mother engaged in a professional occupation" and the "father in small business."

English is the basic language in this home, with Ilocano, one of the major Philippine regional languages, being spoken as a second language. Upon interviewing the family, Adams' determined "the parents are apt illustrations of those who, through realizing differences in race, have faced the criticism from the families and gone into their marriage with open eyes." In this family, the "interest in the children is paramount," with "every effort being made to insure the best educational opportunities [are afforded] to them as an added guarantee for their success." When the parents were asked whether the children's American or Filipino heritage was emphasized in their upbringing, it was explained that "racial attitudes and differences are not discussed in the home so that the

children may be spared any possible instigation of personality disturbances.”¹² Perhaps, given their professional education level, the family repatriated to the Philippines because they anticipated more tolerance towards interracial marriages and children.

Case No. 271 comes from a similar background as Case No. 264 and Case No. 266. The second child of three, this American mestizo was a healthy, bright young girl, who lived in a rented home that, “while unpretentious, contains the needed comforts.” Both of her parents were college graduates, with her Filipino father completing graduate school in the metropole. This girl’s parents were married in the United States, and encountered sharp criticism from the local white community and “extreme parental disapproval.” Both parents were able to provide for their children through working in “professional occupations.” The parents, “being extremely intelligent types,” took “serious consideration to the effect of racial mixture before proceeding to bring up a family,” revealing that they understood how their children would be received in the United States and that they took the anti-Filipino climate very seriously.¹³ Moving to the Philippines may also be an indication that the child would be raised culturally Filipino.

The final case we will examine, No. 279, was a girl who was one of six children born to a Filipino man and an American woman. The large family's children were all “happy, adjusted, and ambitious.” The parents of these American mestizos were married in the metropole years before the child was born, after her Filipino father had already completed his graduate degree in an unknown American university. Adams determined that the mother had a high level of education based on her profession in the Philippines.

¹² Ibid., 76.

¹³ Ibid., 76-77.

A wealthy family, their “high annual income” made it possible for “added advantages for the children.”¹⁴

Self-Ascribed Identities of the American Mestizos in the Philippines

The variety of lived experiences for the American mestizos in Adams’ study do not indicate that having American heritage in the Philippines led to any overwhelming differences in lifestyle and identities for those racialized as American mestizos and the larger Filipino population. Although colonial expatriates often asserted that American mestizos were treated differently because of their American heritage, Adams’ cases show that there was no special discrimination against these children that affected their life chances. In many instances, American mestizos were given charity and assistance through a variety of formal and informal community programs. Adams’ research clearly demonstrates that American parentage was not a stigma in the Philippines, for some American mestizos lived among the upper-class of the islands, not required to segregate themselves from the privileged classes.

The majority of the American mestizos in Adams’ study, however, were part of the largest socioeconomic strata in the islands, the wage-working lower class of the Philippines. Philippine society in the 1930s was highly stratified, an economic bifurcation that resulted in many Filipinos living in acute poverty. Poverty crossed all racial lines in the Philippines, not choosing its victims among a certain racial amalgamation or racial group. Despite their American parentage, these mixed race children lived the economic and cultural life of the vast majority of Filipinos, not of a special in-between group as white expatriates had imagined. If they were going to be the

¹⁴ Ibid., 77.

political leaders of the Philippines, they could only do so as Filipinos, not as American mestizos. The desires of Filipino nationalists, who racialized the American mestizos as Filipino, had materialized.

There are many reasons why the American mestizos integrated into Filipino society as “Filipinos” and not as a separate racial group. There were no economic, political, or cultural incentives for a person to identify themselves as an American mestizo in the 1930s. While the white expatriate community recognized the American mestizos as separate racial group, this brought no material advantages to individuals who would live, work, and raise families in the Philippines among millions of other Filipinos for their entire lives. For lower-class individuals, American citizenship brought no advantages except for being able to travel back and forth between the colony and the metropole. The government of the Philippines, which was transitioning from colony to independent nation due to the passing of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, provided no incentives to individuals who declared themselves racially distinct from the overall Filipino population.

There existed no practical or realistic way for a distinct American mestizo culture to coalesce in the Philippines. No concentrated American mestizo communities existed anywhere in the islands, for the numerically small population had always been scattered throughout the sprawling geography of the Philippines. The only thing most American mestizos had in common, besides being lower-class, was that their expatriate fathers provided no American cultural input into their upbringing. Comprising less than one quarter of one percent of the overall population, American mestizos could easily blend into the much larger Filipino demographic. Finally, and most importantly, the majority

of those racialized by white expatriates as American mestizos were raised solely by their Filipina mothers. From their birth, the American mestizos were immersed in Philippine culture. If American mestizos did not even consider themselves to be “American mestizos,” then it is easy to understand why an American mestizo identity never coalesced.

Imposed Racializations and Self-Ascribed Identities of the American Mestizos during the Japanese Invasion of the Philippines During World War II

Those racialized as American mestizos would, like all Filipinos, suffer from the tragedy that was to befall the Philippines with the Japanese decision to further expand their empire in Southeast Asia at the end of 1941. Only hours after neutralizing the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7th, Japanese forces launched a full-scale assault upon the Philippines designed to cut off American use of the islands. Well-planned Japanese airstrikes destroyed the airplanes tasked to defend the Philippines and rendered naval bases useless, forcing a large-scale strategic withdrawal of American naval forces from Philippine waters. Without air and naval support, the bulk of American and Filipino ground forces were ordered to withdraw from scattered positions throughout the islands to Bataan and Corregidor, where it was hoped they could hold out until reinforcements arrived. Manila was declared an open city by the Filipinos, with its defenses dismantled and guns withdrawn to comply with international law regarding the status.

Engulfed in a war for their very survival, cut off from the outside world, previous animosities between expatriate Americans and Filipinos-- the loss of the life during the

Philippine-American War, the decades of American colonization, the economic exploitation-- faded away into the background. The importance of whether someone was Filipino, American, or racialized as some combination of both paled in comparison to the threat of the Japanese, which took precedence over all other concerns.

During the hectic withdrawal of military forces from positions across the islands to Bataan and Corregidor, those racialized as American mestizos worked hand in hand with Filipinos and Americans to evacuate civilians to defensible areas. On December 15, 1941, seventy-four expatriate civilians, including thirty women and fourteen children, decided to leave Paracale for the open city of Manila hundreds of miles away rather than risk a direct confrontation with Japanese troops that were rumored to have landed in the nearby vicinity. After traveling by truck, and then abandoning their vehicles in favor of walking, the exhausted group was joined by “small groups of Filipinos who were also getting out of the area.” Days later, the civilians reached a government outpost with “10 or 12 Filipino soldiers stationed there, under an American mestizo lieutenant, who did all they could to help the women and children.” Although the escaping expatriate civilians racialized the lieutenant as an American mestizo, the officer was indistinguishable culturally from the Filipinos he commanded. By the time the civilians had arrived in Manila, “a number of them developed dysentery and malaria,” and were eventually rounded into the Santo Tomas internment camp.¹⁵

As increasing pressure was placed upon Bataan and Corregidor, the last lines of defense against the sweeping Japanese advance, these bastions eventually surrendered when it was clear they could not be reinforced with men and supplies from the United States. By May 6, 1942, all formal resistance against the Japanese ceased, all

¹⁵ A. V. H. Hartendorp, *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines* (Manila: Bookmark, 1967), 131-133.

communication with the Philippines was cut off, and the islands were well on their way to becoming one of the nations of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the Japanese term for the lands in Southeast Asia which they now ruled.¹⁶

Life in the Philippines was to be reorganized under Japanese control, beginning with political and educational institutions. The Japanese instituted a campaign, according to Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo, to disseminate the “principle of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the spiritual rejuvenation of the Filipinos, the teaching and propagation of Nippongo [Japanese language and culture], the diffusion of vocational and elementary education, and the promotion of the love of labor” with the goals of creating an “atmosphere friendly to Japanese intentions and war aims” and to “erase the Western cultural influences, particularly British and American, on Filipino life and culture.”¹⁷

The Japanese cultural agenda, however meticulously planned, encountered problems immediately after its initiation. The first problem was the geography of the Philippines. “The 7000-odd islands of the Philippines, sprawling along 1000 miles of ocean, made it impossible for the Japanese armies to garrison more than key towns in the populated and cultivated districts,” US Army historian Louis Morton noted. “The sparsely settled farmlands and the virtually inaccessible mountains of the interior were left relatively unoccupied by enemy troops,” making it impossible for a new educational system to be uniformly implemented. The second problem was that the inhabitants of the Philippines despised the Japanese occupiers, with many choosing to openly resist their efforts to transform the islands into a part of their empire. “Japanese occupation of the

¹⁶ Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People-8th Edition* (Manila: Garotech Publishing, 1990), 390-395, and Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953), 298-299.

¹⁷ Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 396.

Philippines was opposed by increasingly effective underground and guerrilla activity that ultimately reached large-scale proportions,” historians of the Philippines have documented. “Postwar investigations showed that about 260,000 people were in guerrilla organizations and that members of the anti-Japanese underground were even more numerous. Their effectiveness was such that by the end of the war, Japan controlled only twelve of the forty-eight provinces.”¹⁸

Trying to convince the Filipinos that Japanese control of the Philippines was in the people’s best interests was not working. “After abortive efforts to draw the people of the Philippines into the ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ by propaganda, quislings, bribery, and subversion, the Japanese were forced to resort to wholesale arrests, punitive expeditions, and summary executions in an attempt to stem a steadily rising tide of opposition,” and ruling with an iron fist was determined to be the best way to maintain control of the strategically important islands. However, repressive measures only engendered resistance and encouraged more Filipinos, including those racialized as American mestizos, to oppose the Japanese occupation.¹⁹ The primary concern of ousting the invader trumped all other matters, including those of race.

American Mestizos, as Filipinos, Join the Guerrilla Movement Against the Japanese

One of the most pressing problems of the Filipino guerrilla movement was reestablishing communication between the islands and the outside world, necessary to establish a military network of supply and to facilitate the eventual retaking of the Philippines. For a short time after the fall of Corregidor, there was no radio contact

¹⁸ See the section on World War II in Ronald E. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1991).

¹⁹ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 295.

between the islands and the Allies' main base of Australia. The Allies were in the dark as to the strength, composition, and intentions of Japanese forces. Guerrillas on Mindanao, the southernmost region in the Philippines, proved a boon to the Allied cause, and were vital in reestablishing communications between the islands and Australia.

Among the early leaders of the Mindanao resistance were two Filipinos of mixed heritage. Captain Luis Morgan, an individual racialized as an American mestizo, was a “former Philippine Constabulary officer who refused to surrender to the Japanese forces.”²⁰ After the fall of Bataan, Morgan escaped hundreds of miles south, traveling across dozens of islands, and organized an independent guerrilla unit in western Lanao on the island of Mindanao. After traveling further south to the municipality of Baliangao, Morgan met with another guerrilla unit headed by Captain William Tate, “an American negro of Filipino mother,” combining their forces so to better face Japan’s impending occupation of the southern Philippines. Together, Morgan and Tate organized an expeditionary force and made contacts with former soldiers and military officers across Mindanao, “branching out to the neighboring provinces ... from the mountains of Lanao.” Both Morgan and Tate fought against Japanese attempts to subjugate Filipinos in the southernmost islands of the Philippines. Filipinos likely racialized Morgan and Tate not as American mestizos, but as Filipinos. The duress of war, and fighting alongside Filipinos for a common cause, probably dispelled any doubt that they themselves were Filipino.²¹

Morgan and Tate, after consolidating their forces under the command of American expatriate Colonel Wendell Fertig, protected Mindanao by continually

²⁰ Manuel E. Buenafe, *Wartime Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: Philippine Education Foundation, 1950), 178.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

thwarting Japanese attempts to control the island's vast interior, where the heart of the most effective Philippine resistance network had been set up. By early 1943, after Fertig had fully secured Mindanao, he made the bold decision to send agents to Australia to inform the Allies that the island was secure. Fertig believed Mindanao showed great promise as a possible beachhead to retake the Philippines, being a “large and strategically placed island” that “could be made into a major guerrilla base for further expansion to the north.”²² On Mindanao, communication networks were reestablished with over seventy transmitter stations placed along strategic points, furnishing a “constant stream of information which, within the limits of accuracy, helped considerably in the planning of operations against the Japanese in the Philippines.” Fertig's guerrillas, supplied by US Navy cargo-carrying submarines departing from Australia, “eventually became the largest and best equipped in the Philippine islands,” numbering 38,000 men.²³

The American Mestizos Become a Military Concern for the US War Department and the US Office of Strategic Services

Submarines could provide operatives and supplies from Australia into the Japanese-controlled Philippines, but they could also evacuate civilians and military personnel on the return trip. Fertig's guerrilla network facilitated the movement of people out of the warzone. In the process of transporting civilians and military personnel, however, heated controversy arose surrounding those externally recognized as American mestizos. Racial construction in the Philippines was to become a military matter.

²² Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 300-301.

²³ *Ibid.*, 308.

Beginning in late 1943, Mindanao became an evacuation point, with Colonel Fertig and General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of American military forces in the Pacific, establishing a repatriation policy for evacuating Americans seeking to leave the wartime Philippines. From the start, Fertig and MacArthur disagreed on who to repatriate, among the many other disagreements they would have throughout the war.²⁴ Messages between Fertig and MacArthur show regular conflicts as to who should be taken back to the MacArthur's headquarters Brisbane, Australia in American submarines. "Policy of repatriation recently arranged, subject to your selection and discretion, the evacuation of American servicemen who have escaped enemy imprisonment and whose services are not needed by you and/or Americans who having rendered faithful service under your command are unfit for further service due to wounds, injuries or illness not the result of own misconduct," read a tersely worded military message from MacArthur to Fertig. "Accordingly, the evacuation of Morgan, Tucker, and Minter ... at this time is disapproved. It is desired that any further selection for evacuation be within the aforestated policy."²⁵

Why was it necessary that Captain Luis Morgan, one of Fertig's top "American mestizo" commanders, be evacuated? Was he injured? Did he commit a crime? Why did MacArthur's headquarters refuse? Whatever the case, Fertig continued to push for Morgan's repatriation, prompting various replies from MacArthur. On October 4, 1943, when another submarine was due to pick up American civilians in Mindanao, MacArthur made a personal request of Fertig, a man whom he had no actual operational control over.

²⁴ For more on the relationship between Fertig and MacArthur, see William Manchester, *American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978).

²⁵ MacArthur to Fertig, Secret Cable, NR: 161, GTNO CN/jgs, September 28, 1943, Box Number 42A, Joseph Hayden Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan (hereinafter Hayden Papers).

“You are authorized [to] arrange evacuation on return trip vessel of one hundred Americans following policy already outlined, including therein all American women and children, also male civilians whose services are not needed [in] your area who can be accumulated without undue risk.”²⁶ A week later, when another submarine sortie was scheduled to commence, MacArthur reiterated his concern, stating, “I am particularly desirous of effecting the evacuation of American women and children in the area who have been protected from or otherwise have eluded enemy capture and whose hardships and peril have caused me constant concern.” The general added, “Now that the means are potentially at hand I desire that every effort be made to effect such evacuation as speedily and safely as possible.”²⁷

Colonel Fertig seemed to disregard MacArthur's orders during these submarine evacuations, especially the provision that stated only American citizens should be evacuated. Both MacArthur and Fertig seemed to have come to an agreement that as long as the guidelines were loosely followed, there would be no harm. Yet, these repatriation efforts seemed to irk the War Department back in the metropole, who disliked the blatant disregard of their directives. The War Department, in 1944, communicated their disapproval to General MacArthur's headquarters in Australia.

In July 1944, the War Department became concerned with the nature of the evacuation efforts of MacArthur and Fertig. It was requested that MacArthur's headquarters “advise the manner of selecting evacuees and the reason for evacuating those who desire to remain in the Philippines.” The War Department “desired that [an]

²⁶ MacArthur to Fertig, Secret Cable, NR: 171, PRS CN/jgs, October 4, 1943, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

²⁷ MacArthur to Fertig, Secret Cable, NR: 183, PRS CN/tpd, October 10, 1943, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

estimate be given as to the number of evacuees yet to be transported to the United States from the Philippine Islands and also the number of such individuals now in Australia to be sent to the States.”²⁸ The issue that concerned the War Department the most was who was being transported to the United States. “In selecting these persons to be brought to the United States, only American citizens, who desire to leave the Philippines, together with their wives and children, should be transported therefrom,” a simple enough directive from the War Department. The final demand, that “no Filipino civilians (including those married to an American) should be removed from the Islands,” sparked controversy throughout MacArthur's command.²⁹

General Stephen J. Chamberlain took serious issue with the War Department's policies regarding repatriation from the Philippines, and thought that the request put before the headquarters of the Southwest Pacific Area was outrageous and possibly dangerous to the conduct of the war against the Japanese. Writing to General Douglas MacArthur, Chamberlain pleaded that “the War Department's letter deserves careful examination.” The general ridiculed the officer in the metropole who wrote it, saying it was “obviously dictated by one without knowledge of the Philippine situation and oblivious to the sensitive nature of the racial considerations involved.” Chamberlain was adamant that “it can hardly reflect the policy of the War Department in such matters” and furthermore, “it's post-war disclosure would seriously disturb Philippine-American relations and cause repercussions throughout the Orient.” Chamberlain believed it was

²⁸ The War Department: The Adjutant General's Office to Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Subject: Civilian Evacuees from the Philippine Islands, Secret Letter, AG 370.05 OR-S-E, July 21, 1944, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

²⁹ Ibid.

“advisable that the C in C [MacArthur] place himself emphatically on the record in this matter.”³⁰

Chamberlain's August 1, 1944 letter in response to the War Department reveals his beliefs regarding what he believed could be interpreted as a dangerous “racial” directive. “My policy in the evacuation of American citizens from the Philippines embraces all whose services are not required by our military forces, and whose evacuation can be affected with reasonable safety,” Chamberlain explained, “largely responsive to the threat of death overhanging the heads of all Americans still at large and Filipinos who harbor, protect, or otherwise succor them.” As to the charge that civilians were being removed from the Philippines without their consent, Chamberlain contended that “while the policy does not envision the evacuation of American citizens against their will, it does contemplate the relief of military commanders and Philippine communities from further responsibility for the care and protection of such American citizens who are neither required in nor contributing to the resistance movement.”

Although Chamberlain argued that “the compulsory evacuation of certain citizens may be premised upon the requirements of military necessity,” he also believed that it was vital that certain individuals without explicit American citizenship be allowed to leave the islands under the repatriation program. “A few Filipino wives and mestizo children of American citizens have been evacuated in line with the long standing American concept governing the sanctity of family ties in order that our cause might not suffer the serious prejudice which would result from the flagrant racial discrimination any other course of action would involve,” he revealed. Chamberlain expressed the desire that the evacuation program be expanded to all Filipinos, but considering the lack of

³⁰ Chamberlain to Chief of Staff, Secret Letter, August 1, 1944, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

resources, “the policy of evacuation has not embraced Filipino people, other than those within the immediate families of citizens of the United States.”³¹

Chamberlain, who was well-aware of Japanese propaganda against Americans as racist and American counter-propaganda operations against such Japanese accusations, believed that if the War Department's communique fell into enemy hands it would seriously undermine military efforts to garner support for the Philippine underground and to retake the islands. “I feel it would be remiss in my duty were I to fail to urge that paragraph two of basic communication be expunged from the records of the War Department,” Chamberlain pleaded. “In the Pacific war, enemy propaganda depicting the Occidental concept of racial inferiority and discrimination is one of the strongest weapons yet employed,” arguing that “this paragraph serves, however unintentionally, to restate and lend credence to such propaganda.” So dangerous was the directive that only explicit American citizens, not their Filipinos wives and American mestizo children (who were Americans by birthright, but only if they had sufficient documentation), be allowed refuge in Australia and the United States, that Chamberlain pleaded “it should not be preserved for future historians to record as the policy of the War Department in the treatment of nationals of the United States who, despite their abandonment to the brutality of a merciless invader, have sustained a depth of loyalty which challenges any parallel on the pages of human history.”³²

MacArthur's headquarters believed the War Department's directive would irreparably harm the reputation and possibly the invasion plans of the United States in the Southwest Pacific Area should the Japanese or the Philippine resistance catch wind of the

³¹ Chamberlain to Chief of Staff, Secret Letter, August 2, 1944, 1, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

evacuation guidelines and perceive them as racist. It was deemed crucial that American psychological warfare efforts in the Philippines focus upon convincing the Filipino people that the United States saw the inhabitants of Asia as racial equals to white Americans, with no difference in their treatment. The Japanese, in turn, sought to counter American efforts with their own psychological warfare campaign which aimed to convince Filipinos that the United States had been, and would continue to be, a merciless colonizer. “In spite of exercise of brutality, Japanese exploitation of racial prejudice has met some success in occupied areas,” read the August 2, 1944 plan for psychological warfare in the islands of the Pacific by the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which operated directly under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The stakes were seen as high, for “Heavy pressure is being exerted on the Philippine puppet government to force Philippine forces into the defense of their Islands against American reoccupation.”³³

The unequal treatment proposed by the War Department for Filipinos and those racialized as American mestizos led MacArthur's headquarters to fear that revelations of a racial double standard might be enough to unravel the American/Filipino alliance against the Japanese and substantiate claims that the United States had abandoned the islands to a ruthless enemy. “From the beginning of the war nearly all Filipinos have remained loyal,” read the OSS’s secret psychological warfare report on the Philippines. “However, they cannot understand our failure to send relief during the past three years.”³⁴ American psychological warfare specialists felt, despite a tarnished reputation from what they

³³ Office of Strategic Services, “Basic Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area,” Secret, August 2, 1944, 1, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers. Emphasis on the word “defense” is present in the original document.

³⁴ Office of Strategic Services, “Appendix ‘D’ to Basic Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area: Special Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in the Philippines,” August 2, 1944, 1, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

perceived as the abandonment of the US military due to MacArthur's withdrawal to Australia, "the Japanese anti-white program failed to alienate the Filipino from loyalty to the United States."³⁵

Chamberlain believed that not only could the War Department's directive be correctly perceived as racist, thereby causing damage to the ongoing war effort, but that it was also in danger of damaging the post-war relationship with the Philippines, and possibly all of Asia. The OSS's psychological warfare plan in the Southwest Pacific called for strengthening "Filipino opinion that America is the Philippines' best and safest long-time friend" and that the "46 year old joint venture with the Filipino in his struggle for freedom proves our respect for the rights of Oriental people," but there were ulterior motives involved. "The Congress of the United States has granted the Philippines complete independence as soon as the enemy is driven out, and orderly, free democratic processes are established," the clandestine document continued. "The law includes the provision that sites for the development of air, naval, and land bases will be made available to the United States for the mutual protection of the American and Filipino people." The Philippines was seen as crucial to the American post-war disposition in the Pacific, a fact that the Japanese were well-aware of and tried to exploit in their propaganda, pointing out "that American bases are positive proof of our imperialism."³⁶

Immediate and long-term strategic concerns led MacArthur's headquarters to ignore the War Department's directive and to argue that their document should be removed from the historical record completely. "It should not be preserved to disturb post-war relations between the American and Filipino people," Chamberlain urged,

³⁵ Ibid., 2.

³⁶ Ibid.

claiming there would be “repercussions in the Orient which would inevitably follow its disclosure.”³⁷ Perhaps this was an overreaction, for the war was still raging, and the ultimate defeat of Japan would be many months, and many casualties, away. Yet, it seems that Chamberlain's request was granted, for the official Army histories on the Philippine guerrilla campaign fail to mention any evacuation effort, nor do they reference any concern about the racial makeup of the evacuees. What evidence remains of the debates surrounding the repatriation campaign exists in the personal files of the University of Michigan political science professor Joseph Ralston Hayden, who served in the Office of Strategic Services as General Douglas MacArthur's personal advisor on the Philippines.³⁸

Self-Ascribed Identities of the American Mestizos at the End of World War II in the Philippines

Major operations to retake the Philippines began in late 1944, with American troops landing in Leyte in October and subsequently at Luzon, then Mindoro, taking strategically important areas across the islands. Japanese forces were either destroyed or bypassed in this gargantuan effort. Across the Philippines, guerillas began to openly attack their occupiers and assist American invasion forces by harassing the Japanese in sprawling operations behind enemy lines. By 1945, the US Army had retaken Manila on Luzon, after a bloody battle that left many civilians dead and nearly all of its infrastructure shattered; Mindanao was retaken with assistance from Fertig's guerrillas; towns and barrios across the islands were reclaimed by nameless Filipinos in forgotten

³⁷ Chamberlain to Chief of Staff, Secret Letter, August 2, 1944, 3, Box Number 42A, Hayden Papers.

³⁸ Professor Joseph Ralston Hayden's Papers are located at the Bentley Historical Library in the University of Michigan.

battles. Death did not discriminate in the Philippines, nor was it easily calculated, for it was estimated that over one million Filipinos were killed or maimed by the end of the war.

Those identified as American mestizos recounted the horrors of the last days of the war in the Philippines. Ralph Bennett was one of the “American mestizo” civilians who survived marauding Japanese marines and American aerial and artillery bombardment in the final battle for Manila. What Bennett heard and saw would be ingrained in his memory for the rest of his life. One of his Filipino friends, Armando “Dody” Quirino, had come upon the dead bodies of his mothers and sisters, and then, in an attempt to save his grandmother, ran to her home across the street, which he was unable to reach due to a Japanese machine-gun emplacement on the corner. Ralph and Dody, along with a group of unarmed Filipinos, were then rounded up by the Japanese and indiscriminately machine-gunned. The two companions hit the ground, but were not hurt, biding their time until the Japanese left the area.

After these experiences, it probably mattered little to Dody that colonial expatriates racialized his friend Ralph as an American mestizo. Dody, like most residents of the Philippines, considered Ralph to be a fellow Filipino. There would be no reason not to. Ralph was born and raised in the Philippines by his Filipino mother, ate Filipino food, and had endured the Japanese occupation along with millions of other Filipino civilians. Surely, Ralph had more in common with Filipinos than with Americans, and saw himself as a Filipino, like the evidence suggests other racialized American mestizos did.

For three days Ralph and Dody dodged Japanese teams and American barrages, until one fateful evening when the two were huddled in the staircase of a house in the remains of their shattered neighborhood. Dody was sitting two steps below Ralph when an American artillery strike began. As one of the shells exploded, shrapnel was sprayed across the stairwell. Ralph was struck in the leg by a piece of shrapnel. Dody was struck in the back of the head and killed instantly. Under these horrific circumstances, concerns of who was an American mestizo or Filipino mattered little to individuals caught in the middle of the greatest conflict the world had ever known. If concerns of who was an American mestizo or Filipino would matter again after the dust had settled across the decimated Philippines, it remained to be seen.³⁹

³⁹ Alphonso J. Aluit, *By Sword and Fire: The Destruction of Manila in World War II, 3 February-3 March 1945* (Manila, Philippines: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1994), 435.

Chapter Six: Imposed Racializations and Self-Ascribed Identities of the American
Mestizos in the Postwar Philippines

The Japanese occupation and subsequent expulsion by the Americans shattered the infrastructure and economy of the Philippines. By the end of 1945, on the eve of their political independence from the United States, the Filipino government existed only in name, and everything that was needed to run a society, including food, water, energy, buildings, schools, and roads, had been either destroyed or required extensive rehabilitation. The Filipino people, with an economy in ruins and the most basic necessities and government services nonexistent, felt the ravages of war in their everyday lives. Only the immediate assistance of the United States could prevent the Philippines from succumbing to famine, disease, and widespread unrest in the aftermath of the most devastating conflict in the nation's history. Upon reoccupation, the US Army began providing food and other material aid to the nation's starving population.¹

The government of the United States, realizing the economic reconstruction of the former colony would be impossible without a first-hand assessment of the damage, dispatched Senator Millard Tydings, the country's resident expert on the Philippines, to the islands. Upon his recommendations, the US Congress voted to provide over \$200,000,000 in aid to rebuild infrastructure and to stabilize the Philippine financial situation which was in danger of spiraling out of control. It was obvious that much more was needed, and in 1946, the Philippine Rehabilitation Act, which provided \$620,000,000 to be given to Filipinos who suffered damages during the war, was passed in the US Congress. However, this act would be tied to the Filipino's acceptance of the

¹ Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People-8th Edition* (Manila: Garotech Publishing, 1990), 427-428.

Philippine Trade Act, which established a special free trade relationship between the newly independent Philippines and the United States. From the Filipino perspective, the seemingly last minute inclusion of the “parity” clause to the agreement was most controversial. It gave American citizens “the right to dispose, exploit, develop, and utilize 'all agricultural, timber, and mineral lands,' ... the operation of public utilities, and the exploitation of the 'waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and mineral resources of the Philippines.’” As the trade and rehabilitation acts were tied together, if the parity provision was not accepted by the Filipino government-- and this required an amendment to the government's new constitution-- the country would not receive American funds for rebuilding its war-torn islands.²

If the economic relationship between the Philippines and United States would remain intimate, so would their military relationship. The Treaty of General Relations, signed hours after the Filipino independence ceremonies of July 4, 1946, gave the new Filipino government sovereignty of the country, “except for bases as the United States would need for the mutual protection of the United States and the Philippines.”³

Politician Manuel Roxas called for cooperation with the United States “in all matters concerning our common defense and security” during his inaugural speech as President of the new Republic of the Philippines.⁴ The Military Bases Agreement, ratified in 1947, saw the islands become an integral part in US armed forces plans for projecting power across the Pacific should hostilities break out. Twenty-three military installations throughout the Philippines were leased to the United States for a period of ninety-nine

² Ibid., 434. See the section on Philippine Independence in Ronald E. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1991).

³ Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 437.

⁴ Ibid., 523.

years, including the massive bases at Subic Bay and Clark Field, which would become the nation's two largest overseas bases in the world. At these bases and their surrounding areas, US authorities retained full jurisdiction in matters of taxes and law, even having the ability to arrest and prosecute Filipinos in cases involving American servicemen.

The "G.I. Children" and Altered Imposed Racializations of the American Mestizos

The presence of permanent and transient US servicemen in the Philippines after World War II was guaranteed to be of large-scale proportions when the two countries ratified the Military Assistance Agreement (1947) and the Mutual Defense Treaty (1951). These agreements and conflicts resulted in an influx of American servicemen whose mission was to advise and train the newly established Philippine armed forces, and whose presence only intensified when the islands were used as a staging point to support American forces during the Korean War (1950-1953).⁵ The large influx of American servicemen led to liaisons between American men and Filipina women and an estimated 5000 mixed racial children, the majority of whom would be raised solely by their Filipina mothers after their American fathers left the Philippines.

The "G.I. children," as contemporary Americans and Filipinos called them, were racialized by some expatriate Americans as a new generation of "American mestizos" in the Philippines. There were some similarities between the two groups. The G.I. children, like the American mestizos born under American colonial rule, were the product of liaisons between American men and Filipina women. However, considering the different political and cultural circumstances that existed in the islands after the war, it was likely

⁵ See the section on Philippine Independence in Ronald E. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1991).

that American expatriates' imposed racializations of the American mestizos would not predominate. Filipino nationalists, who now had political control of the Philippines and who had been for decades attempted to build a common "Filipino" identity, continued to racialize the American mestizos as Filipinos. In the newly independent Philippines, it was unlikely that space for an American mestizo existed in the Philippine racial framework at all.

Filipino Perspectives on the Renewed American Military Presence, Interracial Relationships, and the G.I. Children in the Postwar Philippines

“The first evidence of the renewed American presence in the Philippine provinces is so unambiguous as to be almost embarrassing,” remarked white expatriate author Lewis Gleeck on the influx of American servicemen in the Philippines after World War II. “The roads taken by the liberating American armies from Leyte to Lingayen in Pangasinan were marked by a parade of illegitimate children born nine months later, as the overjoyed Filipino welcomed the advancing G.I.'s with unrestrained enthusiasm.”⁶ There existed an array of Filipino perspectives of American servicemen who fathered G.I. children in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Filipino sociologists documented the varied responses to the renewed American military presence, including reactions to the fraternization that would ultimately result in a group that would be racialized as the new American mestizos.

“‘Hello Joe!’ was the familiar greeting that echoed throughout the reoccupied areas of the Philippines,” Filipino sociologist Benicio T. Catapusan wrote of the welcome

⁶ Lewis E. Gleeck, *Americans on the Philippine Frontiers* (Manila, Philippines: Carmelo and Bauermann, 1974), 227.

that was initially given to American soldiers. “Joe was kind and benevolent,” wrote the sociologist, giving “the natives much-needed clothing, scented soaps, sweets, cookies, cheese, butter, canned goods, and free rides,” gestures which held enormous weight among a Filipino population slow to recover from the ravages of war. “Behind the picture,” the sociologist noted, “there is something more vital and more worthy of consideration than the material help that was given to the Filipinos-- the relationship that began between the Filipinos and the Americans in the Philippines.”⁷

"Before the war American-Filipino social relationships were hardly talked about," Catapusan noted in his research. The influx of American servicemen led to increased social contacts between Americans and Filipinos in the newly independent Philippines. “Now that a great mass of American soldiers have infiltrated the Philippine communities and the ‘colonies’ have been destroyed by war, such social aloofness can no longer be maintained,” the Filipino sociologist argued. “The result is [racial] intermixture and social infusion.” Through his interviews with the local population, Catapusan captured the attitudes of Filipinos toward the renewed American military presence.

Catapusan found in his research that several “outstanding attitudes have thus far been noted” towards American servicemen, including those of gratitude, sympathy, and antagonism. Initially, Filipinos expressed gratitude to the Americans for driving the Japanese out of the Philippines, especially after the “great massacre of Manila,” where thousands of the “best and most talented men were beheaded and hundreds of women were abused, starved, and burned to death,” and where “those who were fortunate enough to escape the ‘inferno’ were machine-gunned to death” with “many others buried alive in

⁷ Benicio T. Catapusan, “Filipino Attitudes Toward G.I. Joe,” *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. XXX, No. 6, (July-August 1945): 466.

the debris of falling buildings.” The horrors of war were briefly forgotten when the city was retaken, with Filipinos shouting “Victory!” and “Hail America!” while singing “God Bless America” intermixed with “Philippines, My Philippines.”⁸ Although American servicemen were “sometimes seen under the influence of liquor, ... the Filipinos who observe this unruly behavior do not seem to show signs of ‘disgust,’ nor do they utter words of insult.” Instead, the prevailing attitude was one of sympathy for “these lonely boys” who had fought in a brutal war thousands of miles away from the metropole.

The “American sailor-soldier problem,” as the Filipino sociologist termed it, was “met with kindness and understanding” even in the most extreme of circumstances. One Filipina told Catapusan of her reaction to a late night encounter with a group of drunken American sailors who knocked on her door one evening, mistaking it for a *pam-pam* house, Filipino slang for a house of prostitution. When the Filipina’s sixteen year old daughter opened the door, the sailors “started calling her [and her mother] indecent names.” Unafraid of the “sailors’ aggressiveness,” she invited them in for tea and rice cakes, and afterwards “they stood up and apologetically went out.” Certain American behaviors, which in ordinary times would be seen as a violation of societal norms and values, were deemed acceptable or ignored in the postwar period due to Filipino feelings of gratitude and sympathy.

In tandem with the attitudes of gratitude and sympathy, the Filipino sociologist concluded that Filipinos had developed feelings of antagonism towards Americans, especially among the young men who felt “deprived of the attention of the young Filipinas who have gone with ‘G.I. Joe.’” Catapusan’s informants revealed that there were “valid reasons for the Filipinas’ familiarity with G.I. Joe,” including “curiosity,” the

⁸ Ibid., 469.

belief that “the average American soldier is kind and sympathetic” and “for convenience of transportation.” Many Filipinos expressed apprehension towards the interracial liaisons that formed in the immediate aftermath of the war. One Filipina went so far as to remark to Catapusan, “A girl going with an American navy man or soldier is thought to be disreputable, so that no decent and well-educated Filipino would go with her.”⁹

Filipinas were cautioned “of the misfortune that might befall them because of such familiarity with G.I. Joe.” ... An illustrative example occurred in late 1945, when a local Philippine newspaper purportedly announced the demobilization of US troops in the islands with the headline, “BAD NEWS FOR THE GIRLS!” According to the Filipino sociologist, the concern was that “this order would mean sad ‘adios’ and the heartaches resulting from the temporary love tangles and social impasses which hamper the Filipina-G.I. relationship.” A common derision aimed at Filipinas who hitched rides on American jeeps was the phrase, “*Hangang sa pier ka lamang*,” loosely translating to “the G.I.’s love and care for her are up to the pier only.” Catapusan believed that the epithets held some truth, commenting that “when the G.I. shoved off from the pier, he left his Filipina friend behind him in tears, perhaps broken hearted, afflicted with social disease, ostracized by her own friends, and perhaps treated as an outcast by her own kind and family.”¹⁰

It seems that the American postwar presence, after a short period of time, came to be resented by Filipinos. “We now have enough records to show the Americans’ tendency to discriminate in their dealings with civilians,” the Filipino sociologist noted. “On the horizon of Filipino-American social relationships there is brewing an antagonism

⁹ Ibid., 470-472.

¹⁰ *Manila Daily News*, September 19, 1945, cited in *ibid.*, 472.

evolved from the unpleasant social contacts. ... The liberation, which brought untold happiness to the Filipinos, also developed some doubt about the actual practice of social equality after they had experienced some discrimination.” Catapusan concluded that “adverse experiences developed into the antagonistic stage of G.I.-Filipino relations.”

Catapusan ultimately hoped that “before long the prevalent antagonism will die out, to give more opportunity for the acculturation stage of Filipino-G.I. relationships in the Philippines.” He determined that the acculturation stage was “just beginning, as evidenced by the steady increase of G.I. Filipina marriages, averaging about 125 marriages a week.”¹¹ Unfortunately, the Filipino sociologist and others familiar with Philippine society failed to fully grasp the social and human consequences of widespread fraternization between Americans and Filipinas. Nor did they comprehend the sheer numbers of mixed racial children that would be born from such relationships until years later.

Altered Imposed Racializations of the G.I. Children as American Mestizos by White Expatriates

Altered imposed racializations of the G.I. children as American mestizos would come from white expatriates in the American Guardian Association. Initially, the organization thought it had completed its work in the Philippines after the country had gained its independence from the United States. “Most of the children under the care of the American Guardian Association up to 1942 were the offspring of the enlisted men of the Spanish-American War and World War I,” recalled one of the organization’s postwar annual reports. “Many of these children, who were interned at Santa Domitilla

¹¹ Catapusan, “Filipino Attitudes Toward G.I. Joe,” 475.

Vocational School during the Japanese occupation, reached the age of majority during their internment.” In adulthood, American mestizos had “married in the Philippines” while “others are holding good positions,” and probably, after their contact with the American Guardian Association, went on to live their lives as ordinary Filipinos.

The work of the AGA seemed to have come to a successful conclusion. There were no more racialized American mestizos to be cared for, as “the few remaining minors were soon to reach the age of majority and their guardianships terminated.” However, it became apparent that the fraternization between American servicemen and Filipinas had produced numerous mixed race children, the vast majority of whom were abandoned by their transient fathers. The AGA saw themselves uniquely qualified to tackle “the problem of caring for the destitute so-called G.I. children” in the postwar Philippines.¹² Under the circumstances, the AGA felt it would be foolish to disband, and believed “the Association should do what it could for the children with funds that are available.”

After the Santo Tomas internment camp was secured by advancing American and Filipino forces in 1945, the newly freed members of the AGA went about rebuilding their organization in order to provide for what they saw as the next generation of American mestizos. With the help of the US Army engineers, they constructed an office out of bombed out building, the location being “where we started our first aid to these destitute G.I. children.”¹³ The task at hand was enormous, for the earliest figures obtained by the Philippine Red Cross were that at least 5000 children had been born in the postwar Philippines to American servicemen. At this critical juncture, the American Guardian

¹² “The American-Philippine Guardian Association: Resume of the Year’s Work” (Manila, Philippines: American-Philippine Guardian Association), 1952 , 11, American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines (hereinafter cited as Rizal Library).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

Association racialized the G.I. children as the second generation of American mestizos.¹⁴ “Although we have been giving assistance to several hundred American mestizo babies abandoned here by their fathers, only the most destitute children in and near Manila have received any help,” American expatriate Alva Hill revealed.

Although the relationship between the first wave of American mestizos and the G.I. children was superficial at best, American expatriates believed it, and acted upon the notion wholeheartedly. “Our experiences with hundreds of mestizo children of Spanish War Veterans has proven that even after they have passed safely through their teens, they still need our advice and guidance,” Hill noted. “That assistance can be made available for several thousand mestizos now approaching school age only by increasing our activities and our financial support.” For the white expatriate supporters of the American Guardian Association, the abandonment of the G.I. children by their American fathers continued a trend that had begun in 1898, only reappearing because of the dramatically increased American military presence after the Second World War.¹⁵

The second generation of American mestizos were created by an external stimulus. Without World War II, there would be no discussion of the need to help the abandoned G.I. children, for they would not exist in the large numbers had it not been necessary to expel the Japanese from the Philippines. Without World War II, racializations and self-ascribed identities of the earlier generation of American mestizos would have ceased to exist. There was no culture to pass on, nor were there “American mestizo” traditions. There were political, cultural, or economic incentives to maintain a separate identity. Those of mixed race heritage would have been fully

¹⁴ “The American-Philippine Guardian Association: Resume of the Year’s Work,” 1952, 12, American Historical Collection, Rizal Library.

¹⁵ Ibid.

absorbed into the Philippine racial framework as Filipinos, for it was not a group that could bear children who would be racialized by the larger population as anything other than “Filipino.” Not only were there so few individuals racialized as American mestizos in the Philippines, but a self-ascribed American mestizo identity had never coalesced. The renewed American military presence, and the thousands of G.I. children that resulted, kept the concept of the “American mestizo” alive in the postwar Philippines.

The Demographics of the G.I. Children in the Postwar Philippines

A joint Philippine National Red Cross and the Philippine War Relief of the United States (PNRC/PWRUS) effort to survey the condition of the G.I. children documented that 4236 children had been abandoned by their American serviceman fathers between 1945 and 1947, a number representing what they estimated to be about 75% of the total children abandoned during that particular three year interval. Because some Filipinas objected to registration, a complete 100% figure could not be obtained, but the study's authors believed that there were nearly 5000 abandoned American mestizo children in the islands. For those who could be tracked, 338 G.I. children lived in Northern Luzon, 2014 in Central Luzon, 117 in Southern Luzon, 1158 in the Visayas, and 209 in Mindanao.¹⁶

The joint PNRC/PWRUS venture included a sociological study that surveyed the living conditions of 300 Filipinas and their children, allowing scholars a glimpse into the lives of these families in the postwar Philippines. Most of the Filipinas had only a few years of elementary schooling with little or no vocational training. 70% of the mothers were single and 28% were widows prior to the renewed American military presence.

¹⁶ Thomas Carter, *The Way It Was* (Manila, Philippines: American Chamber of Commerce, 1985), 38-39, and “The American-Philippine Guardian Association: Resume of the Year’s Work,” 1952, 12, American Historical Collection, Rizal Library.

Before giving birth, 46% of the mothers were gainfully employed with an average monthly income of 26 pesos. 73% were in good health, but malnutrition was common, with 20% being in poor health and 7% being in need of immediate hospitalization. 42% of the mothers did not know what Army unit the child's father belonged to, and 38% did not know the father's address in the United States. 71% of the mothers had attempted to communicate their pregnancy and subsequent birth with the child's American father, with 27% receiving replies. Only 22% of the mothers received any financial support from their American fathers, ranging anywhere from between five to 300 dollars.¹⁷

A closer look at the statistics reveals that the majority of the G.I. children were conceived to American servicemen serving in the armies of reoccupation. Of the 300 families studied, 72 children were born in the last quarter of 1945, 246 were born from January to December 1946, and 46 were born from January 1947 to December 1947. 26% of the G.I. children in the study had fathers of African-American descent.

White Expatriates Broaden the Definition of the American Mestizo to include the Children of Black Servicemen in the Postwar Philippines

The clear presence of G.I. children with black fathers in the postwar Philippines begs the question: Would American expatriates in the American Guardian Association racialize the children of black American servicemen and Filipinas as American mestizos? During the American colonial period, the organization's by-laws and constitution stated that the AGA's purpose was to help those children with white American blood, freckles and fair skin. Children of black American servicemen in the Philippines were not

¹⁷ Carter, *The Way It Was*, 38-39.

considered members of the American mestizo group, with white expatriates enforcing these racial beliefs on the ground, including in the pre-war school system of Manila.

By the 1950s, white expatriates felt that these overtly discriminatory imposed racializations of the American mestizos were not reflective of who the G.I. children they sought to assist. An important change in the American Guardian Association's rhetoric towards blacks and the American mestizos had occurred in the Philippines. White expatriates broadened their definition of what being "American" meant, which resulted in a redefinition of who they racialized as "American mestizos" in the postwar Philippines. The American Guardian Association had progressively changed its definitions regarding American race and nationality, rewriting its articles of incorporation. Instead of statements about how the organization would raise American mestizos with white fathers under American tutelage, the AGA declared that its purpose "is to do all that is possible for the protection and uplift of children of any nationality, especially those wholly or partly of American blood." Those of American descent-- not explicitly black or white, for it was no longer indicated which-- would be cared for to the extent it was possible.

The racist beliefs which ran throughout the American Guardian Association's original documents-- that Americans were superior to Filipinos, and that whites were superior to blacks-- were no longer reflected in the organization's by-laws. Children of "any nationality," including Filipinos, were to be assisted. It would be acceptable for the children of white and black Americans to be culturally Filipino. Symbolically, the American Guardian Association rebranded itself to reflect this more inclusive attitude, becoming the American-Philippine Guardian Association (APGA) in 1951.¹⁸ In the

¹⁸ "The American-Philippine Guardian Association: Resume of the Year's Work" (Manila, Philippines: American-Philippine Guardian Association), 1951, 5, American Historical Collection, Rizal Library. In the

initial annual reports of the APGA's, no distinction was made between the children of white or black servicemen and Filipinas, for the organization considered them all “American mestizos.” Pictures of the children that the APGA helped, including many with African-American phenotypes, were hallmarks of the organization’s annual reports in the 1950s. By broadening the definition of who was an American mestizo, white expatriates tacitly admitted that blacks were Americans.

Self-Ascribed Identities of the American Mestizos and a Glimpse into the Lives of the G.I. Children in the Postwar Philippines

American social scientists, concerned with the deployment of American military forces in the Philippines after World War II, captured the perspectives of those racialized as American mestizos in sociological studies conducted in the 1950s. These studies provide a glimpse into the lives of American mestizos in adulthood, and suggest that an American mestizo self-ascribed identity had never coalesced.

John William Calhoun, a US Air Force officer stationed at Clark Air Force base in the Philippines after World War II, sought to document the phenomena of intermarriage in “American-Filipino Marriages: A Descriptive Study of Twenty Interracial Problem Marriages Involving United States Military Personnel and Filipinos.” Calhoun’s primary focus was on “the excessive number of broken marriages ... as compared to the number of divorces in civilian families.” In his official capacity as an administrative officer at the largest American Air Force base outside of the United States, Calhoun “came into contact frequently with persons who came to his office to seek a

next two decades, the American-Philippine Guardian Association would have its name changed once again, this time to the Philippine-American Guardian Association.

solution to their marital problems.” Filipina single mothers often sought counsel from the administrative officer for “some had not heard from their husbands for several years, some were receiving no support,” and “some had received notification of pending divorce action initiated by the husband.”¹⁹ Although not the primary focus of Calhoun’s study, his contact with Filipinas provides a glimpse into the lives and culture of the G.I. children, as well as providing valuable insights into self-ascribed identities of the American mestizos who had reached adulthood in the postwar Philippines.

In the course of his research, Calhoun documented the lives of Filipinas who prior to the war would be racialized by white expatriates as American mestizos. In one notable case, a young woman from Cavite, born to an American father and Filipina mother, came into his office and told the administrative officer about her upbringing. The American mestizo’s biological parents met at Fort McKinley in Manila, where her Filipina mother was employed as a maid. The American mestizo’s biological American father, the young woman claimed, “was lost at sea but the government refused to pay her mother any insurance or pension.” Her testimony to Calhoun all but confirmed that individuals racialized as American mestizos saw themselves as Filipino. Without the presence of her American father, the young woman became part of the Filipina mother’s large extended family in the Philippines, treated no differently from the mother’s two other biological children from another relationship. There is no evidence that suggests the young woman was discriminated against by her extended family or the local community. At the age of

¹⁹ John W. Calhoun, “American-Filipino Marriages: A Descriptive Study of Interracial Problem Marriages Involving United States Military Personnel and Filipinos,” (MA Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1955), 11, University Library, University of the Philippines-Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines (hereinafter cited UP-Diliman). The only copy of the manuscript exists in the University Library at UP-Diliman, which requires the scholar to travel to Manila, as it is not available via interlibrary loan.

15, the young woman began living with her grandmother in Cavite, and soon thereafter quit school in the tenth grade, gaining employment at a café near an American military outpost in Manila to help financially support herself and her extended family. This was the life not of a racially distinct American mestizo, but of a young, poor, Filipina. The young woman never made the claim that she belonged to a unique subset of peoples in the Philippines, nor did the Filipino community with whom she lived and worked contend she was racially or culturally different in any way.²⁰

The Filipinas interviewed in the study revealed that the G.I. children were not raised any differently from the larger Filipino population in the postwar Philippines. The mothers most often prepared Filipino cuisine for the G.I. children, as evidenced in the case of one woman, whose American husband left her because of her refusal to make American-style food for the family. The soldier “was not pleased with the way she kept house, complained that she did not know how to cook, and objected to her preparing Filipino dishes.” After their divorce, the American husband returned to the United States, and the sole child remaining in the islands to be raised by the mother and her extended family, as was common in Philippine culture.²¹

Raising the G.I. children in large Filipino extended families was prevalent, but so was the lack of cultural input by Americans. One Filipina in the study, a resident of Tondo, “had been living with her mother” while raising the G.I. child of an American soldier who abandoned her.²² In another demonstrative case, a young Filipina married a black soldier, bearing two G.I. children from the relationship. The American husband worked as a civilian in the military, and after being fired, became a bartender. The

²⁰ Ibid., 46.

²¹ Ibid., 55-56.

²² Ibid., 73.

Filipina mother worked in a small family-owned store. With their combined incomes, the family raised not only their own G.I. children, but also the Filipina's younger brothers and sisters, despite her husband's objections, who eventually divorced her. When the Filipina's younger sister had a child, the Filipina "raised it as one of her own."²³ Large extended families living in one household was alien to most Americans, yet common in the Philippines, and the G.I. children would be acclimated to these conditions. "The custom of supporting these people frequently is a source of friction between a Filipino wife and an American husband," Calhoun concluded. The fact that "the average American does not expect to assume responsibility for more than his wife when he enters marriage" was very clear.²⁴

Another sociological study which sought to document the phenomena of American-Filipina intermarriages in the 1950s offers one final opportunity to observe the living conditions of the G.I. children in the postwar Philippines. Aspiring sociologist S. Stephen Rafel, in his attempt to document the lives of 20 postwar interracial couples, provided a glimpse into the upbringing of 50 G.I. children in Luzon. Culturally, the children were not being raised as a privileged social class, but as Filipinos, which was evident in their everyday lives. In foodways, the Filipina mothers prepared indigenous meals for themselves and their children. Rafel observed that "rice is on the table everyday" despite the objections of the American fathers. Filipino in-laws, whose customs the American fathers were somewhat weary of, visited often and simply ignored the American father. In cases when the American father was away from home, the Filipinas would bring their children to visit their large extended families in the islands.

²³ Ibid., 70.

²⁴ Ibid., 128.

One American father seemed to accept the fact that his G.I. children would be raised as Filipinos, frankly telling the sociologist, “he would advise against marriage to a Filipina unless one is prepared to live in the wife’s country permanently and ‘go native.’” The evidence suggests this assertion would include the G.I. children’s upbringing.²⁵

Subsuming the American Mestizos and G.I. Children into the *Republika ng Pilipinas* in the 1950s

In the Philippines’ first decade of political independence from the United States, an overt nationalism determined to cement a “Filipino” nationality in the wake of colonial rule destroyed the last vestiges of the American mestizo category. Philippine scholars and government officials embarked on documenting the nation’s history from the nationalist point of view, which included planning an “elaborate centennial celebration” of the birth of the country’s greatest hero and martyr, Dr. Jose Rizal.²⁶ A major effort was made by the Philippine government to institutionalize Pilipino-- the official national language, based upon the major dialect of Tagalog-- into the educations and everyday lives of the multilingual inhabitants of the islands. Philippine President Carlos P. Garcia “emphasized the nationalist themes of ‘Filipino First’ and the attainment of ‘respectable independence’” during his presidency, which saw increasing anti-American, anti-Chinese, and anti-Muslim sentiments come to the fore in terms of

²⁵ S. Stephen Rafel, “Intermarriage: A Critical Evaluation of Twenty Post World War II Intermarriages between Filipinos and Americans on the Island of Luzon,” (MA Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1954), 23, 30, 132, University Library, UP-Diliman. The only copy of the manuscript exists in the University Library at UP-Diliman, which requires the scholar to travel to Manila, as it is not available via interlibrary loan.

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Spectres of Comparison: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (New York: Verso, 1998), 235.

economic policy and politics.²⁷ In a time when the national government was seeking to solidify its control over radically disparate peoples in terms of class and language, the polity had no room for the now antiquated imposed racialization of the “American mestizo,” which signified racial difference and a history of American colonization, rather than a common Filipino narrative and future.

The first half of the 20th century saw American mestizos externally recognized by the American colonial government and white expatriates as a special class, full of promise, despite the objections of Filipino nationalists in government and the scholarly community who argued they were part of the larger Philippine nation. With the founding of the *Republika ng Pilipinas* three decades later, and with residents of the islands overtly in control of their own government, the American mestizo category lacked utility for a newly independent country in the process of solidifying its own nationalist identity. By the 1950s, the Philippines was controlled by Filipino officials who espoused a nationalism which sought to develop a unified Filipino polity that was inclusive in some respects and exclusive in others. In an independent Philippines trying to build a coherent national identity in the wake of American colonialism, contentions that the American mestizos were a special class in the islands no longer held legitimacy.

For political and social reasons, individuals formerly racialized as American mestizos would be included in the new nation as Filipinos after World War II, like the Chinese mestizos had generations before on the eve of the Philippine Revolution. A self-

²⁷ See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006) which tracks the “bifurcation of the Philippine population at Catholicism-- putting Christians and non-Christians on parallel tracks of development (435).” See Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People-8th Edition*, 550-553 for more on the language debate from the nationalist perspective; see 470-471, 510-511 for more on the “Filipino First” policy from the nationalist perspective. See the section on the Magsaysay, Garcia, and Macapagal Administrations in Ronald E. Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study* for more on the “Filipino First” policy from the foreign perspective.

ascribed “American mestizo” identity and culture had failed to coalesce among those with American fathers and Filipina mothers. That the G.I. children were being raised as Filipinos all but assured that the concept of the “American mestizo” would cease to exist in the Philippines in the near future.

Conclusion: The Failure of the American Mestizo Group to Coalesce in the Philippines

In 1982, the United States Congress passed the Amerasian Immigration Act, allowing “Amerasian” children preferential treatment for residence in the metropole. These children were defined as being offspring of “American” fathers and “Asian” mothers from “Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, or Thailand after 1950” who exhibited the “physical appearance” of their American fathers.¹ Noticeably missing from the definition of Amerasian were the nearly century’s worth of children born to American fathers and Filipina mothers. “Of course, I think one of the big blocks to [the Amerasian Immigration Act] was the Philippine problem, and the fact that that’s always been a huge immigration area,” Elizabeth Biester concluded after working to pass the law. “That’s why it was excluded from the act. ... The Congress had to know it wasn’t going to let in floods of people.”² Removing the Philippines from the Amerasian Immigration Act was a tacit recognition of the colonial past and the scale of intimate contacts between the United States and the Philippines and the American mestizos and G.I. children that resulted from that relationship. Simultaneously, however, a history of miscegenation between people from the metropole and its former colony-- the history of the imposed racializations and self-ascribed identities of the American mestizos-- had been ignored.

It is ironic that the Congress of the United States ignored the existence of the American mestizos, for at various points from 1900-1955 representatives of the US government pursued policies which fostered imposed racializations of the American

¹ Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Amerasian Immigration Proposals: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, 97th Congress, 2nd Session, June 21, 1982, 9-10. Public Law 97-359, more popularly known as “Amerasian Immigration Act,” was passed on October 22, 1982. Besides phenotype, official documents could also be used to prove American parentage.

² Mrs. Elizabeth Biester of Pearl S. Buck International to Nicholas Molnar of the Rutgers Oral History Archives, Oral History, August 2, 2007.

mestizo group. During the 1900-1920 period, the American colonial state, concerned with the welfare of the American mestizos whom some of its officials perceived as being socially ostracized by the larger Filipino population, enacted a plan for them to resettle in Mindanao in the southernmost Philippines. Colonial officials sought to mold the group into American proxies and hope they would become the leaders of Philippine civilization solely by virtue of their “white” blood.

The Philippine-born racialization of the American mestizo met resistance when it was transplanted by American colonial officials to the mainland. In the continental United States from 1920-1940, laws were passed aimed at preventing the creation of what some called a “mongrelized” American mestizo population. From the 1940s onward, the American mestizo group was redefined yet again, partly due to the destruction wrought upon the islands during World War II, partly because American expatriates and scholars altered the definition of the American mestizo group to include the children of blacks, but mostly due to the failure of the newly independent *Republika ng Pilipinas* after its independence in 1946 to recognize any difference between the American mestizos and the larger Filipino population as Filipino nationalists strove to create a strong homogenous national identity.

The assigned and chosen racial identities of the American mestizos that materialized between 1900-1955 were fluid, only understood within the context of economic, political, and regional specificities, the course of historical events, and the actual practices of miscegenation in each locale. By the 1950s, an “American mestizo” had never coalesced into a recognized group in the Philippine racial framework. No organizational or governmental structures existed that could maintain a separate

American mestizo identity in the Philippines, for nationalist ideology sought to subsume this group into the larger Philippine nation. As a result, the children of Americans and Filipinas saw themselves as Filipinos after World War II. The conditions of their upbringing-- being raised in single female parent households often supported by extensive kin and extended family networks-- discouraged the formation of a specific American mestizo self-ascribed identity. After five decades, there existed no “American mestizo” traditions, ethnic organizations, churches, clubs, or language. Nor were there “American mestizo” ethnic brokers who sought to politically and economically profit by fostering a distinct racial identity among the group. The usual scholarly markers that demonstrate the creation and maintenance of group identity were not present among the American mestizos by the 1950s.

The American mestizos are part of the intimately linked, but somewhat fragmented, history of the Philippines, Filipino immigration, American identity, and concepts of nationalism, race, and ethnicity, for the group exists at the intersections of these overlapping historiographical fields. Acquiring the Philippines at the beginning of the 20th century was much more relevant than simply integration into the United States overseas empire, or a region where immigrants and cheap labor were obtained at the metropole’s whim. In the process of entering the imperial race in the Pacific, the United States became entrapped in a place where American identity would be questioned, transformed, and contested. The existence of the American mestizos forced the new overseers to define exactly what an “American” was, a query that proved not easily answerable in the Philippines.

Studying the American mestizo population over the course of 1900-1955 involves

local and regional histories in the Philippines and United States but simultaneously offers a broader theoretical and historical interpretation of race and ethnicity. Matthew Frye Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color* and other works in the field of "whiteness studies" contend that during the 20th century, the socially constructed category of "whiteness" was hardening in the United States.³ Over time, these scholars contend, the children of whites and "peoples of color" were distinguished, and that racial distinction served to support a racial hierarchy of superiors and inferiors, enforced through a draconian legal system and extrajudicial violence.

The present study suggests that the actual history of racial construction in the United States does not fit this static model, and furthermore, the colonial experience and contact with the racial frameworks of the colonized shaped racializations of Americans in unexpected, yet historically traceable, ways. American expatriates could not simply transplant their racial models to the Philippines without altering them to the local environment. In fact, American expatriates themselves became the vehicles for bringing hybridized racial definitions back to the metropole that flew in the face of American racial binary, where they elicited different reactions, including acceptance, apathy, and anger. The American mestizos forced the colonizers to raise questions about their own, supposedly rigid, racial framework.

The importance of studying the American mestizo group, while adding to the historical record previously undocumented local histories of both the Philippines and the United States, lies not in proving they existed from 1900-1955, but rather that they existed in numerous forms, sometimes coexisting and sometimes conflicting.

³ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Documenting the varied imposed racializations and self-ascribed identities of the American mestizos over time can be challenging, but also immensely valuable for scholarship on race and ethnicity. Scholars have produced rich bodies of literature on racial and national “groups” that have coalesced-- whites, blacks, Americans, Filipinos, *et cetera*-- and that exist in some form in the present day. This is a study of a racial group that initially amalgamated due to American colonial state intervention, but ultimately failed to coalesce because of the lack of Filipino state intervention, being subsumed within the Philippine racial framework after World War II.

What can the study of this racial group that failed to coalesce tell us about the ones that did? Working in the field of “non-coalesced groups” can be both an exercise in the engagement of original primary sources and a call to reimagine existing historiographies with an open, fluid framework, with no assumption that the “group” being studied exists in its current form or can be transposed over time. One formulation of a group from an earlier period cannot be projected upon the same amalgamation from a later period without an explanation of the stimuli that affect the group’s imposed and self-ascribed identities at that particular historical moment. For the scholar to do so would lead to the projection of a monolithic definition of the “group” upon another amalgamation with an entirely different history; even worse, it could lead to fostering the creation of an artificial category of study. The lessons that can be drawn by studying the “life-cycle” of the American mestizos from 1900-1955, acknowledging the changes in definitions and interpretations at every turn, are an apt demonstration of the value of this field of inquiry.

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