

Contesting dismemberment: rumor, revolt, and empire in Peru and the Philippines (1920-1930)

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Abstract

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In an effort to disrupt traditional borders of Area Studies, this dissertation studies two regions rarely put into conversation with each other—Southeast Asia and Latin America—in comparative perspective to study the anxieties that emerged among local élites in Lima and Manila when dealing with threats to the geobodies of their nations. The territories under threat of dismemberment from the nation—the Amazon basin and the southern islands of Mindanao and Sulu—though claimed for centuries by their predecessor state, the Spanish Empire, had only relatively recently been effectively incorporated into the territory administered from the capital cities of Lima and Manila, and despite the apparent “solidity” of the nation, continued to be understood as fragile additions that could be amputated with far greater ease than their “core”

territories. The study of the rumors and revolts that took shape in and surrounding these territories unearths the anxieties and fears that revolved around them and gives us insight into the differentiated manners in which those spaces and the indigenous peoples living there were understood and what their relationship with the nation as a whole was. These threats emerged in a context of American empire, which was understood to seek territorial reorganization for its own benefit. Paradoxically, it was the country subjected to direct colonial control, the Philippines, that more successfully weathered the challenge, while Peru, subjected to indirect empire or neocolonialism, proved less capable of doing so, thus also blurring the boundaries between both kinds of imperialism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures	6
Glossary	7
Acknowledgements	9
Introduction	13
Chapter One.	
Disembodied rumors of mutilation: internal colonial anxieties in the context of the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-1922	37
Chapter Two.	
Embodied rumors of mutilation: dotting the lines during the Moro unrest of 1923-1925	92
Chapter Three.	
Pushing back on dismemberment in a colonial context: the Bacon Bill of 1926	149
Chapter Four.	
A double act of silencing: The Salomón-Lozano Treaty of 1927	205
Chapter Five.	
From feminized geobodies to female bodies: Beauty queens and a rebel princess	245
Conclusions	289
Bibliography	296

List of figures

Figure 1. Map of some of the locations involved in the Cervantes rebellion.	61
Figure 2. Why the Moro is fierce again.	114
Figure 3. Those who harm Filipino camaraderie, by the new Machiavelli of the Philippines. .	130
Figure 4. What Mindanao would be.	151
Figure 5. <i>Goma</i> being so sticky, can it still be removed?	156
Figure 6. Taking home the Bacon.	176
Figure 7. Bacon's dream/El sueño de Bacon.	177
Figure 8. El Perú en 1913.	212
Figure 9. <i>Variedades</i> , August 14, 1926.	213
Figure 10. Map in the <i>Consorzio Fabbricanti Italiani per l'Esportazione</i>	214
Figure 11. Peru in relief.	216
Figure 12. The admirable plastic beauty of Miss Peru.	275

Glossary

aswang: a number of shape-shifting creatures in Filipino mythology.

balata: rubber-like material.

cédulas personales: tax documentation in the Philippines

carabao: water buffalo

ceja de selva: “eyebrow of the rainforest;” refers to the eastern ranges of the Andes mountains, where the vegetation and climate are tropical.

chuncho: currently a racial slur used to reference the indigenous populations of the Amazonian region. Widely used in Peru in the 1920s.

civilista: “Civilist.” Name of the oligarchic party that governed Peru for much of the “*República Aristocrática*” (1895-1919).

comisario: superintendent, sheriff.

compadre: term of fictive kinship; godfather of one’s child.

datu: leader of an ethnic grouping, used commonly to refer to Muslim leaders.

filipinization: policy implemented in the 1910s to replace American public officials with Filipinos.

Ilustrado: “enlightened one.” Filipino intellectuals of the late 19th century, many of which studied in Europe.

indiada: derogatory way to refer to the (usually) highland indigenous masses.

indigenismo: 20th century intellectual, social, and political movement that sought to vindicate the indigenous peoples of Peru.

juramentado: “one who has taken an oath.” Muslim men who take an oath to kill as many enemies of the faith before being themselves killed.

kalayaan: freedom.

katipunan: revolutionary organization that tried to overthrow Spanish colonialism in 1896.

kota: fortress built by Muslim Filipinos.

kris: Southeast Asian dagger, usually characterized by its wavy blade.

neogodo: “neo-Goth;” derogatory term to refer to the followers of the *Civilista* Party.

Oncenio: the eleven year-long administration of President Augusto Leguía in Peru (1919-1930).

Patria Nueva: “New Fatherland.” Self-attributed nickname for the Augusto Leguía administration in Peru.

Pensionado/a: Filipino student with a scholarship to attend American educational institutions.

República Aristocrática: Aristocratic Republic. Refers to the 1895-1919 period in Peruvian history characterized by nominally democratic oligarchic rule.

Tawantinsuyo: alternate name of the Inca Empire. Also the name of an indigenous-rights movement in the 1920s.

Tordesillaing: the act of tracing international borders in indigenous territories not effectively controlled by extraneous parties.

uti possidetis: principle according to which each state has the right to the territory they control.

One of the guiding principles of territorial demarcation in Latin America.

vinta: speedy Moro sailing ship.

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Introduction

This dissertation studies the ways in which the threat of territorial dismemberment sheds light on how élites in the capital cities of Peru and the Philippines understood the role of ethnic minorities in the regions disputed, and how the former mobilized understandings of history and geography to defend the imagined geobody¹ of the nation. The threat of territorial dispossession can be a key moment of crisis that forces élites to discuss what the territory of the nation is, how it came to be, and for what reasons it must be defended. Crucially, it also forces a discussion of who is included in membership of the nation and who is to be excluded, and whether there is a complete overlap between the peoples and territories included or excluded from the nation. By studying the cases of Peru and the Philippines in the 1920s side-by-side, I propose that the critical moments they experienced from the perspective of the issue of territorial integrity indeed brought these issues to the fore, and that in neither case were the élites able to imagine a completely multi-cultural citizenship that brought all inhabitants of their nations under an umbrella of equality for the ethnic minorities of the contested territories. However, the different degrees to which they attempted (or did not attempt) to engage in such an enterprise gives us key insights into the ways these élites imagined themselves within the broader frameworks of modernity, “civilizational” missions, and empire. Especially since in both cases these threats of territorial dispossession came from (or were believed to come from) American empire, the different ways in which these élites negotiated and pushed back on these initiatives also provides

¹Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

nuance to the way that American empire could be experienced in the colonial and neocolonial world. Naturally, this dissertation relies heavily on comparative perspectives.

The writing of comparative and transregional history is not a straightforward affair, however. While in all historical scholarship the selection of one's case study must be justified to some degree, these decisions are subjected to additional scrutiny when they are a part of comparative or transregional study. There are, of course, cases in which the validity of the transnational or transregional approach is considered as self-evident, as is often the case for studies concerning different parts of the "Atlantic World" within which the existence of connections is taken for granted. Centers and peripheries, metropolises and colonies, though often problematized, are commonly understood ways in which the borders of modern nation-states can be transcended through research. Another "mode" in which such studies could be understood would be that of "horizontal" comparison, that is, of those societies that have had very similar historical trajectories, which are commonly understood as intrinsically "comparable." One example of this approach at the imperial level is J. H. Elliott's study of the British and Spanish empires in the Americas, which aims to "reassemble the fragmented history of the Americas into a new and more coherent pattern."² As ambitious and difficult as such a project may be, the case studies still consist of two Western European, Transatlantic empires dealing with indigenous peoples and exploitation of natural resources, which makes them likely candidates for such a study. Drilling down to nation-states, if Peru were selected as a case study, the natural choices for comparison could be other Andean nation-states, such as Colombia, Ecuador, or Bolivia, as

² J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (London: Yale University Press, 2006).

has been done by scholars such as Michael Stanfield, Pilar García-Jordán, or Brooke Larson.³ Studying these countries in comparative perspective is understandable inasmuch as all four were independent republics with similar trajectories both before and after independence from Spain, and all four made claims on indigenous lands in the Amazon region. In the other direction, even though the Philippines lacked a neighboring polity with which it might have shared a history of Spanish colonization, perhaps Indonesia could serve as the most similar case, which scholars such as Rommel Curaming, Peter Keppy, and even I have done.⁴ After all, both were archipelagic, experienced European colonialism over similar periods of time (albeit under different masters) and made claims over the territories of ethnic minorities in their own “peripheries.”

Such comparisons, entirely valid and intellectually productive as they may be, continue to uphold the area divisions that emerged in specific historical contexts that encouraged the intellectual partition of non-Western peoples into “areas” that could be understood in piecemeal fashion by scholars from the West—a West understood as the center and the “areas” as the peripheries. This paradigm of division into “areas” still holds strong, as has been observed by scholars who disrupt them, such as Junyoung Verónica Kim, who after describing the puzzled

³ Michael Edward Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees: Violence, Slavery, and Empire in Northwest Amazonia, 1850-1933*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Pilar García Jordán, *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos: la construcción de los Orientes en el Perú y Bolivia, 1820-1940*, 1ra ed., Travaux de l'Institut français d'études andines ; t. 139 (Lima, Perú: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos : Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2001). Brooke Larson, *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴ Rommel Argamosa Curaming, *Power and Knowledge in Southeast Asia: State and Scholars in Indonesia and the Philippines*, Rethinking Southeast Asia 17 (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2020); Peter Keppy, *The Politics of Redress War Damage Compensation and Restitution in Indonesia and the Philippines, 1940-1957*, Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde, 263 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010); Peter Keppy, *Tales of Southeast Asia's Jazz Age: Filipinos, Indonesians and Popular Culture, 1920-1936* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2019). Jorge Bayona, “Schadenfreude Colonial: Raza, Modernidad e Imaginación Anticolonial En La Cobertura Filipina e Indonesia de La Guerra Ruso-Japonesa (1904-1905)” (Tesis de licenciatura, Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2018).

looks that she gets when she states that her scholarship bridges these two regions, proposes instead that the study of Asia-Latin America is

not so much a research object as an epistemological viewpoint that allows an acute critical analysis of not only how relations of economic, cultural, and sociopolitical power and exploitation, as well as relations of solidarity and dissensus, are constructed historically and redefined presently but also of the struggles and cacophonies that take shape around these changing relations.⁵

The value of such scholarship lies not only in the well-trod pathways of concrete connections, such as migration or trade, but can offer critical perspectives in its very act of decentering the “West”—understood as Western Europe and the United States, the loci where historical movements are often presumed to flow from. According to Bachner and Erber, such transpacific scholarship thus “has the potential to trouble the naturalized divisions of East and West as well as those of North and South. It harbors the possibility of redrawing global maps and of breaking open wonted intercultural connections and trajectories.”⁶ In this respect, what I attempt to do in this dissertation is to contribute to the disruption of the boundaries of Area Studies by bringing Southeast Asia and Latin America into dialogue with (or past) each other. Some examples of intriguing, yet unexpected and disruptive points of contact are the presence of Malay-language letters sent by Thomas Raffles to the Sultan of Aceh in a Brazilian archive,⁷ or the intriguing

⁵ Junyoung Verónica Kim, “Asia–Latin America as Method: The Global South Project and the Dislocation of the West,” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 98, 100.

⁶ Andrea Bachner and Pedro Erber, “Remapping the Transpacific: Critical Approaches between Asia and Latin America,” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): vi.

⁷ Annabel Teh Gallop, “Duas cartas malaia de Thomas Raffles para o sultão de Achém, 1811,” *Afro-Ásia*, no. 44 (January 28, 2011).

reference by Pramoedya of American pirates in the turn of the 19th centuries capturing Medanonese fishermen from the Dutch East Indies to send them as enslaved workers to mines in South America.⁸ Jon Mathieu has put the history of the mountainous zones of Southeast Asia and South America in dialogue with each other to argue that they represent extreme cases along a continuum of where the cultural center of gravity may lay (in the lowlands in Southeast Asia, in the highlands in the Andes) and that this is the result of historical phases of development, whereby no matter what the earlier trajectory was, high modernity ends up incentivizing development in the lowlands.⁹ In a sense, it is my hope that this dissertation can contribute to the growing body of scholarship on the Pacific and the Transpacific¹⁰ that sees this region as one that is characterized not only by interconnection—which indeed existed to significant degree—but also one in which one can see disconnected parallelisms, rhyming analogies, and convergences that do not necessarily meet.

Now, despite having made the case that transpacific scholarship, or (Southeast) Asia-Latin America as an epistemological viewpoint may be valid in themselves, the specific choice of the Philippines and Peru as case studies for comparative history can still be unpacked, lest it appear completely arbitrary. One could make the case that there might be more in common between the narrative of territorial loss experienced by Thailand and that of Peru, inasmuch as they were both sovereign, continental states that experienced (or believed they experienced) a steady

⁸ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass*, Rumah Kaca. English (Ringwood, Vic. ; New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 57.

⁹ Jon Mathieu, “Long-Term History of Mountains: Southeast Asia and South America Compared,” *Environmental History* 18, no. 3 (2013): 557–75.

¹⁰ With some notable examples being the work done by Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *A Primer for Teaching Pacific Histories: Ten Design Principles*, *Design Principles for Teaching History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

erosion of their territorial integrity at the hands of more powerful neighbors.¹¹ Or perhaps it would make more sense to seek out connections in the earlier modern period, for which there is much recent scholarship connecting the west coast of the Americas and the Philippines (and Asia at large) as part of the “Spanish Pacific,” as shown by the works of Ricardo Padrón, Christina Lee, Rainer Buschmann, Edward Slack, and James Tueller, and Tatiana Seijas.¹² This earlier modern period of mutual interconnection may be understood to end in 1815, with the end of the galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco in the context of the Latin American wars of independence. Beyond that year, or more acutely, 1898, it would perhaps make more sense to seek a point of comparative study between the Philippines and Puerto Rico, two countries subjected to direct United States empire, as undertaken by Julian Go.¹³

There were, however, hidden connections between independent, post 1821 Peru and the Philippines that have gone mostly unnoted and serve to show how the 1815 severance of the Manila Galleon did not bring an absolute end to Latin American imagination about the Philippines. Slightly over thirty years before the Spanish-American War led to Dewey’s irruption in Philippine history, the Spanish-South American war of 1864-1866 featured a Peruvian plan to launch a naval

¹¹ Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*; Shane Strate, *The Lost Territories: Thailand’s History of National Humiliation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016); Gustavo Pons Muzzo, *Las fronteras del Perú; historia de los límites*. (Lima: Ediciones del Colegio “San Julián,” 1962).

¹² Ricardo Padrón, *The Indies of the Setting Sun: How Early Modern Spain Mapped the Far East as the Transpacific West* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2020); Ricardo Padrón, Christina H. Lee, and Project Muse, *The Spanish Pacific, 1521-1815 A Reader of Primary Sources*, Connected Histories in the Early Modern World (Baltimore, Maryland: Project Muse, 2020); Rainer F. Buschmann, Edward R. Slack, and James B. Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberian World, 1521-1898*, Perspectives on the Global Past (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014); Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 100 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹³ Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S. Colonialism*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

expedition towards the Philippines, bringing the war to Spanish-held territory, that would have involved a Peruvian-Chilean fleet making its appearance in Manila Bay. Given the material superiority of the South American ships over their Spanish counterparts, this would have almost surely led to a naval catastrophe for Spain on the same level as their defeat in 1898, with unpredictable effects on Philippine history. The Peruvian government, however, insisted on hiring a former Confederate officer, John Randolph Tucker, to command the expedition, which in turn led to a strike by Peruvian naval officers that resulted in the scrapping of the plan. The Peruvians instead sent Tucker to map the rivers of the Amazon, bringing a completely unlikely connection between a Philippine history that did not happen and that of the Amazon region in Peru.¹⁴ After the Cavite mutiny of 1872 and the execution of the priests collectively known as “Gomburza,” Leoncio Prado, the son of the Peruvian president who planned the earlier expedition to the Philippines, organized his own expedition towards the islands with the aim of sparking an anticolonial insurrection. This was part of his own personal crusade against Spanish imperialism in the Caribbean that had led him to fight in the Cuban war of independence that had begun in 1868. The ship transporting the revolutionaries was shipwrecked by a storm, and a follow-up expedition by Prado was interrupted by the outbreak of the War of the Pacific against Chile (1879-1883), in which he perished. The transpacific anticolonial campaign of this Peruvian revolutionary has so far eluded scholarly inquiry.

From the perspective of parallel developments of similar social phenomena in the late 19th century, another parallel that has thus far not been subjected to serious scholarly study has

¹⁴ David P. Werlich, *Admiral of the Amazon: John Randolph Tucker, His Confederate Colleagues, and Peru* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990).

been that of the similarities of the social critiques that are so central in the novels of cultural icons José Rizal in the Philippines (*Noli me tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*) and Clorinda Matto de Turner in Peru (*Aves sin nido*). Although there is no evidence that they read each other's work, both authors denounced the abuses committed by the priestly class against the natives, which could be studied as a case of the 'coloniality of power' as proposed by Aníbal Quijano.¹⁵ Even in fully independent Peru, the iconoclastic social critic was dealing with the same issues that continued to bedevil the colonial Philippines, showing how "colonial" social structures and oppression could continue intact in nominally postcolonial nation states. And in a literary direction that differed in two manners, that is, featuring connection rather than parallelism, and appreciation for the Spanish past rather than critique, there is the influence that the grandiloquent Peruvian hispanista poet José Santos Chocano had on Spanish-language Philippine literature, Jesús Balmori in particular.¹⁶ Admiration for the poet was such that him receiving an award for his poetry from the Leguía administration merited the headline in an issue of Manila's *El Comercio*, which even went so far as to reproduce his entire thank you speech.¹⁷

This dissertation leans more towards the Rizal-Matto axis of disconnected convergence than towards a Chocano-Balmori axis of connection and influence. One way of approaching this disconnected convergence could be that of Benedict Anderson in his ambitious study of global anarchism and nationalism through the lens of three Filipino intellectual-activists, whereby he looks at anarchism as a "gravitational field" of sorts that exerted its influence over nationalist

¹⁵ Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80.

¹⁶ Irene Villaescusa Illán, *Transcultural Nationalism in Hispano-Filipino Literature*, Historical and Cultural Interconnections between Latin America and Asia (Cham: Springer International Publishing, n.d.), 59–61.

¹⁷ "Santos Chocano ha sido coronado en el Perú." *El Comercio*, March 7, 1923, 1, 2.

movements the world over.¹⁸ In this case, the “gravitational field” might be that of the allure of territorial dominance over unconquered (but claimed) territories held over élites in post-Spanish polities. Unlike Anderson’s work, however, in this case there are hardly any direct connections between these two élites besides the aforementioned Chocano-Balmori literary link. Despite the global reach of telegraphic networks, the Peruvian advance into the Amazon goes unmentioned in the Philippine press and the Christian Filipino colonization of Mindanao makes no appearance in that of Peru. In the Philippines, news about Peru was dominated by the Tacna-Arica dispute with Chile, and in Peru, what little there was about the Philippines focused on straightforward administrative colonial news and was surprisingly devoid of orientalizing stereotypes—unlike that of the Dutch East Indies or French Indochina.¹⁹ A rich, unexplored network of connections appears unavailable.

In this respect, the manner in which I study how these élites dealt with the threat of territorial dismemberment resembles that of “connective comparison”, whereby I avoid seeking a specific linearity or causality between my two cases, or establish a ‘norm’ from which they each deviate in different ways.²⁰ The chronological period chosen, 1920-1930 is one in which the historical trajectories of the Philippines and Peru had already diverged over the course of at least a century. One was a colony (not of Spain, but the United States), the other was a republic; one was archipelagic, the other continental; one was in Asia, the other in the Americas. Although

¹⁸ Benedict R. O’G Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London ; New York, NY: Verso, 2005), 1–2.

¹⁹ Jorge Bayona, “Orientalisme Yang Bercabang: Kasus Pandangan Peru Terhadap Hindia Belanda Pada Dasawarsa 1920-An” (Unpublished manuscript, Seattle, 2020).

²⁰ Alys Eve Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization*, Next Wave (Duke University Press) (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).

during the 19th and part of the 20th centuries the Philippines was an exporter of labor and Peru an importer, there was little overlap. The bulk of Filipino labor ended up Hawaii and the continental United States, while the bulk of Peruvian imports of labor from Asia came from China and Japan—Peru's foray into enslavement of Pacific Islanders was brief.²¹ Economically, in the world market, both were exporters of raw materials—with a special overlap in sugar—and importers of manufactured goods, so there is little sign of direct trade between the two.

It is precisely in the study of the nuances and trajectories of these similarities and differences that the richness of the comparative approach emerges. As pointed out by Elliot, “a comparison of the history and culture of large and complicated political organisms that culminates in a series of sharp dichotomies is unlikely to do justice to the complexities of the past. By the same token, an insistence on similarity at the expense of difference is liable to be equally reductionist, since it tends to conceal diversity beneath a factitious unity.”²² A comparative history that identifies perfect symmetries and trajectories between two cases is most likely engaging in a flattening of historical complexities; intellectually productive *difference* is what can propel scholarly inquiry forward, as is also recognized by Florencia Mallon in her study of peasant movements in Mexico and Peru: “[i]t is nearly impossible, in comparative history, to find perfectly commensurable apples; (...) the lack of fit, of commensurability, is the first and most important

²¹ Adrian De Leon, “Sugarcane Sakadas: The Corporate Production of the Filipino on a Hawai’i Plantation,” *Amerasia Journal* 45, no. 1 (2019): 50–67. Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946*, Nation of Newcomers (New York: University Press, 2011). Isabelle Lausent-Herrera, *Pasado y presente de la comunidad japonesa en el Perú* (Institut français d’études andines, 1991). Isabelle Lausent-Herrera, “Tusans (Tusheng) And The Changing Chinese Community In Peru,” in *The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2010), 141–83. H. E. Henry Evans Maude, *Slavers in Paradise: The Peruvian Slave Trade in Polynesia, 1862-1864* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981).

²² Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, xvi.

clue that a larger boundary or antagonism exists between cases. Thus, lopsidedness, rather than being a fault, offers an entry into analytical richness and productivity.”²³ Lopsidedness in the conditions that framed anxieties over territorial dismemberment in Peru and the Philippines loom large in this dissertation.

In Peru, the remote possessions that produced anxiety over dismemberment consisted of a continental expanse connected by land to its capital, in the Philippines, it was a series of islands separated by the sea—yet the one connected by land was, in practice, far more remote than the one ‘separated’ by sea. In the Amazon rainforest, the local population was composed of a series of indigenous tribes that people from the coast and highlands broadly considered ‘savage’, ‘primitive’ and undifferentiated; in the Philippines, the largest single constituency seen by Christian Filipinos was that of the Moros, who, while also being considered ‘savage’ and ‘backward’, held the allure of belonging to a fellow religion of the Middle East—one with which Christianity had long-term historical relations and conflict. The Lumad peoples, for their part, went mostly ignored in these discussions, occupying perhaps the same semantic space as the indigenous peoples of the Amazon. Furthermore, even though conquest and colonization of these spaces and peoples was an ongoing process, the early 20th century ‘breakthrough’ that brought them under more effective rule from Lima and Manila came from vastly different sources of violence and authority. Peru subjected “its” indigenous peoples through its own sovereign military forces and colonists, while in the Philippines, this was brought about by a foreign military, one that subjected all Filipinos—Christian, Muslim, and non-Christian, non-Muslim alike—to

²³ Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 221–22.

colonial rule. All of these differences allow us to make a productive analysis that will highlight their different trajectories and show how the processes that result are historically contingent and not simply the ‘natural’ outcome of colonialism.

There is, however, a common logic in the ways these subordinated élites in Lima and Manila understood their claims on these indigenous territories, which I have labeled one of “inherited destiny.” These élites viewed themselves as the territorial heirs of the former Spanish Empire and aspired to take control of all the territory that it had claimed before their independence. This included territories that had been beyond the reach of colonial soldiers and bureaucrats at the end of their respective Spanish colonial periods, such as the Amazon basin and Mindanao. In this respect, they had inherited a territorial claim that had not been made effective, but one which they believed they were destined to fulfill. This also placed the territories and their inhabitants in the paradoxical condition of being ‘already owned’ but ‘yet to be conquered’.²⁴ Although nationalist historians have often “nationalized” the friars who tried to evangelize these territories in the margins, Roberto Chauca has shown how their cartographic efforts actually responded to a transnational, transcendent motivation rather than any attempt at setting the boundaries of empires or future nation-states.²⁵ At any rate, the paradoxical status of these territories will be patent throughout the dynamics between the capital cities and these territories during the 1920s, during which Peruvians will talk about the Amazon basin as

²⁴ Jorge Bayona, “Inherited Destinies: Discourses of Territorial Loss in Postcolonial States across the Pacific (Peru and the Philippines, 1903–1927),” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 169–94.

²⁵ Roberto Chauca, “Science in the Jungle: Missionary Cartographic and Geographic Production of Early Modern Western Amazonia” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 2015), 24–26. Roberto Chauca, “Técnica, teoria e prática na cartografia da Amazônia de Samuel Fritz,” *Terra Brasilis (Nova Série)*. *Revista da Rede Brasileira de História da Geografia e Geografia Histórica*, no. 14 (December 31, 2020).

something “possessed” by Peru (but not *of* Peru), and of its indigenous inhabitants as people who are in the process of ‘becoming’ Peruvian. In the Philippines, historical debates will emerge about the true history of Christian-Muslim relations, while calls for mass Christian migration to Muslim lands became the ‘common sense’ solution to the so-called “Moro problem.” In a way, this is another manifestation of the degree to which nationalism—in this case of territory—is indebted to colonialism, as argued by Vicente Rafael.²⁶ Despite the commonality in the logic of the claim to the territory, I hope to show in this dissertation that the effective responses to the threat of territorial dismemberment diverged. These differences are the result of their respective historical contexts, but they shed light on the way their territories and peoples were conceptualized. Although comparative history can sometimes lead to the exercise being mostly unidirectional, with one case acting as a lens that sheds light on the other, my objective in this dissertation is to make the two cases shed light on each other. As pointed out above, disruption of expected patterns of comparison can be valuable in itself, and if it is mutually illuminating disruption, that is all the better.

There are three caveats that need to be made before describing the contents of each of the dissertation’s chapters. The first is about the legitimacy of Filipino or Peruvian claims to the territory in dispute. This dissertation does not aim to uncover the “rightful” owner of these territories or whether the different historical actors had the legal right to make changes in the political organization of geographic space. Thus, discussion of the terms of the 1899 Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War or the Bates Agreement that established the terms

²⁶ Vicente Rafael, *The Promise of the Foreign: Nationalism and the Technics of Translation in the Spanish Philippines* (Duke University Press, 2005), 2–4.

of relations between the United States and the Sultanate of Sulu will be absent, as will be discussions over the *Real Cedula* of 1802 or the principle of *uti possidetis* on which Peru staked its claim on the Putumayo region. I make this choice from the perspective of indigenous sovereignty and realities on the ground. Negotiations over indigenous territories and people between Western empires or their creole successor states should not be taken at face value, as though a piece of paper signed in Europe could truly “make” autonomous Maranao Moros or Asháninka peoples legitimately subjects of the United States or Peru any more than the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 legitimately made Africans subjects of various European empires. These continued to be scrambles over autonomous indigenous territories and peoples, no matter how subordinated the élites of Lima and Manila may have been in the larger world hierarchy of power and autonomy. As much as the modern-day Republics of the Philippines and Peru have (at least in principle) embraced the logic of multicultural citizenship, in the period of my study, élites in Manila and Lima clearly treated the disputed territories and peoples as colonial possessions and subjects that needed to be conquered, colonized, and civilized to prevent their mutilation from the nation. However, as I explain in the body of the dissertation, these possessions—which are *de facto* colonial—have to deal with the paradox of simultaneously being *de jure* national, due to their proximity to the national “core,” which explains the extreme anxiety that their threatened loss could represent.

The second caveat deals with my treatment of American empire. The focus of my dissertation is how local élites dealt with (real or imagined) pressures coming from the imperial hegemon, how these were informed by the prevailing culture of colonization and civilizational process that they were imbued with, and how they reflected their understanding of what their

relationship with the disputed territories and ethnic minorities were. Thus, it does not attempt to present a diplomatic history of American ambassadors in Lima or governors-general in Manila, and the instructions they might receive from, or discuss with, Washington DC. My focus is on the mental world of these local, subordinated élites, so Americans remain deliberately shadowy in most of the dissertation. Rather than attempting to trace the “real” maneuverings of American empire—which would result in a text in which White men in the United States and their representatives abroad would hold the spotlight, with the local élites seeming to only react to them—I try to keep the focus on how the local élites (which, admittedly in the case of Peru, was mostly White as well) pictured American empire and how they dealt with the threats it presented to their territorial integrity.

The third caveat is that this dissertation does not attempt to reconstruct the world view of the indigenous peoples regarding territory, nor their historical experience and trajectory in this specific conjuncture. While there is much fascinating work in this respect, such as Santos-Granero’s *Slavery and Utopia*,²⁷ this dissertation instead seeks to problematize the mindscapes of the élites residing in the capital cities regarding indigenous territories and peoples. The focus instead is on how the élites in the capitals Othered and exoticized the indigenous caretakers of the Amazon basin and Mindanao and expounded numerous ways in which they would be incorporated into “civilization”—and hence bind their lands to the national geobody. In this manner, their *missions civilizatrices* became tools not only to claim a position among the “civilizing” peoples of the world, but also to secure the geobody of the nation.

²⁷ Fernando Santos-Granero, *Slavery and Utopia: The Wars and Dreams of an Amazonian World Transformer*, First edition. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2018).

This focus on how capital city-based élites envisioned “their” indigenous peoples also brings forth the issue of terminology to be used for each of these constituencies. The case of the Philippines provides ready-made, historically used terms to bring to bear: “Christian Filipinos” to refer to the majority populations of Luzon and Visayas, and “Muslim Filipinos” to refer to the Islamic populations in parts of Mindanao. The Lumad population—who remained mostly overlooked in discussions of territorial dismemberment—appear to have been included under the flattening term of “Non-Christian Tribes.” Of course, “Muslim Filipino” is not an unproblematic term, as it itself had an agenda behind it. Labelling the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu as qualified “Filipinos” (Christian Filipinos were usually referred to as straightforward “Filipinos”) served to naturalize such ‘foreigners in a domestic sense’ into the body of the nation. Were it not for the obvious exoticization and Othering of Muslim Filipinos that Christian Filipinos routinely engaged in, this inclusion could be read in a positive light. Nevertheless, acknowledging the issues with it, I use “Muslim Filipinos” throughout the text, while simultaneously making an effort to not refer to “Christian Filipinos” as just “Filipinos”, in an effort to avoid the normalization of Christianity as the ‘normal’ Filipino. Certainly, it must be acknowledged that “Christian Filipino” is also a flattening category, which may encompass both rural inhabitants of Luzon and Visayas and multilingual élite men such as Manuel Quezon, but inasmuch as the historical actors and current-day readers understand the vast diversity within the category, it continues to be of use.

Peru, however, does not present such ready-made terms. Historically used terms to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Amazonian rainforest are deeply problematic. “Chuncho” is, of course, a slur, while “tribus salvajes” (*savage tribes*) is hardly better. “Indigenous peoples” by itself also presents the issue that it may flatten the very different historical trajectories

experienced by the indigenous peoples of the highlands, who in the 1920s continued to be referred to uncritically as “indios” or “indígenas”, and those of the rainforest. “Amazonian” is tricky, as such a term could technically include colonists in the region as well. Thus, variations of the potentially clunky “indigenous peoples of the Amazon rainforest” are used in this dissertation. Another complicated issue comes from referring to the “non-indigenous” inhabitants of Peru who Othered and exoticized the indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin. Of course, they simply referred to themselves as “Peruvians” and never felt the need to come up with a qualification— if only a relatively performative one such as “Christian Filipinos”. Terms like “White Peruvians” or “European Peruvians” obscure the fact that many of those included in the broad category of the unqualified “Peruvian” were not, in fact, White or European, but rather indigenous, mestizo, or of African or Asian descent. Borrowing a page from the Philippines and using “Christian Peruvians” is also problematic, as the indigenous people of the highlands had also been Christianized over three centuries of Spanish colonialism and a century of independence, yet were still Othered as *la indiada* (“the Indian masses”). Thus, I have to rely on the relatively unsatisfying term “Peruvians”, which has the effect of highlighting the degree to which the indigenous people and territories of the Amazon region were, indeed, considered “foreign in a domestic sense”. Thus, “Peruvians” invade and colonize indigenous lands, not Peruvian lands. Peruvians of the 1920s did not use an analog of “Muslim Filipinos”, there were no “Amazonian Peruvians” or “Pagan Peruvians”. The exclusion was baked into the period’s terminology, and my use of it, far from an attempt to perpetuate it, seeks to highlight its existence and its implications for the present.

Organization

The dissertation is divided into three parts. The first two consist of two paired chapters each that explore a common theme, with the final chapter providing the comparison within itself. The first set of paired chapters uses the lens of rumor and revolt to understand what the élites found plausible in the contexts prior to the major crises of territorial dispossession. Chapter 1 focuses on the failed rebellion of Captain Guillermo Cervantes in the remote Amazonian port city of Iquitos. The revolt was characterized by the rebel leader as being motivated by the increasingly autocratic government of President Augusto Leguía and his rumored intentions of wishing to sell the contested Amazonian territory of the Putumayo region to Colombia for his own personal benefit—and to the detriment of the nation. However, in the capital city, the rebellion provoked a different kind of anxiety: that the rebel leaders actually intended to secede from Peru in a matter similar to how the Acre region had seceded from Bolivia a couple of decades before. These rumors, however, were actively suppressed by the Leguía administration, and we can only attest to their existence through a careful reading of the sources. Rather than latch onto this narrative of anti-Peruvian secession—which certainly would have led to a universal condemnation of the revolt—the Leguía administration chose to instead further a narrative of politically motivated rebellion, despite this one being bound to be more divisive, as the defense of Leguismo was definitely not as popular a cause as that of the territorial integrity of the republic. In Peru, talk about an imminent territorial dispossession—be it through sale to another country or through secession—was such a touchy topic that it could only be discussed publicly by outright rebels.

Chapter 2, for its part, explores the interpretations given to a series of local revolts in the Muslim-majority province of Lanao in the southern island of Mindanao. The American Governor-

General Leonard Wood insisted on casting the outbreaks of violence as a result of a history of irreconcilable differences between Filipino Christians and Muslims, an argument that was roundly rejected by the Manila élite. Instead, they publicly argued that the violence was the result of a Machiavellian plan executed by the governor-general himself for some kind of nefarious purpose, perhaps to indefinitely prolong American retention of the entire archipelago under the excuse that Christian Filipinos had proven unable to govern, or even to partition the colony into two entities, one Christian and one Muslim. In order to counteract the plans of the American governor-general, Christian Filipino politicians and commentators actively lobbied for the continued colonization of the Muslim south by Christian colonists, as this would successfully bind Mindanao to the rest of the Philippines—a policy that was the result of their ambivalence towards Muslim Filipinos and their doubts about their loyalty to the Christian Filipino leadership in Manila.

Taken together, chapters 1 and 2 shed light on the traffic of rumors surrounding territorial dispossession in the capital cities of Lima and Manila in the context of revolts in potentially contested regions of their territory. Both élites were aware of their relatively tenuous hold on these stretches of territory, and the potentially ambiguous loyalty of its inhabitants—be they settlers or natives. And yet, they also show us an interesting contrast in the ways the threat of territorial dismemberment could be exorcised in the face of the potential agent of dispossession. Peruvian citizens could not publicly discuss the alleged reason Cervantes had revolted—that the authoritarian President Leguía was planning to cede the Putumayo region—and even their conversations about the secession of Iquitos could not make it into print. Conversely, Filipino colonial subjects were able to openly accuse their own authoritarian, foreign-appointed

governor-general of subverting order and inciting rebellion in order to push his own agenda of partition and dispossession, and faced little, if any, retribution.

The second set of paired chapters deal with the moments of crisis themselves, that is, the announcement of the Bacon Bill of 1926 that proposed the official partition of the Philippines, with Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan being directly annexed to the United States, and the ratification of the Salomón-Lozano Treaty between Peru and Colombia in 1927, which set a border between the two countries that “ceded” to Colombia the Putumayo region. Chapter 3 studies the outrage the Bacon Bill produced among Filipinos of all walks of life in Manila and other Christian provinces. Christian Filipinos wrote and published letters of protest and resolutions and held great rallies of protest against an American empire that sought to undermine the economic viability of a (rump) independent Philippines for its own benefit, as it sought to transform Mindanao into a rubber-producing colony that would supply its needs. Furthermore, despite their ambivalence towards Muslim Filipinos, Christian Filipinos (and Americans) sought to lobby them in support of the unity or partition of the archipelago, giving them a voice in this issue.

Chapter 4 studies the ways in which the news of the imminent ratification of the Salomón-Lozano Treaty was received in 1927. Unlike the Bacon Bill, whose contents were openly available, the terms of the Salomón-Lozano Treaty had remained shrouded in secrecy since it was signed in 1922 (barely months after the collapse of the Cervantes rebellion that had denounced what ended up being one of its main terms, the cession of the Putumayo region). In this information-poor environment, opposition to the treaty was fragmented and uncoordinated, and actively suppressed by the agents of the Leguía administration, who persecuted those who opposed it.

Soto voce rumors also circulated that the treaty was the result of American empire, as it was seen as a compensation to Colombia for the secession of Panama two decades before, provoked by American interests in building a transoceanic canal free from interference from Colombia. Finally, whatever protest there was against the “dismemberment” of Peruvian territory did not take its indigenous peoples’ desires into account at all. Indigenous peoples, when referenced, were cast as mere parts of the scenery, or, at worst, as natural resources that would be lost alongside rubber trees or port facilities. They were definitely not understood as fellow Peruvian citizens who would now be subjected to Colombian rule in any way resembling the pitiable manner that Peruvian citizens living under Chilean occupation in Tacna and Arica were in the same time period.

Taken together, chapter 3 and 4 show us the degree to which the Philippines and Peru had moved in the direction of incorporating their ethnic minorities into the national project in a context of territorial dispossession. While it is true that Christian Filipino concern for their Muslim counterparts continued to be refracted through the lenses of orientalism and their own *mission civilizatrice*, they did consider their voices to at least be a factor in the equation of territory. Some even expressed concern for their future under permanent United States colonialism. In contrast, any such rhetoric was still several decades away in Peru. This sheds light on the ways in which an outside colonial presence can force local élites to build solidarities within a colony, solidarities that republican élites can simply ignore in the name of “progress,” and enforcing their will through the monopoly of violence on the part of a creole state. Furthermore, it gives us a contrast in the ways resistance to American empire—colonial or neocolonial—could be resisted. Precisely the language of “benevolent assimilation” and supposed “training for democracy” impeded American authorities in the Philippines from engaging in crackdowns against their colonial

subjects that denounced American empire. Leguía, on the other hand, widely understood to be beholden to American empire and its financial interests, could violently enforce a territorial dispossession rumored to be part of a territorial reorganization decided by American empire.

Chapter 5 moves on from the body of the nation to feminine bodies. In the Philippines, it focuses on two élite Muslim women related to the Sultan of Sulu, who, despite Christian Filipino attempts to orientalize them, actually ‘leapfrogged’ their interlocutors by acquiring and flaunting a kind of ‘Anglo’ modernity that was in the process of asserting its superiority over the ‘Hispanic’ modernity of the Christian Filipino sector of society. They both showcased their handle of English, and one even studied in the United States, adopting a flapper lifestyle; the other, who was proclaimed Miss Mindanao in the Manila Carnival, adopted American social mores and expressed her desires to find employment in ‘modern’ occupations such as nursing or teaching. On the Peruvian side, it studies the case of another beauty queen, who was utilized by the Leguía régime to shore up his handling of the territorial trajectory of the nation. Shortly after the final resolution of the Tacna-Arica dispute with Chile that had simmered since the end of the War of the Pacific, the reigning beauty queens of Chile and Bolivia transited through Peru on their way to a Pan-American beauty pageant in Florida. While they were in Peru, Leguía put the spotlight on the three beauty queens (representing the three belligerents in the war) to symbolize the triumph of his foreign policy of finalizing the border arrangements with almost all the neighboring countries. Contrary to expectations, this beauty queen belonging to the ‘modern’ élite of the Peruvian capital showcased significantly more conservative outlooks than her provincial Muslim counterparts in the Philippines.

Thus, by studying these two cases comparatively, some of their key differences can be seen in higher resolution and can be understood in reference to one another. Phenomena that may appear completely “natural” in a single scenario may raise eyebrows when seen through the lens of comparison. It may appear completely foreseeable that the fear of dismemberment through secession in the capital of Peru should be directed at colonists in the Amazon who could try to set up their own state, rather than at the indigenous peoples in the region; the latter being seen as completely devoid of sovereignty or the right to self-determination. On the other hand, in the Philippines it may also seem completely natural that this fear be directed at the indigenous Muslim inhabitants of the region, either through their own agency or as a pretext for a dismemberment ordained by the imperial power, rather than at the Christian Muslim colonists who had settled in Mindanao. When looked at in comparison, these traits take on a new dimension. Why do these differences emerge? What does it tell us about the historical trajectories of Peru and the Philippines vis-à-vis their indigenous peoples and imperial overlords?

The comparative perspective can also highlight important differences between local élites and their imperial hegemon, the United States. The case of a colonized élite in the Philippines using the tools provided by empire to contest imperial dismemberment of their imagined territory can make us ask questions about how these matters were negotiated by subordinated—but not directly colonized—élites in Peru. To what degree did open colonialism give opportunities to ‘speak back’ that were denied to those under indirect colonialism or neocolonialism? To what degree were these neocolonial élites and politicians voluntary collaborators in their own neocolonization? The matter of absences and presences in comparative perspective also open up our fields of vision. While female bodies of indigenous Muslim women in the Philippines were

gazed at as alternative, but still valid, manifestations of beauty and feminine demureness; in Peru in the same time period, only white (or “white-adjacent”) women could be considered truly beautiful, with indigenous women (from either the highlands or the rainforest) being, at best, considered “picturesque”—that is, part of the scenery. Suddenly such presences and absences can cease being what is to be expected in a scenario of general colonialism, but can instead be interrogated as specific manifestations thereof, and their trajectories excavated.

The continuing interrogation of Lima and Manila’s relationship with the Amazon and Mindanao continues to be important. We live in a broad present in which columnists in Lima openly call for the napalming of indigenous protestors, and Peruvian colonizers routinely murder indigenous leaders.²⁸ One in which the president of the Philippines can joke that soldiers deployed to counterinsurgency operations in Mindanao can each rape three women.²⁹ The more that History can disrupt the state-sponsored narrative of the ‘natural’ inclusion of these spaces into the Peruvian and Filipino geobodies—and the concomitant ‘othering’ of their indigenous populations—the bigger its role in bringing about change on the ground.

28 EFE, “El periodista con el ‘premio’ al artículo más racista exige medalla y diploma.” *elmundo.es*, August 8, 2009, <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2009/08/27/comunicacion/1251366677.html>; Jacqueline Fows, “Asesinados en la Amazonía de Perú dos líderes indígenas que denunciaban al narco.” *El País*, February 27, 2021, <https://elpais.com/internacional/2021-02-28/asesinados-en-la-amazonia-de-peru-dos-lideres-indigenas-que-denunciaban-al-narco.html>.

29 “Rodrigo Duterte jokes to soldiers that they can rape women with impunity.” *The Guardian*, May 27, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/27/rodrigo-duterte-jokes-to-soldiers-that-they-can-women-with-impunity>.

Chapter 1

Disembodied rumors of dismemberment: territorial anxieties in the context of the Iquitos

rebellion of 1921-1922

When a military rebellion broke out in August of 1921 in the remote city of Iquitos, deep in the indigenous spaces of the Amazon rainforest that were in the process of being colonized by the Republic of Peru, people in Lima were quick to lend credence to rumors that it had separatist ambitions. Iquitos was, after all, almost an overseas colony: many an official or soldier appointed from Lima to enforce the will of the central government had to travel first to Panama, New York, and then the Brazilian riverine ports of Pará and Manaus before reaching their destination in Iquitos³⁰—a trip of at least 14,000 km. The alternative southward route around the South American landmass through Punta Arenas, Buenos Aires, and then up the Brazilian Amazon was at least 17,000 km long. Distance-wise, despite being adjacent to the landmass of Peru's core coastal and highland regions, Iquitos was farther away from Lima than Manila was from San Francisco (around 11,500 km, assuming no stopovers) or Saigon from Marseilles (a little under 14,000 km). Worse yet, Lima was completely at the mercy of Brazilian goodwill if they ever had to deal with a serious separatist movement centered in Iquitos. Indeed, as the course of the Iquitos rebellion would prove, while overland operations were indeed possible, huge logistical difficulties limited them to very small numbers of men. Limeño anxiety over the rumored secession of its remote colony could only have been reinforced by the fact that its economy was

³⁰ Samuel Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos (Loreto - Perú)* (Para, Brasil: Tip. España, 1923), 78.

almost entirely directed towards the Atlantic seaboard, using the Amazon River as a highway connecting it to markets abroad, bypassing the Andean highland and Pacific coast core of Peru entirely. Between Iquitos's remoteness, its relatively established Spanish-speaking, Catholic settler population (which, unlike indigenous people, *might* be recognized as independent and sovereign by foreign governments), and almost independent economy, the specter of secession and territorial mutilation loomed large in the minds of the inhabitants of the capital. Such an event had happened relatively recently, when the disputed settler territory of Acre seceded from Bolivia in 1903 (although it was claimed by Peru as well) and then annexed itself to Brazil, Texas-style.

The rebels, however, not only immediately disavowed any kind of separatist rhetoric, but rather flipped the script onto Lima and President Augusto B. Leguía. In the early proclamations directed at the populations of Iquitos and Peru, the leader of the rebellion, Captain Guillermo Cervantes, pointed out two major motivations for their actions: the increasingly despotic and autocratic attitudes of the Leguía régime, which ignored constitutional guarantees by arbitrarily imprisoning and exiling opposition politicians; and especially, the threat that he represented for the territorial integrity of the republic. In his words:

[Leguía] intends to deliver our beloved Patria a further blow by selling the enormously rich region of the Putumayo to Colombia for a few million which will go to satiate various appetites. Shall we allow a repetition of that which happened to our rich region of Acre,

sold to Brazil? Never! Let them first pass over our corpses and stain their footprints with the blood shed in defense of our beloved Patria.³¹

Thus, what we see is a reversal of the accusations and anxiety: far from the settlers being the ones mutilating the country's geobody (the internalized geographic "shape" of the nation that its citizens become invested in)³² they leveraged rumors according to which territorial mutilation was on the agenda in the capital, and declared that they would defend the country's territorial integrity against the unpatriotic politicians from the metropolitan center.

How can we understand the coexistence of such contradictory rumors of territorial dismemberment? What do they tell us about the anxieties of a colonizing society, from the perspectives of both those residing in the coastal and highland core and those residing in the Amazonian colonies? In this chapter I argue that the fact that both those in the core and those in the colonies found rumors that the other party was seeking to dismember the country's geobody believable speaks to a common understanding of the fragile, brittle nature of their possession of large tracts of the Amazon rainforest. Unlike the core, highland and coastal parts of the country that could only be lost in the face of bald-faced expansionism and conquest by its neighbors—such as had been the case with the coastal Departments of Tarapacá and Tacna as a result of the War of the Pacific against Chile—the Amazonian territories in the east were in a state of constant colonial contestability. Much like the colonies of European empires in decades past (or in the very recent past), they could be renegotiated, traded, given away, or annexed relatively easily, not always with the need of a major war. Thus, it was believable that a handful of armed men could

³¹ "Iquitos mutiny." *West Coast Leader*, September 10, 1921, 6.

³² For the concept of "geobody," see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

lead a separatist movement or that a president could sign away a large portion of territory without much of the country having any say in the matter.

This in turn reveals an only semi-acknowledged understanding of just how “different” the eastern territories were from the rest of the country. They could only be discussed as an integral component of the nation’s geobody which, despite the 14,000 km distance between the capital and Iquitos, could be cartographically portrayed as territorially contiguous to the nation; and yet, when discussing its characteristics, peoples, and conditions, there was also a keen awareness that it was something different than the coast and highlands, which were understood to *be* Peru, unlike the rainforest which was understood to be *possessed by* Peru. This cleavage between both regions, the “dotted line” that separates them, is reflected in the way they are studied as well. Frederica Barclay has taken notice of how there is an implicit division of labor among scholars of Peruvian history whereby the domain of historians is the coastal and highland “core” of the country, while the Amazonian rainforest is that of anthropologists, due in part to the nature and paucity of historical primary sources.³³ Historical training is not available in any university in the Amazon basin, while training in Anthropology is at the *Universidad Nacional de la Amazonía Peruana*. From the perspective of the public servants who make the decisions of what disciplines are taught where, this is probably a reflection of an implicit idea that while History is a discipline that can study a national “we”, Anthropology continues to be that which studies the foreign (even if it is ‘foreign in a domestic sense’)—disciplinary attempts to deconstruct itself notwithstanding.

³³ Frederica Barclay, “Olvido de una historia. Reflexiones acerca de la historiografía andino-amazónica,” *Revista de Indias* 61, no. 223 (December 30, 2001): 493–511.

Thus, unlike other outbreaks of violence, the Iquitos rebellion highlighted a cleavage within the Peruvian geobody, a dotted line within a supposedly homogenous map along which a skilled, powerful “geosurgeon” might carry out an incision leading to mutilation dismemberment. The widespread awareness that this was a still incomplete project of internal colonialism drove anxieties that they had yet been unable to fully erase that dotted line of amputation. This stands in contrast with even the “hybrid” coast-highland city of Arequipa in southern Peru, which had (and continues to have) a very strong regionalist culture that has sometimes even been portrayed as separatist, if mostly in a sardonic manner.³⁴ Yet, despite this reputation, even when another anti-Leguía rebellion broke out in Arequipa in 1930—the one that would finally oust him—there was no noticeable talk of it actually being a separatist attempt in disguise. Such was the nature of the relationship between the coastal-highland “core” and its colonies in the rainforest, rebellions in the latter could be cast as separatist immediately, while those “within” were not.

In order to understand and interpret the swirling of rumors surrounding the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22, I resort to the work of historian Luise White. She finds in rumor a productive site for historical inquiry, arguing that the category of rumor does not hinge on whether its content turns out to be true or false, but rather in that “they are drawn from a store of historical allusions that have been kept alive and given new and renewed meanings by the gossip and arguments of diverse social groups.”³⁵ Indeed, its value lies in that they provide a given community’s commentary on difficult to explain events, they set the parameters of what is

³⁴ Thomas F. Love, *The Independent Republic of Arequipa: Making Regional Culture in the Andes*, First edition., Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).

³⁵ Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 82.

believable given their historical experience. In the context of Amazonian studies, Fernando Santos-Grandero and Frederica Barclay, for example, have studied how Asháninka, Awajun, and Wampi peoples in the Amazon region currently circulate stories of white predators who seek to extract peoples' vital force. They attribute these rumors to a desire to understand a context of constant attack by a capitalist Peruvian state which they believe has decided to exterminate them once and for all.³⁶ Thus, as argued by White, "[h]istoricizing rumor (...) may reveal an intellectual world of fears and fantasies, ideas and claims that have not been studied before. The contradictory elements of rumors can be read to reveal the complications of everyday concerns."³⁷ It is in this manner that I read my sources in an attempt to reconstruct settler colonial anxieties in the context of this bout of violence. The rumors may appear on the newspaper page itself, or I might only be able to find clues as to their existence by editorials and articles seeking to put them to rest. In the context of the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22, I seek to emphasize the role of rumor and speculation to help us trace the shape of the fears and anxieties that élites in Lima and settler élites in Iquitos harbored regarding their contested geobody.

Following White in that rumor is collective, believable commentary on challenging events that a community must deal with, it is key to tease out the ways in which we may access them. The exact content of the rumors that circulated in Peru on the topic of territorial mutilation are elusive. The press in Peru under the authoritarian regime of Leguía was subjected to certain government restrictions, thus acting as a filter for rumors that were not beneficial to the administration. The well-known opposition newspaper *La Prensa*, for example, was arbitrarily

³⁶ Fernando Santos Granero and Frederica Barclay, "Bultos, selladores y gringos alados: percepciones indígenas de la violencia capitalista en la Amazonia peruana," *Anthropologica* 28, no. 28 (2010): 21–52.

³⁷ White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 86.

expropriated in the months prior to the Iquitos rebellion, while the director of *El Comercio* was expelled from the country.³⁸ Thus, although rumors played an important role in the general life of Peru in the conjuncture of the 1921 revolt, the press bears witness to the swirling of rumors and accusations mostly in the negative, be it by self-censorship or outright censorship imposed by the State. That is, the existence of said rumors is mostly evidenced by the effort taken to disprove them, rather than by their extended elaboration in the printed page.

Peru and the Amazonian region

The Amazonian region, which encompasses about two thirds of the Republic of Peru's surface, was not always tethered to states centered in the Andean highlands or the Pacific coast. In a way, the thick rainforests east of the highlands may have acted as a "fracture zone" à la James Scott, where people could decamp to in order to avoid the exactions of state-building in the Andean highlands.³⁹ Recent scholarship such as Roberto Chauca's and Adrian Lerner's has sought to study the history of the Amazon basin as a whole, rather than following national demarcations.⁴⁰ Of course, this did not mean that the highlands and the rainforest represented two completely separate, discreet regions; rather, as suggested by Scott, state peoples of the highlands and state-free peoples of the eastern lowlands could be understood as co-constitutive,

³⁸ *West Coast Leader*, April 16, 1921, p. 1. "Expropriation of *La Prensa*"; Juan Gargurevich, "La Prensa y La Crónica, viejos acorazados que volverían a flote," *Conexión*, no. 2 (2013): 15; Henry Pease García and Gonzalo Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, Primera edición: marzo de 2013. (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013), 67.

³⁹ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Agrarian Studies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁴⁰ Chauca, "Science in the Jungle"; Adrián Lerner, "Jungle Cities: The Urbanization of Amazonia" (Doctoral dissertation, New Haven, Yale University, 2020).

with an active exchange (both peaceful and violent) taking place between them. Early Republican understandings of the division between the two might actually be the result of the disappearance of “hinge” ethnic groups over the course of the colonial period.⁴¹ Nevertheless, despite some penetrations in the “eyebrow of the rainforest” (*ceja de selva*) region of the tropical highland borderlands between the two, even the Inca empire failed in its larger attempts at spreading the state into the tropical lowlands.⁴² There is even reason to believe that it continued to act as a fracture zone during the colonial period, when indigenous highlanders and people of African descent escaped to the rainforest to get away from the exactions of the colonial state.⁴³

Through the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, an imaginary line was drawn through completely unknown regions of the world, splitting them between the empires of Spain and Portugal. The result was that South American territories whose existence were for the most part hitherto unknown were neatly divided between the two, along with their peoples.⁴⁴ Thus, the colonial period constituted the beginning of the bizarre condition whereby Amazonian territories existed in two opposite and contradictory states vis-à-vis the state: they were *already owned* and *yet to be conquered*.⁴⁵ Where previous indigenous Andean highland states knew there was a threshold beyond which they no longer exerted *imperium*, the Spanish colonial state in the Andes would imagine complete, unimpeachable sovereignty over lands whose existence they were not

⁴¹ Barclay, “Olvido de una historia.”

⁴² Terence N. D’Altroy, *The Incas, The Peoples of America* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 100–101. Michael Andrew Malpass, *Ancient People of the Andes* (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2016), 230.

⁴³ García Jordán, *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos*, 45.

⁴⁴ Christine Hunefeldt, *Crafting Borders: From Torsedillas and Q’osqo to Andean Nation-States, 1500-1900* (Lima: Yolanda Carlessi, 2018).

⁴⁵ Jorge Bayona, “Inherited Destinies: Discourses of Territorial Loss in Postcolonial States across the Pacific (Peru and the Philippines, 1903-1927),” *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* 3, no. 2 (2017): 169–94.

aware of, let alone successfully conquered. Thus, I refer to the drawing of lines demarcating boundaries in unknown and/or non-controlled land as “Tordesillaing”. As will be discussed later, after independence, the successor settler states would engage in their own Tordesillaing of indigenous lands and peoples, paying as much attention to the desires of the indigenous peoples in those lands as the Spanish did—that is, none.

Over the course of most of the colonial period, the gaze of the Spanish colonial state was mostly turned away from the Amazonian region due to the relative absence of mineral resources to extract, and the difficulties involved in mobilizing an Amazonian indigenous labor force. The highlands offered a much more profitable colonizing experience for the Spaniards. Thus, colonization of the Amazon rainforest was left in the hand of friar missionaries, such as the Franciscans or Jesuits, who were understood to foist Spanish sovereignty onto indigenous bodies and lands in ways that they did not necessarily assume was the case when they were sent to China or Japan. Indeed, nationalist historians in Peru have acritically absorbed this rhetoric and have continued to rely on missionary incursions as part of their defense of Peru’s sovereignty in the Amazonian region.⁴⁶ This is especially egregious since, as pointed out by Molina, Varela, and Lossio, the Amazonian region was functionally abandoned by the Spanish—even their missionaries—in the wake of the Juan Santos Atahualpa rebellion of 1742.⁴⁷ As pointed out by Pilar García-Jordán, in the decades that followed that rebellion, the Spanish colonial state was more concerned with defending its highland core through a series of forts than in “civilizing” the

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Pons Muzzo, *Las fronteras del Perú; historia de los límites*. For a disputation thereof, see Chauca, “Técnica, teoría e práxis na cartografia da Amazônia de Samuel Fritz.”

⁴⁷ Ana Molina Campodónico, Ana Varela Tafur, and Jorge Lossio Chávez, *El río deja de ser. Introducción al estudio de la historia y la cultura contemporánea de la Amazonía peruana* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Instituto Riva-Agüero, 2020), 11–12, <http://repositorio.pucp.edu.pe/index/handle/123456789/172884>.

rainforest region, which had been completely lost. It was only very late in the colonial period that Spanish Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries attempted to encroach into indigenous lands again, with very limited success.⁴⁸ Barclay has noted, however, how in the aftermath of the Spanish withdrawal from the region, Andean groups rebuilt some bidirectional contacts with populations in the rainforest, thus showing how these indeed were two interconnected spaces.⁴⁹ State agents answering to Lima would not return in force to the region until the 1840s—interestingly enough, about the same decade when the Spanish finally made some inroads into Muslim-held territories in Mindanao.⁵⁰ In the meantime, indigenous peoples of the Amazon lived their lives mostly without intervention from the colonial or republican states.

However, within the framework of the *already owned-yet to be conquered* mindset, once republican Peru got back on its feet thanks to the revenue generated by the *guano* export boom starting in the 1840s,⁵¹ state agents renewed their interest in the Amazonian region. As pointed out by Molina, Varela, and Lossio, the state conceived of the region as a “colonial domain” full of natural resources awaiting exploitation, and the enterprise was unironically described as a “conquest of a domestic frontier.” State-sponsored agents, soldiers, and scientists explored the rivers of the region and established military outposts and towns (often intertwined with each other), attempted to promote international commerce through the major rivers, and tried to attract “racially superior” White immigrants to the region.⁵² Juan Carlos La Serna has studied the

⁴⁸ García Jordán, *Cruz y arado, fusiles y discursos*, 23–58.

⁴⁹ Barclay, “Olvido de una historia,” 504.

⁵⁰ Reynaldo Ileto, *Magindanao, 1860-1888 : The Career of Dato Uto of Buayan* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program - Cornell University Press, 1971).

⁵¹ Paul Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano: Commercial Policy and the State in Postindependence Peru*, Princeton Legacy Library (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁵² For the mapping of the eastern rivers by foreign agents hired by Peru, see Werlich, *Admiral of the Amazon*.

role that photography served in the “Othering” of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon region and their construction as an obstacle to “progress.”⁵³ All of these measures involved the exercise of violence against indigenous peoples of the region, such as the Asháninkas and Yáneshas, who were forced to turn into peons for the White colonists from abroad and mestizo colonists from Peru. Despite the use of forced indigenous labor, the Geographic Society of Lima continued to describe the region as “uninhabited,” and that it should be colonized by “racially superior populations.”⁵⁴

The period immediately preceding the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22 was characterized by the rubber boom that began after the catastrophic Peruvian defeat in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883)⁵⁵ and ended in the 1910s. The degree to which territorial anxieties can be understood within the framework of what Vamik Volkan calls a “chosen trauma”, that is, a transgenerational collective trauma that compels members of the group to try to “make whole” the community⁵⁶ can be seen by the fixation with naming new settlements in the region after towns lost in the war, such as Tarapacá and Tacna.⁵⁷ The emergence of rubber as a highly valued commodity for industrial capitalism captured the attention of the state. In its desire to tap into the vast revenues that this resource promised, the state gave free rein to genocidal rubber barons such as Julio César Arana to enslave and murder indigenous peoples such as the Boras, Huitotos,

⁵³ Juan Carlos La Serna, “The Forest as Cliché: Otherness, Progress, and Internal Frontiers in Early Photography from the Amazon,” *American Anthropologist* 117, no. 4 (2015): 795–800.

⁵⁴ Molina Campodónico, Varela Tafur, and Lossio Chávez, *El río deja de ser. Introducción al estudio de la historia y la cultura contemporánea de la Amazonía peruana*, 14–25.

⁵⁵ William F. Sater, *Andean Tragedy: Fighting the War of the Pacific, 1879-1884*, Studies in War, Society, and the Military (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

⁵⁶ Vamik D. Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity,” *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001): 79–97.

⁵⁷ Ironically, both of these rainforest settlements are now in Colombia, meaning that they were lost twice.

Yines, and Ocaínas in order to force them to enter the labor economy and extract the valuable latex. The memories of these extreme acts of violence and exploitation continue to reverberate among the indigenous peoples of the region today, as shown by Wilton Martínez.⁵⁸ Although there were some cases of Peruvians denouncing these practices, such as those of Benjamín Saldaña Rocca, for the most part Peruvian nationalists from the coast or the highlands praised Arana for “civilizing” populations that they considered entirely “savage”, and for upholding Peruvian sovereignty in the face competing claims from Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil. Arana was even elected mayor of Iquitos in 1902 and senator in 1922.⁵⁹ In general terms, there did not seem to be a major clash in the way settlers in the Amazonian region and politicians and public opinion in the capital regarded the importance of the welfare of the indigenous peoples of the region. Even the *Asociación Pro-Indígena*, well-known for standing up for indigenous rights in Peru, mostly demurred when the Putumayo scandal broke. Their focus was on the exploitation of indigenous people in the highlands and the coast, generally understanding that Amazonians were not really Peruvian citizens, and generally choosing to join the nationalist voices seeing Peruvian activity in the Putumayo as a defense of the nation’s geobody.⁶⁰ In this fashion, even the *Asociación Pro-Indígena* implicitly reflected upon people a general understanding that was usually extended to land: the indigenous peoples living in the highlands and the coast *were* Peruvian, while those in the rainforest were *of* Peru.

⁵⁸ Wilton Martínez, *Historias del caucho en la Amazonía peruana*, Documentary (Centro de Antropología Visual del Perú, 2016).

⁵⁹ Molina Campodónico, Varela Tafur, and Lossio Chávez, *El río deja de ser. Introducción al estudio de la historia y la cultura contemporánea de la Amazonía peruana*, 27–46.

⁶⁰ Frederica Barclay, “La asociación pro indígena y las atrocidades del Putumayo, una misión auto restringida,” *Boletín americanista*, no. 60 (2010): 143–63.

The years of the rubber boom also signaled the rise of Iquitos as a major city and center of international commerce. With several huge fortunes being made rather quickly, the splendor and luxury of the city during these years has often been highlighted. The city's buildings were described as sumptuous, and its cultural life was said to have included plays and operas with performers brought from Europe. As Adrián Lerner points out, however, despite the hoopla surrounding the city's modernity and unbridled wealth, Iquitos always constituted a case of precarious urbanization. The riverine city was always constrained by the forces of the river flow, which frequently threatened to erode the shore and cause massive flooding. Furthermore, the fabric of the city was always co-constituted by a mass of urban poor who lived in ramshackle, precarious housing located not far from the palatial mansions of the nouveau riche.⁶¹

It was in this period that the most obvious precedent for the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22 took place: the federalist rebellion of 1896. In the ferment of settler accusations of being neglected by the central government, alongside expectations of the imminence of the implementation of a federal political system under the newly inaugurated government by Nicolás de Piérola, the population of Iquitos rose on May 2, 1896 to establish the Federal State of Loreto. As we will see, much like in the rebellion of 1921, the federalists of Iquitos very loudly proclaimed their continued loyalty to the Republic of Peru, with the only change being that of them jumping ahead in the process of establishing a federal system in the country. And once again, much like the later rebellion, it would be immediately painted as a separatist enterprise by politicians and

⁶¹ Lerner, "Jungle Cities."

commentators in the capital.⁶² The rapidity with which the rebellion petered out once it became clear that the central government did not take kindly to their sudden move suggests that these federalists were not that deeply invested in their cause, at least not to the point of shedding blood. Indeed, as government military expeditions were formed (which would follow almost exactly the same routes as those of 1921), the federalists quickly lost their nerve and ended their federal experiment. On the other hand, that the government and public opinion in the capital almost immediately jumped to the conclusion that the rebellion was separatist, alongside the rejection the rebellion elicited even from other pro-federalist Peruvian politicians throughout the country, reveals the deep anxiety that could be triggered by almost any sign of autonomy on the part of the colonists in Amazonia. This chapter will deal with the ways this was expressed through rumors and speculation in the 1921 rebellion.

The rubber boom came to an end in the 1910s, after the British successfully transferred seedlings to areas they colonized in Southeast Asia. These carefully planned, intensive rubber plantations quickly surpassed the productivity of the “wild rubber” being harvested that was so destructive to human populations and to the trees themselves. Of course, the treatment of the migrant workers transferred into these colonies had its major problems as well, alongside the ways indigenous peoples were displaced.⁶³ World War I also played a large role in the economic decline of Iquitos and the Amazonian region, as the supply of consumer goods from Europe dried up and drove up prices beyond the reach of many. However, violence against indigenous peoples

⁶² Frederica Barclay, *El estado federal de Loreto, 1896: centralismo, descentralización y federalismo en el Perú, a fines del siglo XIX*, 1a. ed., Travaux de l'Institut français d'études andines ; t. 266 (Lima : Cuzco, Peru: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos ; Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos "Bartolomé de Las Casas, 2009).

⁶³ Stephen L. Harp, *A World History of Rubber: Empire, Industry, and the Everyday* (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 10–40.

did not diminish alongside the economy; local potentates sought different ways of making money, such as planting cotton, which continued to require raiding indigenous settlements for labor and enforcing an abusive labor system.⁶⁴ This continued violence against indigenous peoples led to the uprising of a coalition of Asháninka, Conibo, and Yine peoples led by an indigenous leader named Tasorentsi. A former enslaver himself, he turned against the White masters, and wove a series of interethnic alliances that allowed them to clear the Upper Ucayali region in Peru's central rainforest until the early 1920s.⁶⁵ This major economic slump and anxiety over the future of the colonizing enterprise in the Peruvian Amazon would be the conditions of possibility for the outbreak of the 1921 Iquitos rebellion.

A rumor-crossed régime: Leguía's *Oncenio*

The Iquitos revolt of 1921-22 took place during a period known as the *Oncenio* (the eleven-year period) of August B. Leguía's authoritarian, pro-foreign investment rule. Leguía himself described his administration as the *Patria Nueva* (New Fatherland) to express the wholesale change that he sought to enact after the twenty-odd years referred to as the *República Aristocrática* (Aristocratic Republic) in Peruvian historiography, which had been characterized by a near monopoly over power by the oligarchic *Civilista* party. A successful businessman of a middle-class, bourgeois background, Leguía himself had been a member of the *Civilista* party and had even reached the presidency on their ticket for the 1908-1912 period. His authoritarian tendencies during his first administration—and lack of a true oligarchic

⁶⁴ Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*, 179–85.

⁶⁵ Santos-Granero, *Slavery and Utopia*.

background—led to most *Civilistas* distancing themselves from him by the time his first administration ended. When he made his political comeback in 1919, riding the wave of the Mexican Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the post-World War I economic slump, he was able to capture the imagination of a growing middle- and working-class electorate that saw in him the opportunity to overturn a social and economic system built solely to favor the most privileged families of the country. As will be discussed below, despite many accusations of electoral fraud in all directions, he handily won the elections of 1919 against the increasingly decrepit *Civilista* party.⁶⁶

The early phase of his rule—during which the Iquitos rebellion took place—was characterized by an autocratic impulse manifested in the intense persecution of the *Civilista* party leadership, which resulted in the banishment of most of its foremost politicians. After a few years of the political situation being touch-and-go, the *Civilista* party was completely crippled, and the oligarchy lost its stranglehold on politics—but not their fortunes. Leguía also headed a period of economic growth fueled by massive loans and private investment coming from the United States, placing Peru firmly in its orbit. He has famously been said to have expressed a desire “put an American in charge of every branch of our government’s activities” and to turn Peru into some kind of protectorate of the United States.⁶⁷ While these constituted some major changes, the rest of the rhetoric of the *Patria Nueva* was quickly rolled back. The regional Congresses that were meant to decentralize the country were completely ignored, with Leguía instead governing in an increasingly centralized manner. While he enjoyed a honeymoon period with university

66 Pease García and Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, 59–86.

67 Paul W. Drake, *The Money Doctor in the Andes: The Kemmerer Missions, 1923-1933* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 216–17.

students and working class leaders, the relationship deteriorated quickly after 1923. His talk of *indigenismo*, an ideological current that sought to vindicate the indigenous people of Peru that could range from the paternalistic to the radical, was also abandoned when the indigenous peoples of the highlands began to mobilize for their rights.⁶⁸ As mentioned above, *indigenismo* tended to focus above all on the indigenous peoples of the highlands, not those of the rainforest. Even the radical Tawantinsuyo movement focused almost exclusively on mobilizing the indigenous peoples of the highlands.⁶⁹ In this respect, Peruvian republican society, a hundred years after independence, appeared to echo the cultural visions of indigeneity of the late colonial period, in which the indigenous people of the rainforest were pictorially represented as *indios infieles* (infidel Indians) in contrast with those of the highlands, who appeared as *tributarios civilizados* (civilized tributaries).⁷⁰ The ones who could be redeemed or saved from the clutches of exploitative landowners were the latter; the indigenous peoples of the rainforest for the most part did not even enter the picture.

The Leguía presidency itself was deeply entangled with the circulation of rumors, even from its inception. In the weeks following the presidential elections of 1919, despite Leguía having won by a very wide margin, rumors and speculations that the incumbent Civilista party intended to impugn the results circulated widely—rumors which, according to Pease and Romero, might have originated in a baseless accusation coming from Leguía himself with the intention of

⁶⁸ Pease García and Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, 59–86.

⁶⁹ Jaymie Patricia Heilman, *Before the Shining Path: Politics in Rural Ayacucho, 1895-1980* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), 42–70.

⁷⁰ Juan Carlos Estenssoro, *Los cuadros de mestizaje del virrey Amat ; La representación etnográfica en el Perú colonial* (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 1999).

setting up an excuse to seize power.⁷¹ Were these alleged Civilista maneuverings to transpire, the issue would be settled in the Civilista-dominated Congress, where the outcome was a forgone conclusion. Another version claimed that the Civilistas were preparing to engage in outright electoral fraud to deny Leguía the presidency. The circulation of these stories was among the reasons that prompted him to carry out a preemptive coup d'état with the support of the military to install himself as President of the Republic, and their perceived verisimilitude—as well as his own popularity—prompted the population to turn a blind eye to this technical violation of constitutional norms. The threat of a *Civilista* countercoup informed Leguía's persecution of its leadership, a task for which he would tap his cousin Germán Leguía, who assumed the post of Minister of Government.⁷² Rumors of *Civilista* plots and the arrests of their alleged leaders would continue throughout the early years of Leguía's *Oncenio*.⁷³

The Iquitos rebellion of 1921-1922

By the early 1920s, Iquitos was in the midst of a major economic recession resulting from the drop in the price of rubber caused by the competition of plantation rubber from Southeast

⁷¹ Pease García and Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, 63–64. Manuel Burga and Alberto Flores Galindo, *Apogeo y crisis de la república aristocrática* (Lima: Rikchay, 1984), 127.

⁷² Pease García and Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, 67; Peter F. Klarén, *Peru: Society and Nationhood in the Andes*, Latin American Histories (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 239–42; Carlos Contreras, *Historia del Perú contemporáneo: desde las luchas por la independencia hasta el presente*, 4a ed., Serie Estudios históricos 27 (Lima: IEP, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos : Fondo Editorial : Universidad del Pacífico, 2007), 235–36.

⁷³ For examples, see “Revolutionary conspiracy.” *West Coast Leader*, November 13, 1920, 1; “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, October 22. “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, April 23, 1921; “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, April 23, 1921; “Rising of Peruvian and Bolivian Indians?” *West Coast Leader*, April 16, 1921, 2.

Asia.⁷⁴ Well aware of the effects of Asian competition, settlers in Iquitos bemoaned the economic crisis and called for economic relief from the central government, which eventually came on January 19, 1921, in the shape of a temporary lifting of export tariffs on rubber.⁷⁵ Despite being thankful for these measures, the rubber producers of Iquitos lamented that it was too little, too late. Their investments had already lost their value, their workers had left the region for better prospects elsewhere, their industry already lay in tatters.⁷⁶ Economic conditions in Iquitos did not improve in the early months of 1921, resulting in teachers going on strike over unpaid wages, and the departmental prefect resorting to extraordinary negotiations with local businesses to provide the also unpaid local police with basic supplies to tide them over.⁷⁷ These measures were not without their critics, however. Samuel Torres, one of Cervantes' lieutenants, pointed out that the result of the lifting of import and export tariffs, combined with the fact that the Leguía government had ceased all cash remittances to the local administration in Loreto was the cause of the unpaid wages of public servants. Furthermore, he denounced that these arrangements with local businesses to provide basic supplies sponsored by Prefect Ruiz y Pastor were actually a scheme by the official to enrich himself.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Fernando Santos-Granero and Frederica Barclay, *Tamed Frontiers: Economy, Society, and Civil Rights in Upper Amazonia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2000), 119–33. See also Chapter 2. Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*, 195–97.

⁷⁵ “Exoneración de derechos.” *El Oriente*, February 2, 1921, 1; “Medida digna de aplauso.” January 7, 1921, 1. “La liberación de derechos.” February 1, 1921, 1; see also “Desde Lima: interesante exposición del ‘Centro Loretano’.” April 30, 1921, 1–2.

⁷⁶ “La liberación de derechos.” *El Oriente*, February 1, 1921, 1; “El éxodo.” April 26, 1921, 1; “Nuestras industrias.” April 30, 1921, 1.

⁷⁷ “Procedimiento laudable.” *El Oriente*, February 10, 1921, 1; “Situación violenta.” April 13, 1921, 1.

⁷⁸ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 42–45.

It was in the midst of this atmosphere of economic anxiety and suspicion that at 5 am of August 5, 1921, Captain Guillermo Cervantes began his revolt against the Leguía-appointed authorities in Iquitos. Not much is known about Cervantes. He was a career soldier who fought in the La Pedrera conflict with Colombia in 1911 and was said to have been the one to capture the Colombian flag. This experience made him resent the manner in which the Peruvian victory there had been undermined by authorities in Lima, who had turned over the territory to Colombia. He had also played a key role in the coup against President Billinghurst back in 1914.⁷⁹ After the failure of his rebellion, Cervantes fled to Ecuador, where he continued plotting the downfall of the Leguía régime alongside other dissidents, such as General Oscar Benavides and Augusto Durand, and he appears to have attempted to infiltrate northern Peru. He was still based in Guayaquil in 1929, but the date and means of his death cannot be ascertained.⁸⁰

The barracks of the 17th *Cazadores del Oriente* (Jägers/Hunters of the East) Regiment and the gunboat *América* were Cervantes' first targets that morning. Having secured them, he was able to quickly take control of the city, with only a few warning shots being necessary as the city police—with whom the troops had had simmering tensions—did not offer resistance. The prefect, César Ruiz y Pastor hid in a German commercial establishment, while the (now former) commander of the *Cazadores* Regiment sought asylum in the house of a judge. Authorities loyal to the Leguía administration were detained, some slated for deportation from Iquitos. By the

⁷⁹ "El compañero de Cervantes." *Amazonía*, August-September, 1984, 12-13, 40. Molina Campodónico, Varela Tafur, and Lossio Chávez, *El río deja de ser. Introducción al estudio de la historia y la cultura contemporánea de la Amazonía peruana*, 48. Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*, 196. "El jefe de la revolución en oriente." *Variedades*, September 24, 1921.

⁸⁰ Luis Alfonso Navarro Cáuper, "La revolución del capitán Cervantes." *Proceso: Revista de la Amazonía*, January-February 1974, 9-11. "El compañero de Cervantes." *Amazonía*, November, 1984, 12-13.

time the inhabitants of Iquitos awoke, Cervantes was in complete control of the city. In the words of one his followers, the rebels were able to quickly consolidate an effective “collective or class dictatorship,” that was distinct from the corrupt “personalist dictatorship” of Leguía.⁸¹

Captain Cervantes addressed a number of proclamations to the people of Iquitos, explaining why rebellion against the Leguía administration was necessary. His criticism ran along two axes: the first was that the current régime constituted a despotic autocracy that violated the rights recognized by the 1919 Constitution (one that Leguía had tailor-made for himself!), the second was that Leguía planned “to dismember [Loreto] of one of its richest regions: the Putumayo.”⁸² From the very beginning then, the rebels staked out a position against “territorial dismemberment” and instead hurled that accusation against the president. The very choice of the word “dismemberment” brings to mind how the country’s shape as portrayed in maps was understood to be a body, a geobody.

The exact nature of the rebels’ endgame at this early stage of their rebellion remains unclear. Many decades later, one of Cervantes’ followers, Andrés Gallardo Echevarría, stated in an interview that the Captain had engaged in secret correspondence with General Benavides (who was exiled in Costa Rica), Lieutenant-Colonel Luis Sánchez Cerro in Trujillo, and a Major Caballero in Cuzco, to carry out a simultaneous uprising in all three cities. The well-known General Benavides would then join them to command the anti-Leguía revolution.⁸³ Considering that Gallardo was only 17 years old when the revolt took place and was not a member of Cervantes’

⁸¹ “Algunos detalles sobre el movimiento de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, August 20, 1921, 1. “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” October 30, 1921, 2. Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 114–15.

⁸² “Algunos detalles sobre el movimiento de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, August 20, 1921, 1. Torres Videla, 113.

⁸³ “El compañero de Cervantes.” *Amazonía*, November 1984, 12-13.

closest inner circle (he was not taken along in the flight to Ecuador), it is unlikely that he had direct knowledge of this correspondence, and that he instead is relaying what was common knowledge at the time—or rumored. These connections with Trujillo and Cuzco were not mentioned in the book-length defense of the rebellion published by Lieutenant Samuel Torres, a member of Cervantes' inner circle. This is, however, consistent with a defeated anti-Leguista who was not inclined to give away officers who could continue to be viable agents against the régime. Luis Sánchez Cerro, after all, was the one who did, in fact, overthrow Leguía in 1930. Torres did, however, appear to question the lack of activity of higher-profile anti-Leguía leaders such as Benavides when explaining the rebels' strategic choices. According to Torres, Iquitos could have served handsomely as the capital of a provisional government seeking to overthrow the Leguía dictatorship because of the difficulties government forces would have to face approaching it from the highlands, as well as the possibility for exiled politicians to arrive freely to the riverine port from the Atlantic seaboard (which, unlike Peru's ports on the Pacific, could not be monitored by the government) to lend their support to the rebellion. He defended the decision to hold a defensive position in the eastern lowlands instead of trying to invade the highlands and the coast, where they would lose the advantages of their superior knowledge of the rainforest terrain and their adaptation to it, as well as face the disadvantages of the colder climes of those other regions of Peru. Instead, the rainforest region and its troops should have served as an impregnable territorial base, which would have facilitated further anti-Leguía uprisings in other parts of the country, bringing about the fall of the régime. In the absence of

the latter, he questioned bitterly why none of the many dissident politicians that had been exiled abroad by the Leguía régime chose to show up in Iquitos.⁸⁴

At any rate, claiming to seek to set right all the economic wrongs brought about by Prefect Ruiz y Pastor in particular and the Leguía administration in general, the rebels proceeded to seek funds for their revolutionary activities. Showing up at the *Banco del Perú y Londres*, they gained access to their vaults—despite the protestations of the branch manager—and took 23,300 pounds of the 26,300 that were available, giving out an official writ of transference of the funds to the revolutionary government. The rebels reportedly destined these funds to cover the backpay of public officials, police, and soldiers in the city. These disbursements were also affected by the traffic in rumors; instead of doing so on the Monday after the rebellion, as had been their initial intention, they were forced to do so a day earlier, for rumors had circulated that the rebels planned to abscond with the money taken from the bank. Lieutenant Torres kept a scrupulous record of all the expenses made by the rebels in payment of the government's duties and claimed that such an honest administration of the region's finances led to a revival of economic activity and a clear increase in civilian morale.⁸⁵

The first days of the revolutionary régime in Iquitos also saw the enactment of an ambitious package of reforms which lend some credence to their claim that it constituted much more than a mere military revolt. They carried out a flurry of measures to slash the budget, which they saw as bloated and full of arrangements that lent themselves to corruption, such as overpriced rations for the troops and excessive allocations of funds for payment of rent of the

⁸⁴ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 116–17.

⁸⁵ “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, August 12, 1921, 1; Torres Videla, 117–28.

prefect's residence or elementary schools. In this process, they cut or consolidated the budgets of the office of the prefect, the subprefect, the police, river *comisarios*, captaincy of the port, customs, war auditor, education, rations for the troops, and the treasury. They restructured fiscal revenues in a protectionist key, raising import and export duties on all products except those that were used for the production of goods. The rebels, furthermore, took on the unpopular shipping company Booth & Co., forcing them to cut back their rates as established in their contract with the government, reorganized city hall and the tax collection company, abolished the tobacco and salt monopolies, and reformed the extraction of balata (a rubber substitute).⁸⁶ Furthermore, in consonance with their claim that the rebellion represented a restoration of constitutional order that had been violated by the Leguía régime, Cervantes offered guarantees to judiciary authorities, consuls, and private commercial houses in Loreto that they would be able to continue exercising their functions as they did before. Public servants were also ordered to continue running the apparatus of state or face dismissal.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Torres Videla, 129–71.

⁸⁷ "Los sucesos de Iquitos." *El Comercio*, September 20, 1921, 2; Torres Videla, 113–14.



Figure 1: Map of some of the locations involved in the Cervantes rebellion. Shaded area corresponds roughly to the highland regions

The military engagements

The rebels naturally had to take stock of their strategic situation. At the earliest moment of the rebellion, the rebels only comprised 150 soldiers plus nine officers, all limited to the city

of Iquitos itself.⁸⁸ Survival required expansion to defensible positions from where they could hold off the government's counteroffensive. Thus, the rebels identified three axes along which they could potentially be attacked. The Amazon River itself to the east, through Brazil, was the least likely path of attack by government troops, but they set up some defenses there nevertheless. The other two were those through which the government did, in fact, carry out its counteroffensive. The southern one consisted of the Pachitea and Ucayali Rivers, which would be the axis along which troops departing from Lima and following the Pichis River would take; and the western one was the Huallaga River, which would be taken by government troops travelling from Pacasmayo and Cajamarca (in the highlands) and descending on the town of Moyobamba, located in the "upper rainforest" region that acted as a borderland between the highlands and the rainforest. They accurately predicted that the government would be slow to respond, so their first priority was to gain the allegiance of the garrisons along those rivers to augment their limited forces, rather than having to fight off a government counteroffensive.⁸⁹

Regarding their southern front, sailing southward along the Ucayali River towards the Pachitea River in the small craft *Iquitos* in August, rebel troops took control of Masisea, some 550 km south of Iquitos.⁹⁰ On their western front, along the shores of the Huallaga River, rebel forces departed Iquitos on August 16, sailing on the captured Navy gunboat *América*, heading towards Yurimaguas (about 400 km from Iquitos), which they captured without resistance.⁹¹ Rebel troops continued their advance upriver, and after a small skirmish, captured the town of Tarapoto on

⁸⁸ Torres Videla, 185. "The Iquitos Uprising." *West Coast Leader*, August 20, 1921, 2.

⁸⁹ Torres Videla, 187.

⁹⁰ Torres Videla, 187–89.

⁹¹ "Los sucesos de Iquitos." *El Comercio*, September 5, 1921, 1. "Los sucesos de Iquitos." October 30, 1921, 2. Torres Videla, 189–90.

August 31.⁹² Both the government and the rebels armed indigenous people to serve as auxiliaries in this engagement, but they did not appear to have taken part in the fighting and disappeared quickly from the field of battle and the historical record. Despite their disappearance as soldiers, oral testimonies collected from indigenous sources indicate that the rebels indeed recruited indigenous guides in the Ucayali region, including the famed Tasorentsi of the 1915 uprising.⁹³ Their absences in much of the extant written records illustrates the degree to which indigenous Amazonians were seen as almost just “scenery”—a topic I will expand on in chapter 4—or whose presence as guides for settler soldiers was taken for granted and not worth mention.

By late August, President Leguía and his administration were finally taking the rebellion seriously. Following the playbook of Nicolás de Piérola a quarter of a century before,⁹⁴ one of his first measures was to declare the closure of the riverine port of Iquitos to all transportation, international and domestic.⁹⁵ This cut off the rebels from any legal international commerce and would eventually put them in a dire situation regarding food and other basic supplies. As predicted by the rebels, the régime planned a two-pronged counteroffensive, much like in 1896. The southern prong was comprised by the significantly-named *Colonizadores del Oriente* Regiment (“Colonizers of the East”) and elements of the 2nd Battalion and would depart overland from the central highland town of Tarma and approach Iquitos from the south, following the course of the Pichis River. The other prong would attack eastwards from Chachapoyas, in

⁹² “La rebelión en el Oriente.” *El Comercio*, September 14, 1921, 1; “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” October 30, 1921, 2. “El jefe de la revolución en oriente.” *Variedades*, September 24, 1921.

⁹³ Santos-Granero, *Slavery and Utopia*, 133–34.

⁹⁴ Barclay, *El estado federal de Loreto, 1896*, 267–96.

⁹⁵ “Clausura del puerto de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, August 20, 1921, 1; “The Iquitos uprising.” *West Coast Leader*, August 20, 1921, p. 2.

northern Peru, and approach Iquitos following the course of the Huallaga River. Unlike the southern prong, this one would not be comprised by active duty military, but rather by volunteers specifically recruited for the purposes of this operation, and would be commanded by Senator Pablo Pizarro.⁹⁶ Pizarro belonged to the ruling class of Chachapoyas, a city on the borderlands between the highlands and the rainforest, and was probably selected for this duty due to being a veteran of the War of the Pacific forty years prior and a *compadre* of President Leguía.⁹⁷ Rebel Lieutenant Samuel Torres dismissed the forces led by Pizarro as mere mob of bushwhackers (*montoneros*) who lacked the discipline of regular troops and would end up ransacking the countryside since they never received the salaries that Pizarro was supposed to give them (suggesting that he had pocketed those wages instead). He furthermore suggested that this prong was led by civilians because no professional officer would accept such a mission.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, the rebels continued to enlarge the territory under their control, departing from Tarapoto on September 7 and heading to Moyobamba. On September 11, a confusing engagement broke out in the environs of Moyobamba, in which the rebels prevailed. Limeño newspaper *El Tiempo* inaccurately predicted that “this capture of Moyobamba marks the limit of the insurrectionists’ planned advance, who most certainly will not commit to any new major offensives to expand their radius of action, because measures to stop them have been

⁹⁶ “Por palacio.” *El Comercio*, August 28, 1921, 3; “Expedición a Loreto.” August 30, 1921, 3. “Iquitos mutiny.” *West Coast Leader*, September 3, 1921, 13.

⁹⁷ David Nugent, “Erasing Race to Make the Nation: The Rise of ‘the People’ in the Northern Peruvian Andes,” in *Locating Capitalism in Time and Space: Global Restructurings, Politics, and Identity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 148–49.

⁹⁸ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 192.

adopted.”⁹⁹ The rebels pushed further on to the town of Rioja, not far from Moyobamba, where in a chaotic encounter both forces fell apart and fled in defeat. Even though Senator Pizarro reported a splendid victory in the fighting on September 23 or 24, the truth eventually made its way to Lima, and he took ill and left for the capital.¹⁰⁰ The outcome of this engagement would later lead to a series of angry (and frankly very entertaining in their deployment of aggrieved masculinity) exchanges between senators Pizarro and Arana in the Peruvian Senate, where they accused each other of cowardice and threatened to have the other removed from their seats.¹⁰¹

By October the rebellion had stagnated in its military and political expansion—no other anti-Leguía uprisings took place in the rest of the country. Furthermore, as the port of Iquitos remained closed to international commerce, the rebel leaders were faced with shortages of money and food. To resolve the first issue, they issued their own currency amounting to Lp 50,000—a measure that proved unpopular among the merchant class.¹⁰² Regarding the food situation, the rebels unsuccessfully begged the Brazilian authorities in Manaus to allow ships to transport food to Iquitos, arguing that the Leguía administration was a dictatorship, and that its closure of the port was only harming the civilians of Iquitos, among whom were many Brazilians.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ “La rebelión en el Oriente.” September 14, 1921, 1; “El combate con los revolucionarios en Moyobamba.” September 15, 1921, 1; “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, October 30, 1921, 2.

¹⁰⁰ “Por Palacio.” *El Comercio*, September 18, 3. “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, September 29, 1921, 2. “Los sucesos de Loreto.” October 5, 1921, 4. “The Iquitos campaign.” *West Coast Leader*, October 1, 1. “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, October 30, 1921, 2. “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, October 31, 1921, 1. Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 192–93. “Por Palacio.” *El Comercio*, November 3, 1921, 3.

¹⁰¹ “En la cámara de senadores.” *El Comercio*, January 17, 1922, 3. “En la cámara de senadores.” January 18, 1922, 2–3. “En la cámara de senadores.” January 19, 1922, 1. “En la cámara de senadores.” January 20, 1922.

¹⁰² Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 172–84.

¹⁰³ “The Iquitos revolt.” *West Coast Leader*, December 14, 1921, 3. “La revolución de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, December 24, 1921, 2.

Some hope did emerge in the rebel camp, however. A Colonel Teobaldo González¹⁰⁴ arrived in Iquitos from Guayaquil, representing a revolutionary committee that presumably sought to overthrow the Leguía régime, and whose authority the rebel leaders immediately acknowledged.¹⁰⁵ However, as they were making arrangements for Colonel González to tour the front lines to take over command of the rebel forces, news arrived that the forces in the southern front in Masisa were under government attack.¹⁰⁶ The government's *Colonizadores del Oriente* regiment had taken longer to get ready, but once it departed Tarma in the central highlands and engaged in combat, it proved steadier than Senator Pizarro's irregulars.¹⁰⁷ After a sharp engagement with the rebels, Masisa fell to the government forces. Samuel Torres attributed this defeat to treachery, suggesting that the rebel commander had come to an understanding with a government representative.¹⁰⁸ *La Prensa*, the government's mouthpiece, judged that with the fall of Masisa, the rebels were cut off from the upper Ucayali River, the breadbasket of Iquitos, which meant that the rebellion was close to collapsing.¹⁰⁹ A counterattack led by Captain Cervantes himself, however, stabilized the southern front for the rest of the duration of the rebellion.¹¹⁰

In the meantime, on the Huallaga front both sides restructured their forces in the wake of the clash in Rioja. Regulars of the 5th Regiment of the Peruvian Army finally completed their

104 His surname appears as González and Gonzales in different sources.

105 Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 200. "The Iquitos revolt." *West Coast Leader*, December 14, 1921, 3.

106 Torres Videla, 200–201.

107 "La expedición a Iquitos." *El Comercio*, September 8, 1921, 6. "Por Palacio." September 16, 5.

108 Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 197–98. "Iquitos rebellion." *West Coast Leader*, November 9, 1921, 3. "Por Palacio." *El Comercio*, November 8, 1921, 1. "Por Palacio." November 17, 1921, 1. Torres Videla, 201–6. "The Iquitos revolt." *West Coast Leader*, December 14, 1921, 3.

109 "Iquitos rebellion." *West Coast Leader*, November 9, 1921, 3.

110 "The Iquitos revolt." *West Coast Leader*, December 14, 1921, 3. Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 206.

preparations and headed east to engage the rebels. The rebels, on their part, now commanded by Colonel Teobaldo González headed west from Iquitos, reoccupying Yurimaguas, Tarapoto, and Moyobamba by December.¹¹¹ In the town of Lamas, in the vicinity of Moyobamba, the 5th Regiment laid a trap for the rebels, in which they would ambush González men when they were fêted by the local notables. The trap was not sprung perfectly, but González was still defeated and had to retreat in disorder.¹¹² Alongside the lack of news of uprisings elsewhere in the country, the scarcity of food and other supplies, as well as the tenuous situation on the Ucayali River, this defeat convinced Cervantes and his followers to bring the rebellion to a close. Forces on the Ucayali River were ordered to carry out a fighting withdrawal northwards to join them, after which they would all retreat northwards up the Napo River and head to Ecuador. On January 2, 1922, the last remaining rebels fled Iquitos, most heading for Ecuador.¹¹³

The specter of constant colonial contestability invoked in the swirling of rumors

News of the outbreak of the rebellion first circulated in Lima a week after the events transpired, and further information was constantly scarce in Lima throughout the duration of the rebellion, often arriving with a delay of weeks, if at all. Periodicals such as *El Comercio*, *El Tiempo*, and *Mundial* complained about the lack of timely news from the east, with *Mundial* ironically commenting on it in the preface to an interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs Alberto Salomón.

¹¹¹ Torres Videla, 197–99; Torres Videla, 207–9. “Iquitos rebellion.” *West Coast Leader*, November 9, 1921, 3. “The ‘miniature war’.” November 30, 1921, 1. “Telegrama oficial.” *El Comercio*, December 2, 1921, 1.

¹¹² Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 207–9. “The miniature war.” *West Coast Leader*, December 28, 1921, 2.

¹¹³ Torres Videla, 210–11. “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, January 4, 1922, 1. “Los sucesos de Iquitos.” January 9, 1922, 1; “End of the miniature war.” *West Coast Leader*, January 4, 1922, 1–2. “The Iquitos rebellion.” February 1, 1922, 2. “El capitán Cervantes y los revolucionarios de Iquitos.” *Mundial*, April 7, 1922.

In an imaginary conversation between reporters scouring the local newspapers for news, their dialogue went thusly: “—Anything? —Nothing. —And the revolution in Loreto? —It’s in the middle of the rainforest, nobody knows what’s going on over there!”¹¹⁴ While the newspapers complained that the government had access to newspapers and other sources that it did not share with journalists,¹¹⁵ even high-ranking politicians and socialites in Lima felt their access was restricted as well. Infamous rubber baron and Senator-elect for Loreto, Julio C. Arana, had to visit the president several times to attempt to hear “something, anything” about what was happening in Loreto, and positivist intellectual and newspaper editor Clemente Palma complained that he did not understand why Senator Pizarro did not occupy Iquitos immediately, saying that it may be due to reasons “that remain hidden from our gaze as chroniclers, but that the government must know in full detail.”¹¹⁶ Even the president had to rely on the slow arrival of individuals through the overland route from the rainforest to get a notion of what was transpiring in the east.¹¹⁷ These were, of course, ideal conditions for the swirling of unconfirmed rumors and speculation.

When the news of the Iquitos rebellion finally broke in Lima, the government took pains to avoid any talk of separatism. Giving us a notion of the currency of rumors in Lima and how it could shape journalistic coverage and eventually even the responses by the state, *El Comercio* quoted that morning’s issue of *La Crónica*:

114 “Hombres y cosas del día.” *Mundial*, September 30, 1921.

115 See also “El movimiento de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, September 10, 1921, 1. “La rebelión en el Oriente.” *El Comercio*, September 14, 1921, 1.

116 “Por Palacio.” *El Comercio*, October 29, 1921, 1. “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, October 29, 1921.

117 “Por palacio.” *El Comercio*, August 23, 1921, 1. “Por Palacio.” September 16, 5. “Por Palacio.” November 17, 1921, 1.

It was stated yesterday in official circles, *and it was commented with insistence in the streets*, that serious events had taken place in the capital of the Department of Loreto, motivated by the economic crisis in that territorial circumscription (...). Even though, as happens in such cases, the high officials of the Ministry of Government refused to provide the press with information related to those events, we have found out, *through other means, of an unofficial nature, of course*, that the crisis we refer to led to an uprising of the troops in the Iquitos garrison (...). Through reports obtained by our chroniclers, *about whose veracity we do not take responsibility*, we know that captain Cervantes, leader of the revolted troops based in Leticia, arrested the prefect of Loreto, Mr. Ruiz Pastor; the subprefect, Mr. Alcibiades del Águila, and the chief of the garrison, commander Escudero. (...) Finally, it was stated that this movement is being characterized as federalist.”¹¹⁸

Later reports would eventually confirm the veracity of the early rumors reported by *La Crónica*, which fits within a broader context of the ambiguity of rumor; inasmuch as it is believable commentary, those who are exposed to it are left wondering whether its contents will turn out to be true or not. It was difficult to dismiss anything out of hand. Journalists were understood to have a duty to not only report about the facts of a situation, but also about *the fact that rumors circulated*. Upon circulation, such rumors led to speculation, which transformed into the next round of rumors, which may then be amplified by the press once again.

Possibly seeking to wrest back control of the narrative about the rebellion from rumormongers, the government started giving out statements to the press starting later that day.

¹¹⁸ “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, August 12, 1921, 1. My emphasis.

In general, the Leguía administration's early response was to downplay the significance of the Iquitos rebellion. They emphasized an aborted mutiny of a month and a half before, which they attributed to bad financial decisions on the part of the prefect, who had failed to pay the salaries of the soldiers—rather than broader, structural economic crises or neglect on the part of the central government—effectively throwing him under the bus. Captain Cervantes had taken advantage of this malaise to incite a revolt in the Iquitos garrison. While the differences between the uprising being caused by a generalized economic crisis or the bad financial administration of a specific prefect might be a matter of perspective, the government did immediately start to counteract one of the claims put forth in *La Crónica's* original report: they emphatically stated that “the federalist tendency that the aforementioned newspaper attributes to the Loreto movement is entirely baseless.”¹¹⁹ *La Prensa*, now a government mouthpiece, also clarified that the revolt in Iquitos “has no political significance.”¹²⁰ Thus we can see the beginning of a framing of the revolt as one revolving exclusively around material concerns—and rather petty ones at that—which thus made it a matter of little import.

Indeed, the crude material interest angle was played up by the central government, which took pains to emphasize the seizure of the money reserves in the *Banco de Perú y Londres* as a clear cut case of a vulgar bank robbery which would be followed by an expeditious flight abroad to enjoy their ill-gotten gains. Indeed, newspaper coverage depending on official sources highlighted the rebels' seizure of the cash reserves amounting to 23,000 pounds held at the

¹¹⁹ “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, August 12, 1921, 1.

¹²⁰ As cited in “Uprising at Iquitos.” *West Coast Leader*, August 13, 1921, 20.

Banco del Perú y Londres in Iquitos,¹²¹ and government press releases copied in the press of the key Brazilian town of Manaus (a sister-city of sorts to Iquitos, as argued by Adrián Lerner¹²²), clearly portrayed this as a mere criminal act: “Captain Cervantes of the Peruvian Army, commanding 100 bandits robbed the *Banco del Perú y Londres* in Iquitos, taking twenty three thousand pounds (...). Afterwards, the horde fled.”¹²³ Describing the rebels as a “horde” (*horda*), naturally served to diminish their standing. Over the course of the week following the arrival of news of the revolt in Lima, it seemed that the government was more concerned about the recovery of the money seized in the bank through cooperation with the countries to which the rebels were presumed to have already fled, than it was about putting down the revolt per se,¹²⁴ suggesting that it is possible that they indeed believed this narrative, and that their responsibility now was to simply apprehend those they presumed to be on the run.

The “bank robber” narrative continued to reverberate long after the initial reports of the revolt arrived in Lima. A little under a month after the news arrived in the capital, Clemente Palma, also a die-hard Leguía loyalist, started firing broadsides against the Iquitos rebellion from his weekly editorial column in the magazine that he headed, *Variedades*. He too dismissed the possibility of the movement having any kind of political significance. He argued that this was a mere “adventure” (*aventura*), and that all attempts to paint it as a political affair were mere justifications for Cervantes to be able to seek asylum abroad when the rebellion surely collapsed, while securing his supposed main objective: being able to abscond to Europe or the United States

¹²¹ “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, August 12, 1921, 1; “Los sucesos de Loreto.” August 13, 1921, 3; “Los sucesos de Loreto.” August 14, 1921, 1.

¹²² Lerner, “Jungle Cities.”

¹²³ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 191.

¹²⁴ “Estados Unidos: Los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, August 16, 1921, 4. “Por Palacio.” August 19, 1921, 1.

with his share of the loot, while abandoning the poor devils (*pobres diablos*) who had followed him, leaving them to fall in the hands of government forces.¹²⁵ In the same vein, a cover cartoon in his magazine featured the Minister of Government, Germán Leguía, conferencing with a high-ranking military officer, whom he tells: “Look, colonel, my plan to capture the agitator Cervantes is quite superb! We go along the Pichis (river) with a division, with another we cut him off on the Balsapuerto side, we box him into this bend of the Amazon and we capture him... in Paris.”¹²⁶ On December 29, 1922, a year and a half after the rebellion began, and a year after it had ended, a Peruvian senator still insisted that Cervantes had rebelled solely in order to steal a large amount of money from the bank.¹²⁷

In any event, the initial government response was that the Iquitos rebellion was nothing to be very concerned about. It announced that no additional troops would be sent to Iquitos for the time being—presumably from Lima—, as the other garrisons in the Amazon region would suffice to put down the rebels.¹²⁸ Despite such statements, rumors circulated according to which troops were already “being sent overland from Lima.”¹²⁹ Hence, the central government clarified that the *Colonizadores del Oriente* #19 regiment was simply redeploying back to its usual quarters in Pachitea, in the upper rainforest of central Peru, where its soldiers would continue to work on railroad construction.¹³⁰ The untroubled response of the central government to the reports of the Iquitos rebellion is perhaps best underscored by the fact that President Leguía continued to

¹²⁵ “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, September 10, 1921.

¹²⁶ “Estrategia.” *Variedades*, September 17, 1921.

¹²⁷ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 216–17.

¹²⁸ “Los sucesos de Loreto.” *El Comercio*, August 12, 1921, 1.

¹²⁹ “Uprising at Iquitos.” *West Coast Leader*, August 13, 1921, 20.

¹³⁰ “Los sucesos de Loreto: falta de noticias – la censura.” *El Comercio*, August 13, 1921, 3.

partake in his usual activities on the day the news arrived in Lima, including a four-hour long ceremonial lunch on board the visiting Italian cruiser *Libia*.¹³¹

As it became more steadily apparent that the Iquitos rebellion was more than a mere bank robbery, the central government still balked at openly labeling it a separatist movement. Instead, through their mouthpieces and partisan editors, it pushed a narrative according to which the movement was motivated by anti-Leguía sentiments of people seeking to restore the prior status quo under the *Civilista* party—something which, as it turned out, was not altogether inaccurate. An intercepted telegram from inveterate opposition politician Augusto Durand (whose newspaper *La Prensa* had been expropriated by the Leguía régime and turned into its mouthpiece, as mentioned above) to Cervantes read as follows: “My congratulations. Cable me regarding situation.”¹³² *La Prensa* published further intercepted cables, one in which Cervantes told Durand “Situation favorable; come,” and the second featured Durand messaging a Cisneros in Panama, saying “Cervantes advises me of adhesion of Tarapoto garrison.”¹³³ At least Manuel Rivera, a Loretano “born settler” (*poblador nato*) and president of the Lima-based *Centro Loretano*, refused to believe these cables were real.¹³⁴ Anyhow, in an atmosphere of limited information, these tidbits of information could fan waves of rumors that would put the population of Lima on edge regarding the stability of the régime that seemed to be under the constant threat of restorationist revolts and coup attempts. It is interesting, however, that despite the potential for ambivalence regarding the public’s opinion on the continuance of the

¹³¹ “Por Palacio.” *El Comercio*, August 13, 1921, 2.

¹³² “The Iquitos uprising.” *West Coast Leader*, August 20, 1921, 2.

¹³³ “The Iquitos situation.” *West Coast Leader*, September 3, 1921, 20.

¹³⁴ “Al margen de los sucesos del oriente.” *El Comercio*, September 25, 1921, 7.

Leguista administration—while Loretano separatism was uniformly rejected by public opinion in Lima—the central government chose to highlight the rebels’ anti-Leguía tendencies. This either speaks to the unmentionability of territorial dismemberment, or perhaps a concern that it might invite more attention on the rumors being propagated by the rebels that it was the Leguía administration that was planning to “cede” territory to Colombia (see below).

Clemente Palma, the editor at *Variedades*, acknowledged the existence of the Durand telegrams and offered a nuanced interpretation of the degree to which the rebellion was or was not directly connected to “*neogodo*” (“neogothic”)—that is, *Civilista*—sympathies. According to him—it is unclear on what sources he based this take on—the rebellion was not *directly* connected to *neogodismo*; the rebels were not *Civilista* loyalists themselves, nor was this coordinated with opposition politicians. The rebellion was instead the *indirect* result of the systematic persecution of people with *Civilista* sympathies by Minister of Government Germán Leguía (President Leguía’s cousin), which meant that those officers who were suspected of such sympathies were sent to remote locations such as Iquitos. Combined with the common practice of unit commanders throughout the country routinely transferring away their worst soldiers to Iquitos, this led to a toxic mix of resentful officers and undisciplined troops that were the perfect conditions for such a revolt. At any rate, he dismissed the possibility that the rebellion could result in a full-fledged *neogodo* counterrevolution, despite the contacts established between the rebels and opposition politicians, for the latter were simply too far away from Iquitos to be able

to arrive in the riverine port city in time to have any effect on the events. Thus, he estimated the rebellion's life expectancy at between one and three months.¹³⁵

Rumors of separatism and mutilation

For all of the government's early protestations downplaying the rebellion to a mere bank robbery, rumors of separatism were still clearly widespread in Lima. As pointed out previously, it is not easy to find them expressed in print, but one can find exceptions, such as in Lieutenant Samuel Torres' book-length defense of the rebellion. Among the grievances he listed that explained the outbreak of the rebellion was the prefect's policy of excluding creole settlers from any public office, using the pretext that Loretanos harbored "separatist, federalist, or regionalist ideas,"¹³⁶ indicating that this authority appointed by the central government believed that there was a grain of truth behind the rumors. The wide circulation of such rumors and that they were found believable by officials from the coast or highland regions of the country reflected the anxieties of the latent threat that colonists presented to the geobody: the fear that their settlers might grow away from them and seek their own path. Furthermore, due to Loreto's contiguity with Peruvian territory (on a map, if not through travel), such separatism was even more distressing than that of other overseas colonies in the same time period. Stuck in a condition of in-betweenness, the colonial territories in the east were cartographically understood as an integral part of the nation without having to resort to the semantic acrobatics of terms such as "overseas metropolitan province." It might have been 14,000 km away in practical terms, but the

¹³⁵ "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, September 10, 1921.

¹³⁶ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 20. His emphasis.

map showed it as just another part of the country. And yet, there was also an understanding, that there is something “different” about the east; in many ways, it was possessed by Peru, *but it was not of it*.

In order to get some idea of the nature of these rumors one must resort to close reading their disavowals and refutations, which naturally point to their existence in sufficient strength to merit disproof. The aforementioned group called *Centro Loretano* that claimed to speak for the interests of Loretano born settlers (*pobladores natos*), study the region’s problems, and offer solutions to them, underscored that one of their main activities was to “carry out an intense labor of information (*propaganda*) in order to counteract the fantastical concept that the public of this side of the Andes [i.e., Lima] has made of the idiosyncrasy of the people from the rainforest (*montañeses*) who feel the noble pride of being natives of a region destined to foment the greatness of the nation.”¹³⁷ From the other tracts signed by Manuel Rivera Iglesias, the organization’s president, it is clear that “natives” of the region he refers to are the settlers, not the indigenous peoples of the region, whom he consistently Others, despite whatever sympathies he may have for them. The colonists may be native, but not indigenous. Among the fantastical concepts that Limeños might have regarding the settlers in the east was the notion that they harbored separatist ideas. Rivera dismissed the possibility of the rebellion being related to federalist ideology—a line of thinking that was perilously adjacent to separatism when advocated from regions such as Loreto, but not in other regions of metropolitan Peru—or to separatism itself:

137 “Declaraciones del ‘Centro Loretano’.” *El Comercio*, December 9, 1921, 2.

We do not think that the Loreto movement, at the present moment, has any connection with the politics of the capital [i.e., anti-Leguía opposition conspiracies], for, in our view, it has solely been the natural result of hardships; *nor would we ever believe that this revolution is federal*, with its concomitant dislocation of the central powers of the republic, nor is it separatist, *as many imagine*, for patriotism in Loreto is far too widespread and rooted in the hearts of all its children for such madness to be consummated.”¹³⁸

“As many imagine” is the key passage here. They speak to a state of public opinion captured by Rivera, an anxiety that is only mentionable in the negative, given the momentousness of its implications. Referencing it in the affirmative would mean invoking the specter of separatism, something that the media seemed uneasy doing in the case of Iquitos, as it would be too believable and, were it true, repression of such a separatist rebellion would pose very real military and political difficulties due to its remoteness and the possibility of foreign intervention in favor of the would-be independent nation. The ghost of Acre, naturally, needed to be kept as far away as possible, hence the unsurprising absence of op-eds openly and publicly calling it separatist, although such rumors were evidently in the mouths of many in the capital city. Dispelling the ghost of Acre required the disavowal of separatism, hence the angle of acknowledging that the rumor circulated, but calling it false.

In another op-ed, Rivera continued to refute the government’s narrative about the rebellion as either a vast revolution against the Leguía régime or mere bank robbery, referencing instead the ambitious package of reforms that they had implemented in Loreto:

138 “Declaraciones del Centro Loretano.” *El Comercio*, August 17, 1921, 2.

The Iquitos movement—*we have reasons to back up our claim*—is not in any way part of a federalist plan, nor does it have a political facet, *as it has been fancifully stated*. (...) The leader of the rebels, according to truthful news, does not behave like any vulgar revolutionary: *it seems* that Captain Cervantes is making efforts to show himself as a reformer, altering the administrative edifice of the department and enacting various measures for the benefit of the circumscription.¹³⁹

Indeed, he agreed with the government that the rebellion has no connections to federalism—that dangerous stepping stone to separatism—but he also deemed fanciful its alleged “political facet”, i.e., its supposed connections to *Civilismo*. Instead he insisted that the rebellion was solely the result of the appointed prefect’s incompetence and mismanagement, which had led the department to ruin, not to any larger political ambitions. Yet, the currency of unconfirmed information once again is highlighted in this passage, as despite the information coming from ‘truthful’ sources, Cervantes still *seems* rather than *is*. But as a true insider, a “born settler,” who understands conditions in Iquitos and who can determine what is believable and what is fanciful, Rivera claimed the ground of plausibility, whereby his deductions should be taken as truths by Limeños. This authority allowed him to present the evidence of Cervantes’ lack of connection with any political party in Peru and of his very responsible behavior as the *de facto* authority in Iquitos to beseech the government to pursue a policy of conciliation with the rebel leader, instead of aggressive measures such as shutting of the port of Iquitos to international trade, as these only ran the risk of making the confrontation worse.

139 “El Centro Loreto y los sucesos de Iquitos.” *El Comercio*, August 23, 1921, 2. Emphasis mine.

As the rebellion continued to expand the territory under its control, however, the *Centro Loretano* had to walk back its earlier claims that the rebellion had no political implications. Rivera insisted that his intimate knowledge of the movement allowed him to state that it indeed lacked any political implications in its beginnings, but that “due to the trend that the events are taking, it can be seen that what was in the beginning a mere protest over the abandonment of the region and the inertia of the authorities, gradually takes on a political color, that undoubtedly will become greater if the government insists in its decision to liquidate the situation by means of violence.”¹⁴⁰ He continued to characterize the seizure of the treasury of the *Banco del Perú y Londres* not as an “irresponsible gesture of banditry, nor a revolutionary quota, but rather of a duly negotiated loan” which was then used to pay public servants and soldiers who had gone unpaid for a long time. Speaking in the name of the “born children of Loreto” (*hijos natos de Loreto*), he continued to argue for a negotiated solution to the rebellion, rather than the military one embodied in the expedition being readied by Senator Pizarro. Instead, after reminding the readers of all the research he and the members of the *Centro Loretano* had published on Loreto, he suggested that the government appoint “a special commissioner that they trust, one who is in good standing in Loreto, who has the necessary training and knowledge to reform, restore, and commence an era of positive growth for Loreto, and thus, for the country.” He insisted on such an appointment in another op-ed,¹⁴¹ perhaps angling for the commission himself.

Rivera’s insistence on justifying the rebels’ seizure of power in Iquitos and of making the case for a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict appears to have led to a backlash against

¹⁴⁰ “Al margen de los sucesos de Oriente.” *El Comercio*, September 5, 1921, 3.

¹⁴¹ “Al margen de los sucesos del oriente.” *El Comercio*, September 25, 1921, 7.

the *Centro Loretano*. In another op-ed, Rivera stated that he had to respond because “mediocre people, prone to intrigues, have assumed we are the tools of political factions.”¹⁴² He clarified that the *Centro Loretano* had no political affiliation, except in the highest sense of seeking the best possible political administration for Loreto. It was in this sense, he explained, that their critiques of government officials must be understood; not as partisan maneuvering, but rather as a quest for the benefit of Loreto, and as a result, of the entire nation. The accusations against the *Centro Loretano* might have not made their way to the written record, but it is not hard to imagine that their essays would have been taken as sympathetic for the rebel cause. More dangerously, given the government’s later insistence that the Iquitos rebellion was part of a wider *Civilista* rebellion attempt, the *Centro Loretano* needed to clarify its position to avoid unwanted scrutiny from the Leguía government. Perhaps this explains the need to describe the current situation as “a terrible political commotion of effects more deplorable than an earthquake.”

It is also clear there was a circulation of not just rumors between the capital and the colony in the rainforest, but also of *rumors of rumors*. After the rebellion was suppressed, in a letter reporting the abuses that government officials engaged in once they entered Iquitos, a resident of the riverine port dismissed the validity of the rumors that had circulated in Lima: “You know well the idiosyncrasy of the Loretano, who’s all apathy and indolence, and would surely take as a joke all that talk about separatism, *which appears to be what they’re attributing the failed movement to in Lima*.”¹⁴³ In a lighter-hearted tone, the letter-writer agreed with Rivera:

¹⁴² “Declaraciones del ‘Centro Loretano’.” *El Comercio*, December 9, 1921, 2.

¹⁴³ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 230. Emphasis mine.

whether it were due to unblemished Peruvian patriotism or more prosaic laziness, Iquiteños were most definitely not thinking about separatism, and only outsiders could even fathom such a fantastical thing.

Speaking for the rebels, Lieutenant Samuel Torres addressed the accusations of separatism as well, reserving a chapter at the end of his book-length defense of the Iquitos rebellion for the issue. While clarifying that having federalist or regionalist ideas were not crimes in any way, he insisted that the rebellion had no such aspirations. He actually expressed distaste for federalism, arguing that it did not suit Peru's needs or conditions, and that if anyone was moving in that direction it was Leguía himself, with his creation of the regional Congresses of the North, Center, and South. As to regionalism, which he defined as love for the region of one's birth within the nation, he stated that the rebels and their supporters were no more regionalist than any other Peruvian who also loves his own province. Only separatism could constitute a crime, but he categorically rejected this label for the rebellion, stating that the rumors that the revolutionaries and the population of Loreto sought to separate the region from Peru constituted "crude, despicable slander" aimed at discrediting them in public opinion. "The Loreto revolutionaries and their people, neither before nor during this revolution, ever had such an unpatriotic idea, and we are certain neither do any of the inhabitants of our eastern region. We are referring to the *separatist campaign* that they say took place."¹⁴⁴

Perhaps the best proof of the dangerous, Ouija-like nature of openly labeling the rebellion as separatist may come from the context in which it was finally referred to as such in the media.

¹⁴⁴ Torres Videla, 237–38.

In an editorial of the Iquiteño newspaper *El Oriente*, which in the wake of the suppression of the rebellion was, like *La Prensa*, also expropriated and turned into a government mouthpiece, the editor referred to the rebellion matter-of-factly as “the revolutionary and separatist movement that broke out in this city on August 5, 1921.” It later went on to say that the movement “translated the preposterous aim that the majority of the inhabitants of Loreto have traditionally yearned for, independence, for they believe themselves sufficiently powerful to build, by themselves, a sovereign and independent entity.”¹⁴⁵ It was only when the rebellion had been completely extinguished that any media could openly label it as separatist. The ghost exorcised, and the supposedly separatist population under military occupation, it could be freely invoked in the context of confidence in a decisive victory. Labeling it as such when it was still a going concern would have given it too much power.

Rumors about Loretano separatism were clearly not restricted to the conjuncture of the Iquitos rebellion of 1921. *Mundial* chose to run a chronicle about the Iquitos federalist rebellion of 1896, significantly doing so after the rebellion of 1921 had completely collapsed, once again suggesting that discussing such topics *during* another rebellion suspected of separatism would have hit too close to home. Showing the role of rumor, the chronicle writer, Edgardo Rebagliati stated: “The news of the revolution, which took fifteen days to arrive, produced in Lima quite a stir and a long-lasting gossip mill.”¹⁴⁶ The immediate denials put forward by Rebagliati of what the rebellion *was not*, give us a notion of what those rumors consisted of. Rebagliati made sure to set Seminario’s movement apart from Cervantes’s rebellion, stating that unlike the latter,

¹⁴⁵ Torres Videla, 239–40.

¹⁴⁶ “La primera revolución de Loreto.” *Mundial*, June 9, 1922.

which supposedly was tainted by a “political character,” the former was “essentially based on principles, as its leaders, with Seminario at their head, made sure to proclaim that they solely wished to establish a federalist regime in the Republic, self-organizing the State of Loreto,” suggesting not only were there rumors about Seminario’s motivations back in 1896, but that they continued to shape an atmosphere of uncertainty about the events of a quarter of a century before.

This is borne out by Seminario’s opening statements in his interview, in which rather than start by characterizing what his revolution *was*, he too made sure to clarify what his revolution *was not*: “My revolution was not (...) a vulgar political revolution. No.” He then went on to briefly state that their main objective was to establish a federal regime in the country. But perhaps the most insistent denial that Seminario put forward dealt with the territorial integrity of the Republic of Peru:

Seminario: It never crossed our minds to segregate the Department of Loreto from the territory of the nation. We only wanted to try, or perhaps more properly to set in motion, the system of the federated states for the county, one that the very same Piérola had extolled in his promises. This is so true that in the Provisional Bylaws we took great care to state: ‘That the State of Loreto is an integral part of the Republic of Peru.’ Furthermore, I never used any other designation rather than that of governor, because I never thought, even for a moment, to call myself president of an absolutely free territory.

Rebagliati: We will not be the ones, as a matter of fact, to believe such an implausible rumor. Having discarded such a supposition that never found widespread currency (*nunca*

tuvo eco), let us go back to the revolution and tell us about how the federal government was organized.¹⁴⁷

In this case, it is clear that Rebagliati doth protest too much. By going out of his way to say that the rumor was implausible and that it never found widespread currency, he actually revealed the reverse. Rumors that never gained traction do not need denial, they do not even need to be addressed. The fact that they devote a significant part of the interview to address the motivations of the 1896 revolution and whether or not it was separatist instead suggests that such rumors not only *were* widespread (both in the time of the events and even several years later), but that the issue of Loretano separatism continued to be an issue with current relevance. Such rumors of separatism were clearly of sufficient importance to start off the interview by trying to put them to rest. Rebagliati's agreement about their implausibility and lack of popularity was rather an act of deference for his interviewee rather than a statement of fact.

Whether Manuel Rivera's, Samuel Torres's, or Ricardo Seminario's righteous rebukes of rumors of Loretano separatism reflected the actual feelings of the colonists in the region is immaterial for our purposes. They still serve as evidence that there was a strong current of opinion, a metropolitan anxiety over the perils of the colonizing effort in the Amazon rainforest, according to which their own settlers could turn away from the mother country and set up an independent polity, and absconding with "metropolitan" land.

Rumors of mutilation 'from above'

¹⁴⁷ "La primera revolución de Loreto." *Mundial*, June 9, 1922.

These metropolitan anxieties about colonist threats to the geobody lie in contrast with settler colonial anxieties over metropolitan dealings regarding the colonized territories. The rebels did not only disavow rumors that they were threatening the country's territorial integrity, they turned them against the capital instead: the true threat to Peru's geobody came not from them, but rather from a corrupt President who conspired with foreign nations to give away the country's lands for personal gain. All the public proclamations made by the rebels underscored this point, alongside complaints about the régime's authoritarianism and the neglect it had shown towards the region in the midst of its economic crisis and the corruption and incompetence of the local officials appointed by the central government. In this sense we can understand the quotation that opened this chapter; in that first proclamation addressed to the people of Iquitos, Cervantes accused Leguía of orchestrating a repetition of what happened to Acre, "Let them first pass over our corpses and stain their footprints with the blood shed in defense of our beloved Patria."¹⁴⁸ The way his denunciation and vow were worded, he called for a defense of the integrity of the *national* geobody, not specifically that of Loreto in particular. This was not a separatist grievance about the capital possibly giving away part of the envisioned geobody of their future independent polity. In this sense we can see the kind of anxieties and suspicions that were believed to gain traction among the populace. Indeed, contrary to the rumors that would eventually circulate in Lima, the rebels did not try to claim any kind of separatism, but rather flew the flag of homogenous sovereignty over all the indigenous territory claimed by the Republic of Peru. When railing against the rumored sale of the Putumayo region,

¹⁴⁸ "Iquitos mutiny." *West Coast Leader*, September 10, 1921, 6.

they mobilized the geobody of the nation-state, not any notions of a right to hinterland on the part of Iquitos in particular. To what degree these protestations were solely prompted by rumors of Leguía's impending "dismemberment" of the national geobody, and to what degree they were preemptively trying to disavow the rumors of separatism that they knew would circulate in Lima is unclear in the written record. However, considering that, as mentioned above, the earlier federalist rebellion of 1896 had also been rumored of harboring separatist intentions, it is very likely that the leaders of the rebellion kept that in mind throughout their uprising.

Another, longer proclamation came two days later, in which the newly-established ruling junta once again aired their grievances against the central government, accusing the prefect of negligence and corruption, all of which he had done with the approval of the central government. Expanding on their positioning themselves as the true patriots—as opposed to Leguía's *vendepatria* (country-seller) régime—they accused the prefect of failing to show any patriotic spirit during the recent centennial celebrations, having failed to attend any of the celebrations. The prefect was, in fact, an accomplice to a crime against Peru's geobody, as "he allows and has given favorable reports for a fantastic transaction, which they hope to carry out, and which involves the sale of our rich region of Putumayo, *this being the reason for which he tries to get rid of all the good elements of this city.*"¹⁴⁹ Thus, the prefect's obnoxious policies of failing to pay salaries to public servants and soldiers, of pitting the police—loyal to him—against the patriotic soldiers of the republic, and letting the wealthy merchants run amuck by raising prices to the point of making Iquitos unlivable, were portrayed as no mere accident of personal vices, but

149 "El movimiento de Iquitos." *El Comercio*, September 10, 1921, 1. Emphasis mine.

rather a part of a larger, Leguía-approved conspiracy against the Peruvian geobody. Only the truly patriotic garrison embodied the spirit of defense against mutilation coming “from above.”

A later proclamation from September continued to expound on the topic of the threat that the Leguía régime represented for the geobody of the nation, and relating it to the other unresolved trauma of territorial mutilation that Peruvians continue to experience, the loss of the southern territories of Tarapacá, Arica, and Tacna to Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883)

Seeking to silence the voice of the people and to reign without any checks and to dilapidate and embezzle the wealth of the Nation, [Leguía] has exploited national patriotism, with the promise of ransoming our captive provinces [Tacna and Arica] (...) while trying to sell one of the richest regions of the National Territory: the Peruvian Putumayo, which the Régime, in its insatiable appetite for gold, has offered to Colombia, through the payment of a compensation of *seven million soles!*”¹⁵⁰

The rebels maintained that these seven million soles would not even enter the national treasury, but would rather go directly into the pockets of Leguía and his cronies, proof of their lack of patriotism and open corruption. Once again, the loss of Putumayo is not understood solely as an affront to the geobody of Loreto—which would be the angle of attack of a more separatist, settler colonial movement—but rather to that of the nation as a whole. It is, after all, the *Peruvian* Putumayo, part of the *National* Territory.

With the benefit of more space to expound his ideas, in his book-length manifesto in defense of the Cervantes rebellion, Lieutenant Samuel Torres extended Leguía’s propensity to

¹⁵⁰ Torres Videla, *La revolución de Iquitos*, 194. Emphasis in the original.

“give away” Peruvian territory to his first administration (1908-1912). He evoked the trope of Peru’s constant loss of territory—one that continues to hold much water among Peruvian nationalists—by referencing a number of cessions made during those years, with the one along the Caquetá River being particularly repugnant, as it was territory that had been successfully defended militarily by his soldier comrades in the recent conflict of La Pedrera (1910), which meant a double humiliation:

he celebrated with the Republic of the United States of Brazil a Border Treaty through which thousands of square kilometers of the country were cut off from the country between the Juruá and Purús Rivers; he allowed the occupation of the right bank of the Caquetá River, over the bodies of the soldiers of the Fatherland, who traveled to the remote eastern regions to dislodge the Colombian invader; and signed with the Republic of Bolivia a Treaty that was equally onerous to Peru’s interests in the region of the Acre and Madre de Dios Rivers.¹⁵¹

Of course, Torres’s understanding of these territorial losses relied on a maximalist interpretation of Peru’s aspirations to indigenous territory in the Amazon basin, and shows the ambiguous nature of Tordesillaing indigenous lands in an area targeted for settler colonialism by creole nation-states. Of the three “losses,” only one involved any kind of military action (the one with Colombia), while the rest were more oriented towards simply figuring out exactly where creole colonists would draw the lines within indigenous territories. Thus we can see the unsettledness of these lands: such vast “cessions” of actually national territory would usually not take place

¹⁵¹ Torres Videla, 3.

without war—or at least a *very* credible threat of one. None of the creole claimants could wage full-scale war in these regions, to which the extremely small numbers of troops involved in La Pedrera can bear witness to. The way these indigenous spaces were jockeyed about for resembled more the scramble for Africa than the disputes over Alsace-Lorraine or Tacna-Arica. And yet, while territory “overseas” could be understood to be negotiable, the cartographically contiguous nature of the Amazon region led to it being understood as “national” territory whose loss would sting as much as Tarapacá. At any rate, the presumption of the rebels was that if Leguía had committed such crimes against Peru’s geobody in a time when he governed at least somewhat democratically, much worse could be expected on his part now that he was for all practical purposes an autocrat with no checks and balances. He summed it up later with a comment that under Leguía “the cession of the river Putumayo region [to Colombia] is almost a done deal...”¹⁵² As we will see in Chapter 4, barely a few months after the Cervantes rebellion collapsed, the Leguía régime signed a secret treaty doing just that.

Conclusions

This chapter has revolved around the claim that the study of rumors of imminent mutilation of the national geobodies can give us insight into the nuances of territorial anxieties both by inhabitants of the capital and by those colonizing the Amazon basin. The rumors that circulated in the context of the Iquitos rebellion of 1921—both in the Amazonian colonies and in the capital—show that it was always the “Other” that was the threat to the nation’s geobody.

¹⁵² Torres Videla, 51.

That is, commentators in Lima accused the colonists of being separatist, while the colonists accused the capital of being willing to give away land for the financial gain of a few politicians. However, they reflected a common understanding of the fragility of the colonizing endeavor in the Amazonian basin. The fact that the central government never effectively seized on the widely-circulating rumors of separatism on the part of the Iquitos rebels—at least during the hostilities—despite the presumably unanimous unpopularity of “territorial loss” among metropolitan Peruvians, shows how dangerous such allegations could be. Instead, they chose to emphasize the rebels’ sentiments against the Leguía régime, a régime whose support was certainly less widespread than that for the integrity of the country’s geobody. The calculus going into this decision showcases the risks inherent to talking about separatism, even when one’s assumed anti-separatist position would garner wider support. Once invoked, the ghost of Acre might not be easily exorcised. The rebels, on the other hand, had little to lose and much to gain by accusing Leguía of being willing to “cede” the Putumayo to Colombia, and thus continued to play up that angle. Eventually they would be proven right later in the 1920s.

In general, using rumors as a yardstick to understand what was considered plausible during important events allows us to gain insight into what the anxieties of this colonizing society were, and see how the Amazonian regions were understood as simultaneously colonial and fully national. This ambivalence would continue to have a longstanding effect on the way the entire endeavor and would color the ways that the 1927 Salomón-Lozano border treaty with Colombia would be understood in Peru, particularly after the fall of the Leguía government. I will continue this focus on rumors and speculation in chapter 2, where I discuss those that emerged in the context of a cycle of Moro revolts in the province of Lanao, in the southern island of

Mindanao. While in this particular historical conjuncture the shadow of American empire did not yet take shape in Peruvian concerns about the geobody, as the rumors that circulated concerned two groups of Peruvians—the President and his cronies on one hand, and colonists in Iquitos on the other—accusing each other of being the threat to the geobody, in the Philippines these rumors would center on an external (yet locally-based) agent: the American governor-general. In that case, American empire would seek to make use of the existing cleavage to carve out territory for itself, thus dismembering the geobody. Whatever the source of the threat to the geobody, the use of rumors as historical source allows us to take the pulse of what threats were considered believable in this time period.

Chapter 2

Embodied rumors of amputation: dotting the lines during the Moro unrest of 1923-1925

During the 1920s, outbreaks of unrest in the spaces under constant colonial contestation in the Philippines—i.e., the southern islands of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago—triggered Christian Filipino anxieties over the integrity of the national geobody, and showcased the tensions and cleavages that existed regarding the historical trajectories of the Christian and Muslim communities in the country. Unlike the case studied in Peru, where the rebellion featured colonists and soldiers who identified with the core coastal and highland State, and the rebellion took place within the field of national politics, the bouts of unrest in the province of Lanao in Mindanao came in the form of a series of local, more chronic, indigenous movements, and were analyzed and understood within the framework of the Otherness of the southern Muslims. Conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines, of course, was not a new phenomenon, as tensions between the Muslim south and the rest of the archipelago had been a recurrent feature over centuries of Western colonialism in the region.¹⁵³ In this case, anxieties revolved around the role played by General Leonard Wood, who, during his participation in the

¹⁵³ Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 2d ed. (Quezon City: Published for the Asian Center by the University of the Philippines Press, 1973). James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: University Press, 1981). Miguel Anselmo Bernad, *The Great Island: Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao*, Mindanao Studies Series (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004), 63–105. James R. Arnold, *The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902-1913*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2011). Francisco J. Lara, *Insurgents, Clans, and States: Political Legitimacy and Resurgent Conflict in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines*, Mindanao Studies (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013). Oliver Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives: Americans, Moros, and the Colonial World*, United States in the World (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2020), 94–120.

Wood-Forbes Mission, signaled his sympathies for the idea of separating the historically Muslim regions from the rest of the Philippines, an inclination that became clearer over the course of his tenure as Governor General. A careful reading of the printed page shows that rumors swirled among Christian Filipinos, according to which the unrest was the direct result of incitation on the part of Wood and/or his agents and allies—speculations that eventually became open accusations.

In order to accomplish the geosurgical objective of amputating part of the Philippine geobody, Wood put forward a historicist argument that claimed that enmity between Christians and Muslims was not only a longstanding issue in Philippine history, but also basically an intrinsic, unresolvable part of the relations between both communities. In his reasoning, given the absence of any way to reconcile both communities, the wisest path forward would be to split them into separate colonies, with the United States possibly retaining Mindanao permanently while the Christian Philippines could be envisioned as gaining independence at a (much) later date. Christian Filipino commentators and politicians unanimously pushed back against this narrative, explaining away the earlier history of conflict between both communities, highlighting instances of Christian-Muslim cooperation, and blaming current conflicts on the Governor General's manipulations. And yet, this united front notwithstanding, cracks appeared in the front presented by the Christians. On occasion, Christian Filipinos argued that the opinions of Muslims were irrelevant; other times, tropes of irrational Moro violence and barbarism continued to come up. It is in the falsification of history and current events that one can discern the ways in which anxieties and speculation shaped the debate around the future of Mindanao and the Philippine geobody in this conjuncture.

As in chapter 1, I follow White in the idea that rumors are a valuable historical source that give us the parameters of what was considered believable in a given conjuncture, which in turn grants us insight into the anxieties and fears of a given period.¹⁵⁴ What is particularly fascinating when studying these rumors in comparison with those that emerged in Peru around the same time period is their heuristics. Unlike the Peruvian case, where one must piece together the rumors of territorial mutilation from their disavowals, Philippine rumors and accusations against the alleged designs of their chief executive appeared much more clearly in the media—oftentimes explicitly. This shows a curious case of an inversion of expectations. First, it is in the sovereign republic, Peru, which was at least in principle in control of its own territorial destiny and free to uphold it with its professional instruments of violence (i.e., its army and navy), where rumors of territorial mutilation were such a touchy, anxiety-inducing topic that its citizens could not address them out loud, even when the agents of such mutilation were believed to be separatists. It was in the colonial possession, the Philippines, which was subjected to the whims of its colonizer and lacking in control over its institutional means of violence, where colonial subjects freely screamed bloody murder in the press over the prospect of territorial dismemberment by their American governor. Furthermore, in the supposedly democratic republic, openly accusing the president of conspiring to dismember the country was such a transgression that it could only be voiced by outright rebels—criticism of the régime was tantamount to asking for a government takeover of one’s newspaper—while in the colony similar accusations against the governor general were made brazenly in the open by colonial subjects in

¹⁵⁴ White, *Speaking with Vampires*.

the colonial capital. Indeed, the comparative study of these two cases blurs the lines of what the experience of being a “free citizen” and a “colonial subject” in the 1920s could be.

Separating Mindanao from The Philippines: from unconquered threat to civilizational laboratory

Mindanao and Sulu had a long history of being in a state of constant colonial contestation. Islam had arrived in the late 14th century and had taken enough of a hold in the southern reaches of the archipelago that the many Spanish attempts to conquer its lands and convert its people to Christianity failed.¹⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, through the policy of “civilizing” and disarming the lowland peoples of the northern island of Luzon and the central islands of the Visayas, who had previously participated equally in the economy of raiding, trading, and feasting,¹⁵⁶ the Spanish actually exposed their subjects to seaborne raiding and enslavement by the sultans and datus of the southern archipelago.¹⁵⁷ Even in the late Spanish colonial period, when their use of steam-powered gunboats finally gave them an edge over the fast *vintas* used by the Moros, Spanish military penetrations of Mindanao were still tentative at best, with their effective control often limited to the forts that they built and their immediate vicinity.¹⁵⁸ Christian migrations to the

¹⁵⁵ Pascale Girard, “La Guerra En Los Primeros Tiempos de La Colonización de Filipinas (Siglos XVI y XVII),” in *Extremo Occidente y Extremo Oriente : Herencias Asiáticas En La América Hispánica*, ed. Axel Gasquet and Georges Lomné (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2018), 33–47. Bernad, *The Great Island*, 47–167.

¹⁵⁶ William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994). Laura Lee Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting: The Political Economy of Philippine Chiefdoms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999).

¹⁵⁷ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*, 149–251.

¹⁵⁸ Ileto, *Magindanao, 1860-1888*.

south were always under the threat of “unpredictable” Moro violence in the form of *juramentados* or outright warfare.¹⁵⁹

Thus, as suggested by Abinales, it may be more useful to think of Mindanao polities such as the sultanate of Maguindanao as part of a greater Southeast Asian cosmopolitan maritime network rather than as a remote, yet constituent part of the Spanish Philippines.¹⁶⁰ And as a mostly unconquered, uncolonized region of Southeast Asia, it was in a constant state of dealing with the advances and entreaties of the Spanish from Luzon and Visayas, the Dutch from the East Indies, and the British from Malaya and North Borneo. Indeed, a place under constant colonial contestation. Thus, Muslim resistance to Spanish colonialism did not follow the same logic of *ilustrado* desires for recognition as full-fledged Spanish citizens, revolutionary katipunero desires for *kalayaan*, or élite desires to shape an oligarchic republic based out of Malolos.¹⁶¹ As a matter of fact, when representatives of the Malolos Republic tried to set up a local branch in Cotabato, local Datus Piang and Ali crushed them.¹⁶² For the most part, until at least the early days of American colonization of the Philippines, Moros did not understand themselves as participating of the same historical trajectory as the Christians of Luzon and the Visayas. As attributed to the sultan of Sulu in 1904: “I am not part of the Philippines nor are my people Filipinos.”¹⁶³

159 Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 96–102. Michael Michael C. Hawkins, *Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines Muslim South* (DeKalb, IL: NIU Press, 2013), 117–19.

160 P. N. Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, Mindanao Studies Series (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2010), 41–47.

161 John N Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement 1850-1903* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998); John N Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895: The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, the Making of the Revolution* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002).

162 Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, 48.

163 Bayona, “Inherited Destinies,” 184.

This distance was mirrored by Christians as well. Rather than seeing Moros as their fellow Filipinos experiencing the same colonial subjugation, Christian Filipinos systematically Othered them, considering them instead as a “primitive race” to be civilized. This attitude came into sharp focus in the major Expositions in which Moros (among other Others) were displayed side-by-side with Christian Filipinos for the delight and edification of spectators of both of their imperial masters, Spain and the United States—and to the chagrin of Christian Filipinos. Aguilar has shown that Christian Filipino *ilustrados* residing in Europe had an ambivalent attitude towards the “Igorots” and Moros who were showcased in the Madrid Exposition of 1887. Sometimes they disavowed them as non-Filipinos who were intentionally being weaponized by the organizers to make “real” Filipinos look backward and primitive in the eyes of the public; at other moments they might instead refer to them as their ‘brothers’ who were also faced Spanish discrimination in their own country. Thus, he suggests that “in the end the territory of Filipinas was indeterminate and beyond mapping. With the disjuncture between *the expanse of an imagined homeland and the excluded zones occupied by internal Others, the nation’s geo-body had no solidity.*”¹⁶⁴ Some *ilustrados* even found more in common with Guamanians than with the inhabitants of their supposed geobody. The trend of Othering Moros continued under the United States, as Christian Filipinos once again complained about being represented by “backward and non-progressive races” such as Moros, Negritos, and Igorrotes during the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 in St. Louis.¹⁶⁵ In 1905, a Tagalog lawyer named Vicente Ilustre openly spoke

164 Filomeno V. Aguilar, “Tracing Origins: Ilustrado Nationalism and the Racial Science of Migration Waves,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 3 (2005): 628. My emphasis.

165 Michael C Hawkins, *Semi-Civilized: The Moro Village at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition*, NIU Southeast Asian Series (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), 23–24.

about using the future army and navy of the soon-to-be established republic of the Philippines to forcibly incorporate the Moros and their lands into the new state.¹⁶⁶

At any rate, Christian Filipinos based in Luzon and the Visayas did not have abundant opportunities to act on their prejudices (be they benevolent or aggressive) towards the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu during the earlier years of American colonial rule. As shown by scholars such as Peter Gowing or Patricio Abinales, these spaces and peoples were ruled as a *de facto* separate colony from the Philippines by the United States military until 1914, as the Moro Province. This system of separation that Abinales refers to as a “regime within a regime” was characterized by the conviction by United States military officers that the southern reaches of the archipelago constituted truly different entity than the north, and that Christian Filipinos had no business interfering in the area. Some even voiced the idea that the Moro Province should be split off from the Philippines and governed as a completely separate colony. This was followed by its transfer to civilian rule supervised from Manila in the shape of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu, which was characterized by the rapid Filipinization and de-Americanization of its administration and efforts to involve Muslim Filipinos with the political system being implemented. This lasted until 1920, when it was abolished and “special” status was reserved for Cotabato, Lanao, Sulu, and Zamboanga.¹⁶⁷ Its “reunification” with Luzon and Visayas was thus only a very recent event when the processes taking place in this chapter took place and could be understood as a territorial manifestation of the policy of “Filipinization.” Instituted under the governorship-

¹⁶⁶ Bayona, “Inherited Destinies,” 187.

¹⁶⁷ Peter G. Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920* (Quezon City : Detroit, Mich.: New Day Publishers ; Distributed by Cellar Book Shop, 1983). P. N. Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 18–40.

general of Francis Harrison, who had been appointed by the Democratic government of Woodrow Wilson, this policy sought to reduce the number of Americans serving in the colonial bureaucracy, who were replaced with Filipinos. Thus, not only were Christian Filipinos taking the reins of the administration of “their own” lands and peoples, the transfer of Mindanao and Sulu back under the control of Manila, meant that they were also extending their reach to lands and peoples over whom they had previously never held authority. This, of course, was not understood as an “expansion” of the Philippines, but it rather followed the logic of an “inherited destiny.”¹⁶⁸ That is, that this was the acknowledgment of a territorial shape (a geobody) the Philippines had always “had” (despite the minor technicality of it never having been effectively ruled from Manila) inasmuch as it had been claimed as such by their colonial predecessor, Spain.

By 1920, with Filipinization in full swing and with Mindanao under Christian Filipino control, overt threats of violence or abject othering of Moros had become more muted, but had not altogether vanished. The language of brotherhood between Christian and Muslim Filipinos had become the staple of commentary on Mindanao and its population. Control over Mindanao offered Christian Filipinos not only the promise of valuable untapped natural resources to commodify, and vast lands to populate with Christian Filipino colonists (it could potentially serve as a safety valve to growing land hunger in Luzon and Visayas), but also the prospect of joining the *mission civilizatrice* race alongside other colonial powers. As shown by Tamara Loos, Siam leveraged its efforts in the Malay sultanate of Patani in its far south to showcase how they were bringing modernity to a “backward” people. This allowed them to try to position themselves

168 Bayona, “Inherited Destinies.”

among the “civilizing” peoples of the world, rather than among those that needed to be civilized, and thusly buttressing their continued political independence in the midst of imperial pressures.¹⁶⁹ Having their own “primitive” or “semi-civilized” peoples to “benevolently assimilate” (rather than them being used to portray Filipinos in general as “backward”) could potentially be used to strengthen the Christian Filipino campaign for independence. The significant effort that Christian Filipino administrators put into trying to build roads and implement a public education system in the Department of Mindanao and Sulu can speak to this mindset.¹⁷⁰ As an added bonus, they would be able to reverse the hierarchy that had been put forward by some American officials, who considered that the Moros’ very ruggedness and fierceness made them more worthy depositories of imperial modernity than the softer, more indolent Christian (Catholic) Filipinos were.¹⁷¹ All of these grand plans came under threat when the Republican candidate, Warren G. Harding, won the presidency in the United States and appointed General Leonard Wood to inspect conditions in the islands, with a mandate to put an end to what seemed to be the imminent independence of their colony in Asia.

The geosurgeon cometh: Wood and the Wood-Forbes Mission

It is perhaps fitting that the feared geosurgeon of the 1920s who would flirt with the idea of amputating Mindanao and Sulu from the Philippine geobody came in the form of an actual surgeon. General Leonard Wood began his career in the United States military as a contract

169 Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 72–99.

170 Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 30–40.

171 Hawkins, *Making Moros*, 26–53.

surgeon in the Indian Wars who was able to take advantage of his wife's political connections to make friends in high places, such as Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley. He commanded the well-known 'Rough Riders' Regiment in the Spanish-American War, after which he was appointed Governor of Cuba. In 1902 he was transferred to the Philippines, as governor of Moro Province until 1906, and then as commander of the Philippine Division until 1908. After slightly more than a decade of being passed by for the presidential nomination and command of US forces in World War I, he was tapped to return to the Philippines by the recently elected President Harding.¹⁷² Omar Dphrepaulezz has studied Leonard Wood's career in the southern Philippines within the framework of an emerging conception of white masculinity, which required physical subjugation of "savage" or "inferior" races such as the Native North Americans and Moros.¹⁷³ With non-whites seen as children within this world view, and willingness to subordinate themselves to the commands of a virile white man, it is not implausible that this impulse carried over to his second stint in the Philippines. His tenure as governor-general was characterized by constant friction with the Christian Filipino political élite, whom he constantly tried to "put in their place," so to speak.¹⁷⁴ If his predecessor's term as governor-general was analogous to a late Habsburg period in which power was (in this case, intentionally) devolved to the local colonial élites, Wood would constitute a very brief Bourbon reformer who attempted his own "second conquest" of the Philippines.

172 Jack McCallum, "Wood, Leonard," in *The Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. Spencer Tucker (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2009).

173 Omar Dphrepaulezz, "Genesis or Genocide? Leonard Wood, Theodore Roosevelt and the White Man's Empire in the Southern Philippines," *Theory in Action* 9, no. 4 (2016): 65–89.

174 Patricio N Abinales and Donna J Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2017), 144–47.

The context of Wood's return to the Philippines was that of the election of a Republican president to the White House. Warren Harding disagreed with the laws and policies regarding the Philippines that had been set in motion during his predecessor's tenure, such as the Jones Law of 1916, that promised independence to the Philippines once a "stable government" were in place, and the policy of "Filipinization" implemented by his appointee in the Philippines, Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison. Having no intention of granting the Philippines independence on the basis of the provisions of the 1916 Jones Law, he convinced Leonard Wood to travel to the Philippines as co-head of an investigative committee tasked with concluding that the colony was indeed not ready for independence. This was something with which Wood did not disagree.¹⁷⁵ Over the course of his tenure in the Philippines, Wood would entangle the issue of Philippine independence with that of the integrity of its geobody, trying to box the Filipino political leadership into an either/or scenario. They *might* be able to get independence, but at the cost of losing Mindanao, or they could preserve their geobody but remain a colony for an indefinite period of time. Regarding Mindanao, Wood embodied what Abinales has described as the "restorationist challenge."¹⁷⁶

Unease about Wood's intentions emerged even before he arrived in the Philippines to co-head the Wood-Forbes Mission. An essay from April 3, 1921 (just a few weeks before his arrival) by one G. R. Peña fretted about the reported existence of an American organization dedicated to the idea of indefinite retention of the Philippines, which included Wood and Pershing among its members. Should the independence of colony appear inevitable, the organization's aim was to

175 Jack Edward McCallum, *Leonard Wood: Rough Rider, Surgeon, Architect of American Imperialism* (New York: University Press, 2006), 286–90.

176 Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 40.

retain part of the archipelago for naval and coaling stations, with a special focus placed on Mindanao and Sulu. A member of the organization, one L. C. Spencer, stated that she was in favor of Philippine independence, provided Mindanao and Sulu were retained by the United States. She based this logic on the right of self-determination propounded in the recent peace conferences that put an end to World War I, whereby the Moro peoples of Mindanao and Sulu should be free to pursue a path separate from the rest of the Philippines. Of course, they would need to be under the guidance of American civilizers for at least one generation, so that they would “understand what is meant by civilization.”¹⁷⁷ Whatever the reality of the existence of this shadowy society or Wood’s membership in it, it is clear that there was an awareness of a dotted line along which amputation or dismemberment could take place, one that could be justified precisely by self-determination, an idea with widespread currency at the time.

As Wood toured the southern reaches of the archipelago, he was indeed presented with testimonies that not only confirmed the existence of the dotted line, but also seemed to demand amputation. During his visit to Davao, a number of Moro Datus claiming to speak for their people expressed their desire to remain under American rule indefinitely, as they feared that the Christians would abuse their power if left to their own devices. “They want that the Moro flag be flown instead of the Philippine flag,” the report added.¹⁷⁸ In other parts of Moro territory, the Maranao Moros told Wood that they wished the Americans would remain in the islands.¹⁷⁹ In Jolo, a Moro named Arolas gave a speech in favor of a territorial kind of government for Sulu and

¹⁷⁷ G. R. Peña, “General Wood and Philippine independence.” *Cebu Freeman*, April 3, 1921, 10.

¹⁷⁸ “Moros fear independence because of Christian Filipinos”, “Mga Moros sa Dabaw dili buot sa kaugalian.” *Cebu Freeman*, August 13, 1921, 1.

¹⁷⁹ “Zamboanga rinde cordial recibimiento a su ex-gobernador.” *El Comercio*, August 17, 1921, 1.

an American governor—implying a separation from the rest of the Philippines—a sentiment supported by a sign displayed by other Moros that stated “We wish to become American territory. No independence. We want an American Governor in this province.”¹⁸⁰ Abinales has suggested that the return of the bellicose Leonard Wood signaled a weakening of Christian Filipino authority in Manila, which incentivized Muslim leaders to “desert” to his side and try to regain some autonomy, despite Christian Filipino efforts to integrate them into State administration under Filipinization.¹⁸¹ Thus, these quick manifestations for a return of American authority to Mindanao can be read in this sense, with savvy Moros who were able to quickly identify what the new Governor-General wished to hear and what he stood for, and trying to use it to their advantage.

Even when dealing with the topic on which Wood put his foot down, mandatory schooling, he signaled the cleavage he was determined to exploit. Public schooling had long a matter of contention for Moro leaders, whose belief that it aimed to eradicate Islam had even led to violence recently and would continue to do so over the course of the 1920s.¹⁸² When Moro leaders complained about mandatory school attendance to the Wood-Forbes Mission, the future Governor-General told them

Don’t be afraid of the schools; they are not going to interfere with your religion. But we want the Moros to be educated *so that they can defend themselves against those robbing them of their rights*. We want you to be educated so that you can hold all the positions in your own country. *You are inferior in civilization to the Filipinos* but little by little you will

¹⁸⁰ “Sulú pide un gobierno territorial y un gobernador americano.” *El Comercio*, August 20, 1921, 1; “How Sulu received Wood-Forbes commission.” *Philippines Free Press*, September 3, 1921, 4-5.

¹⁸¹ Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 42.

¹⁸² Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, 63; Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 110–12.

take the lead. (...) Now we want you to be as well educated as the Filipinos and as well educated as the Americans.¹⁸³

In context, the only ones who could in this context be plausibly robbing Moros of their rights were the Christian Filipinos, with whom Wood pitted the Moros in an adversarial relationship. Even his use of “Filipinos” with no qualifiers (such as “Christian Filipinos”) suggested to his audience that they were not, in fact, Filipinos; instead, they could perhaps aspire to some separate (yet still colonial) polity in which they could hold all the positions of authority—except the highest ones, it can safely be assumed. Despite defending schools as a mechanism for Moros to take back power from (Christian) Filipinos, he also managed to subtly use the Moro grievances against them to point out the disadvantages that a united colony presented. “It is impossible to make two sets of laws for the citizens in the same country,” he told the Maranao Moros of Lanao, and repeated the same sentiment in Sulu, two regions where unrest would be strongest in the ensuing years.¹⁸⁴ Moros would not get a separate schooling regime so long as they remained part of the Philippines. Savvy listeners in Mindanao and readers in Manila could not have missed what Wood was signaling: if Moros wanted an entirely different education system, they should better support the separation of the archipelago into two separate colonies.

When certain Moros expressed their opposition to independence, the main reason they brought up was their reluctance to be ruled by Christian Filipinos, which meant that their inclinations mapped out neatly onto Wood’s. That is, indefinite retention of the entire Philippines was their first choice—perhaps because it was the more realistic possibility rather than the most

183 “How Sulu received Wood-Forbes commission.” *Philippines Free Press*, September 3, 1921, 4-5. My emphasis.

184 “Sulú pide un gobierno territorial y un gobernador americano.” *El Comercio*, August 20, 1921, 1. “Zamboanga rinde cordial recibimiento a su ex-gobernador.” *El Comercio*, August 17, 1921, 1.

desirable one (an independent Muslim polity?)—as it would allow them to continue to count on some mediation by an “impartial” imperial master in their relations with Christian Filipinos. Separation from the Philippines was a fall back in case the Christian-majority regions were to gain independence. Although this implied continued colonial rule by the Americans, these Moros understood that a faraway Metropole as less of a direct threat to their lifestyles than the adjacent Christian Filipinos, who were already settling in the south in increasing numbers.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, those Moros those who saw coexistence with Christian Filipinos favorably tended to support the idea of a united, independent Philippines. The idea of two separate independences, one for Christians and another for Muslims, had no presence in the media during this period.

As much as Wood might have hoped for uniform Moro opposition to independence, however, their positions in this respect were varied and difficult to pin down. In one instance, when talking about the aforementioned speech by Arolas (who backtracked on the anti-independence sentiments when confronted), Representative Palma Gil of Davao complained that “these kinds of Moros, who fortunately are not representative of the Moro region as a whole, do not give their opinions openly and frankly.”¹⁸⁶ Illustrating the difficulty of determining the “true” position of Moro datu—if there were such a thing—in 1931 Director Ludovico Hidrosollo of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes reported that he attended a meeting wherein a group of Moro leaders told a number of Americans that they rejected Christian Filipino rule and that they wanted continued American presence, one of them pulled him away to tell him “Well, Director, don’t mind what we said in our speeches. They are for American consumption. The real thing is

185 Samuel K. Tan, *The Muslim South and Beyond* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2010), 41–42.

186 “Los mahometanos de Dávao no son anti-independentistas.” *El Comercio*, October 11, 1921, 2.

that we are brothers. Christian Filipinos and Moros are of the same blood and race. So don't believe what I told them."¹⁸⁷ Eusebio Reyes, a correspondent for *El Comercio*, highlighted that the Sultan of Sulu and Moro Senator Hadji Butu both restated their disagreement with the aforementioned separatist speech, thus making it clear that opposition to independence was not uniform.¹⁸⁸ Another reporter remarked that he had spoken to all sorts of Filipinos, among whom he named Moros, Mohammedans, and "pagans," (this being one of the rare references to the desires of the Lumad populations of Mindanao) and claimed that none were against independence.¹⁸⁹ The *Philippines Free Press* reported that in Lanao, six Sultans and twenty-one Datus of the region wrote a letter to Senator Guingona (a Christian Filipino who represented the Moro province) stating that they too supported independence. Nevertheless, even these protestations of unity with Christian Filipinos revealed a darker side, for they also denied that those who rejected the Filipino flag were receiving death threats.¹⁹⁰ The need to make such a denial suggests that there not only was a constituency of Moros who preferred continued American rule (either of the entire Philippines or just Mindanao), but that it was believable that they could be targeted for their position on the matter.

The Wood-Forbes report eventually hit the newsstands of Manila in November of 1921, causing quite a stir. It generally concluded that, despite their many positive qualities and great advancement since 1899, the Filipino people were not yet ready for independence. Wood and Forbes recommended continuation of United States colonialism in the archipelago, and a rollback

¹⁸⁷ Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 145.

¹⁸⁸ Eusebio Reyes, "El sultán y Hadji Butu no están conformes con la idea de Arolas." *El Comercio*, August 21, 1921, 1.

¹⁸⁹ "Natives eager for independence." *Cebu Freeman*, September 10, 1921, 6.

¹⁹⁰ "The news of the week." *Philippines Free Press*, September 17, 1921, 9.

of the policy of Filipinization. Regarding the possibility of partitioning the country, the Wood-Forbes report flattened the testimonies given to them by different groups of Moros, summarizing them as:

The Moros form an anti-independence unit, and *are unanimously in favor of the continuation of American sovereignty*, and, in case that the Philippines should separate from the United States, *they wish that their part of the Archipelago be retained as an American territory under American sovereignty*. Pagans and non-Christians, who are approximately 10 percent of the population, are in favor of the continuation of American sovereignty; they want peace and security, which are things that the Americans have given them.¹⁹¹

As we have seen, although it is true that several Moros *did* in fact tell Wood and Forbes that they desired to continue living under American sovereignty, it was by no means all of them. Anyone who had been following the news with some attention would have been aware of this fact. In this form, the Wood-Forbes report could prompt anxieties regarding the future of the geobody of the nation. If Leonard Wood had proven to be willing to completely overlook Moro manifestations for independence *alongside* Christian Filipinos, and instead reported “unanimity” against independence and support for being separated from the Christians should they become independent, to what degree would he put his finger on the scales as Governor-General when it came to dealing with the issue of the integrity of the geobody?

191 “Informe de la misión Wood-Forbes.” *El Comercio (extra)*, November 30, 1921, p. 1-10. My emphasis.

Furthermore, the eventual avenue through which it would be rumored that Leonard Wood would try to drive a wedge between Christian Filipinos and Moros was also referenced in the report. When talking about security in the colony, the report read:

Public order is excellent in all parts of the Archipelago *with the exception of some minor disturbances in the Moro regions*, due to, mainly, the rigor and sometimes the excessive zeal there has been in making Moro children, especially girls, attend public schools, and the unexpected rigor manifested in imposing on the disarmed Moros a submission that is equivalent to the absolute dominion of the Christian Filipinos. It is also due, in part, to the fact of not having conceded to the Moros their due representation in local governments.¹⁹²

Wood and Forbes basically laid the responsibility for whatever strife there was in the Moro regions in the hands of overzealous Christian Filipino officials who had taken over as a result of Filipinization—policies that he actually agreed with, but whose blowback he was willing to pin on Christian Filipinos exclusively. In the following years, he would supplement this narrative of conjunctural abuse on the part of Christian Filipinos with one of long-standing (and unresolvable) enmity between both communities. As we will see, Christian Filipino commentators would instead accuse Governor General Wood and his followers of being the ones inciting violence in Mindanao, with the objective of laying the groundwork for an argument that Christians and Moros could not coexist in the same polity, thus necessitating the permanent separation of Mindanao and Sulu (and Palawan) from Luzon and Visayas.

192 "Informe de la misión Wood-Forbes." *El Comercio (extra)*, November 30, 1921, p. 1-10. My emphasis.

The Wood-Forbes report was roundly lambasted in the Manila press to a degree that would have been unimaginable in Peru under Leguía. Early responses from Christian Filipinos, rather than disputing the factual accuracy of these claims, instead focused on how Muslim positions were of no consequence to the issue at hand. Specifically regarding Moro opposition to independence, for instance, Renán de Zojas (the pseudonym for the poet José Hernández Gavira) argued that since Jesus Christ was the first liberator, and that the First Philippine Republic was a Christian creation, it was only natural that Muslims should be against it, and suggested that their position in this matter was irrelevant anyway.¹⁹³ Isauro Gabaldón, the Philippine Resident Commissioner in DC, did not push back on the claim that the Moros as a whole were against independence, but rather directed Congress's attention to the fact that Moros were an absolute minority in the country,¹⁹⁴ thus suggesting that therefore their position on the issue was immaterial. The Wood-Forbes report's comment on Moros' position on independence appeared to have produced enough backlash against them that Emilio Aguinaldo was asked if they should be denied the right to vote. He diplomatically replied that no distinctions should be made between Christians and Muslims, and that in those regions where Moros were the majority, Moro candidates should be given preference.¹⁹⁵ He did not, however push back on the narrative that Moros were uniformly against independence.

Surprisingly, pushback on the factual accuracy of the claims in the Wood-Forbes report instead seemed to come from Moros themselves. The son of Senator Hadji Butu, Hadji Rasul, claimed in a speech that the Americans "prepared" (*prepararon*)—probably a euphemism for

¹⁹³ Renán de Zojas, "Arreglando el mundo." *El Comercio*, December 3, 1921, 2.

¹⁹⁴ Isauro Gabaldón, "Mi contestación al informe Wood-Forbes." *El Comercio*, April 10, 1922, 5.

¹⁹⁵ "No debe haber diferencia entre cristianos y moros filipinos." *El Comercio*, May 23, 1922, 1.

“staged”—the photographs that purported to show that Moros were against Philippine independence, suggesting that they did not reflect the true feelings of the members of his community. He further argued that the Americans in Sulu had never done anything for the Muslim community in the region.¹⁹⁶ He later walked back some of his harsher language, claiming that he actually felt a great debt of gratitude to the United States “for all that they have done for my people,” but insisted, however, that his people (presumably, the Moros as a whole) were “with Luzon and Visayas in their desire for independence.”¹⁹⁷ He later underscored that “the Filipinos of Mindanao and Sulu are willing to fight for our liberty, guaranteeing that any movement initiated by the Christians would be supported by the Moros of Mindanao and Jolo,”¹⁹⁸ in so doing, extending the category of “Filipino” to Muslims as well.

Senator Hadji Butu himself supported the narrative of Moro-Christian unity. In a speech given before the “New South” society organized by students from Mindanao and Jolo, and translated into English by his son Rasul (and thence into Spanish by *El Comercio*), he extolled the virtues of unity between all parts of the Philippines to work towards a common future. He did, however, attribute the existence of this unity exclusively to the American colonizers:

Remember that during the Spanish régime, the inhabitants of the South had nothing to do with those of the North, but with the arrival of the American government, those of the South could carry out the advantages of the unification and amalgamation of the three

¹⁹⁶ “No volveré a Filipinas mientras esta no sea independiente.” *El Comercio*, June 30, 1922, 4.

¹⁹⁷ “Statement del Sr. Hadji Rassul para *El Comercio*.” *El Comercio*, August 31, 1922, 1.

¹⁹⁸ “Hadji Rassul se adhiere al colectivismo.” *El Comercio*, October 9, 1922, 1, 3.

elements of the Filipino people. With the unification of Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, and Jolo, I believe that a government of Peace shall reign.¹⁹⁹

His portrayal of the American role in “incorporating” Mindanao and Jolo also conveniently elided all the acts of extreme violence that this process entailed, such as the massacres in Bud Dajo—carried out by Leonard Wood himself—and Bud Bagsak.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, despite his protestations of unity with Christian Filipinos, his framing of this history gave only an extremely thin veneer of time to their unification—which probably explains why *El Comercio* expressed its disagreement with some of his words. Something that had only been created by the Americans in the past 20 years could just as easily be imagined as broken up.

Remarkably, no space was given for the voices of the Christian Filipino colonists in Mindanao and Sulu during these discussions. With the weight that self-determination had in the immediate post-World War I moment, it is interesting that politicians or media commentators did not choose to give this constituency a voice, one that would presumably weigh in on the side of continued unification of the Philippine archipelago—after all, they shared languages and religion with their relatives in Luzon and Visayas, not with their neighbors in Mindanao. This could be explained by the intersection of élite conceptions of the geobody and visions of class. It was the geobody, that inherited destiny, that the élite was interested in preserving, with its inhabitants becoming secondary—Moros, after all, were “Others” about whose loss they could be ambivalent. Christian Filipino colonists, who were portrayed in the press as belonging to a land-hungry lower class might not merit much interest either. Those who were given voice in the

¹⁹⁹ Hadji Butu, “La unidad es la base de nuestra prosperidad nacional.” *El Comercio*, November 11, 1922, 1, 3.

²⁰⁰ Dphrepaulezz, “Genesis or Genocide?,” 86–89. Arnold, *The Moro War*, 139–68, 228–43. Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 94–120.

media were members of the *élite*, be it intellectual, political, or social, and Christian or Muslim. Lower class, colonist voices were implicitly assumed to not merit space in the printed page.

Malice embodied in violence: speculations of American involvement in Moro unrest

During a particularly sharp cycle of violence led by Datu Santiago in the volatile Lanao region in Mindanao in late 1923, the satirical Tagalog-language periodical *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw* ran a cartoon titled “Why the ‘Moro’ is fierce again.” It depicted a puppet in the shape of a stereotypical Moro going on a violent rampage; it wielded a kris in one hand and a torch on the other and was surrounded by five or six dead or wounded individuals whose Western suits and shoes suggested a Christian Filipino background. In the background, a public school was aflame while an impassive Constabulary soldier wielding a bayonet approached the enraged Moro. To the left, a silhouette of Governor-General Wood held the strings of the Moro puppet, with the label “Makiabelo” (Machiavelli) on his hand, and perhaps even sporting a wry smile.²⁰¹ The cartoon captured the attitude that the more formal Filipino press and political leadership would eventually adopt regarding the nature of and reasons behind Moro unrest, i.e., that after a period of peace under Governor Harrison’s policy of “Filipinization,” Moros turned to violence ‘again’ at the direct incitement on the part of the new American governor. How did Filipino commentators shift from an understanding that Governor-General Wood was simply generally prejudiced against Philippine independence (and in favor or retention of at least Mindanao) to one of actively accusing him of inciting Moro violence? The Datu Santiago revolt represents a

²⁰¹ “Kung bakit ang ‘moro’ ay mabangis na naman.” *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw*, October 24, 1923, 21.

pivotal moment in the evolution of rumors and speculation surrounding Wood's intentions with the Philippine geobody, and as such deserves a closer look.



Figure 2: Why the Moro is fierce again

From suspicion to certainty: The Datu Santiago revolt of 1923

Lanao had already been restive in the months prior to the Datu Santiago revolt, and commentators in the capital displayed a wide array of responses to it. As described by Oliver Charbonneau, American-led forces in Mindanao engaged in “corrective violence” against Moro misbehavior, under the assumption that violence was the only language that they were able to understand, and that such state violence would have the salutary effect of teaching unruly Moros

that violence on their part would not be tolerated.²⁰² Naturally such state violence led to the loss of Moro lives, which an editorial in *El Comercio* lamented, using the language of brotherhood with the Muslims, albeit with certain slippage in the phrasing that suggested that rather than specific commonalities of Philippine history or race, what bound them together was a broad humanity: “It’s forty six Moros, *but they are our brothers nonetheless, because they are human beings*, whose general extermination deserves certain consideration.” The author then made a call for the government to find a solution to these problems “so that we can avoid further killings of our brothers of the South, *whose help we will very much need in the future.*”²⁰³ *El Comercio’s* call for solidarity with the Moros came from a vision of the vast untapped resources of Mindanao and Sulu, which required the allegiance of the latter in order to secure said resources for the Philippine geobody. Another editorial framed the killings in Lanao as part of a greater degeneration of human civilization, placing it alongside the lynchings of Blacks in the United States, warfare in China, revolution in Mexico, unrest in Ireland, and the Russian civil war.²⁰⁴ An essay written by one P. Salustio in the *Philippine Free Press* cited Wood to orientalize the Moros, arguing that they presented the same resistance to civilization shown by Muslims around the world, and comparing them to Hindus and to the Seminole Indians of the United States.²⁰⁵ Many Christian Filipinos clearly continued to see violence involving Moros through a lens of Othering.

Nevertheless, Filipino commentary on these events revealed a certain baseline of suspicion regarding what the motivations for the unrest could be. The Director of the Bureau of

²⁰² Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 95.

²⁰³ “La matanza en Lánao.” *El Comercio*, August 8, 1923, 4. My emphasis.

²⁰⁴ “Retroceso.” *El Comercio*, August 9, 1923, 4.

²⁰⁵ P. Salustio, “El problema de Mindanao.” *Philippine Free Press*, September 8, 1923, 39.

Non-Christian Tribes, José Sanvítores, acknowledged that public schooling and taxes could be among the causes for the unrest, but also suggested that there was something anomalous afoot, “for men, no matter how Moro they may be, and how desperate, do not kill or let themselves be killed for mere ‘sport’.” *El Comercio* also remarked that Wood’s decision to cut funding for the cutter *Mindanao*, which had been at the disposal of Filipino authorities to facilitate communications in the southern islands, was a matter of malice rather than poor judgment, as it had resulted in the “extra-territorialization” of Mindanao and Sulu.²⁰⁶ For every such oblique remark appearing in the press, there must have been more hushed, yet sharp, conversations among journalists and politicians speculating about the meaning of these events and Wood’s involvement in them. It would yet take some time before they would appear boldly in the printed page, however.

Datu Santiago had actually been a supporter of Governor General Wood until he revolted in Lanao, something that may have contributed to Christian Filipino suspicions regarding the true motives of his revolt. At any rate, it appeared to constitute one of those acts of resistance characterized by Abinales as “narrow, rearguard, and unsuccessful attempts to stave off colonialism” rather than any part of a broader, more articulate anticolonial campaign.²⁰⁷ As reported by *El Comercio*, the revolt itself was the result of corruption by local officials. Datu Santiago and his followers had refused to pay the excessive taxes demanded by government officials, which led to *Gobernador Delegado* Bayut, Lieutenant Ignacio Magno, and a detachment of Constabulary soldiers to head to Bugasan, between Lanao and Cotabato, to collect payment

²⁰⁶ “El reinado del terror.” *El Comercio*, July 16, 1923, 4; “Causas fundamentales.” September 25, 1923, 4.

²⁰⁷ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, 39.

on the *cédulas personales*. Once there, they were ambushed and killed by a group of Moros who were pretending to be working on a roof. Datu Santiago and Datu Mangenda then announced an uprising throughout the region, and supposedly rallied thousands of followers and built a fortress in the mountains of Butig.²⁰⁸ With a dearth of information coming from within the Datu Santiago revolt itself, it is difficult to confirm this version of the events, but the revolt in general appears to be consistent with the template put forward by Charbonneau, according to which

first, ‘obstinate’ Moros rejected one or more core tenets of the colonial state (education, taxation, disarmament, trade controls, secular courts); second, Americans engaged in limited negotiations with oppositional datos; third, antistate Moros retreated to a remote fortification or engaged in loosely organized banditry against state agents; fourth, the state used military and para military groups to overwhelm local resistance, leading to asymmetrical casualty rates; fifth, the government and media declared the targeted group had been reformed through force.²⁰⁹

The Datu Santiago revolt can only be speculated to fit within a larger pattern of the necessity and duty of a local “man of prowess” to lead his people in warfare in a context of (at least perceived) grievance, as pointed out by Lara,²¹⁰ or more concretely by Charbonneau, in order to “galvanize eroding support.”²¹¹ On the other hand, if he had indeed revolted at the behest of Governor-General Wood—something that oblique Christian Filipino commentary strongly suggests they at least suspected—such behavior could also be conceived as fitting within the broad pattern of

²⁰⁸ “Los grafts fueron la causa de la revuelta en la Morolandia.” *El Comercio*, October 24, 1923, 1, 5. “¡Fatalidad!” October 19, 1923, 4.

²⁰⁹ Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 103.

²¹⁰ Lara, *Insurgents, Clans, and States*, 23–57.

²¹¹ Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 112.

Datus negotiating with colonial power, and playing the various players against each other, as demonstrated by Ileta in the case of Datu Uto of Buayan.²¹²

The press does not provide much more concrete information that would allow the reading public to gain a blow-by-blow idea of the trajectory of the the Datu Santiago revolt. This was the result of a deliberate policy by the colonial government to restrict information on those events, purportedly to prevent “alarm and anxieties” in the capital.²¹³ The policy backfired. The population was clearly concerned about what was happening in the south, and the government’s policy was roundly criticized by the press.²¹⁴ Senator Osmeña also joined the criticism of the secrecy with which the Governor was handling matters in Mindanao, pointing out that while he was willing to reveal all the secrets of the National Bank scandal, he was extremely secretive about his dealings with the Moros and the contents of the cables he was sending to the United States.²¹⁵ What the Datu Santiago revolt did produce, however, was a rich discussion about the possible causes behind it, and anxieties over what the implications of certain narratives would have for the cause of Philippine independence and the integrity of its geobody.

As Filipino commentators interrogated these events, it became clearer that they increasingly believed that they might not simply be the result of happenstance, but rather that Governor General Wood or his agents might actually have set the events in motion. An extensive editorial in the Tagalog-language *Ang Republika* suggested that “there are already those *who*

²¹² Ileta, *Magindanao, 1860-1888*.

²¹³ “La cuestión de la Morolandia continúa indecisa.” *El Comercio*, October 29, 1923, 1, 5. “Sigilo que las autoridades guardan sobre la Morolandia.” November 19, 1923, 1, 2.

²¹⁴ “La banda de rebeldes moros encabezados por el Datu Santiago ha sido destruida.” *El Comercio*, November 21, 1923, 1.

²¹⁵ “El fracaso de Wood.” *El Comercio*, November 14, 1923, 1, 4.

come from different lands who are against our independence and who seek to induce the Moros to revolt against the government there.”²¹⁶ Senator Osmeña stated that the Legislature “will always be alert to monitor with a penetrating gaze what is happening between those brothers of the South,” suggesting a large dose of suspicion among Christian Filipinos regarding the secret deals that Wood might be making with Moro leaders—they might indeed be colluding to destabilize Christian Filipino rule. *El Comercio* remarked that Wood was set on “dividing Filipinos into Christians and Mohammedans in order to prove to the American people that there is no stable government in the Philippines and that Filipinos are divided in the matter of independence.”²¹⁷ Such a narrative was fundamentally detrimental to the ambitions of the political élite: the absence of a stable government would mean that the provisions for independence set out in the Jones Law of 1916 would not come into effect, and divisions between Christians and Muslims could lead to the mutilation of the geobody.

By the time the Datu Santiago revolt was functionally over, accusations against Governor-General Wood had become direct and explicit. An editorial in *El Debate* accused Leonard Wood and other opponents of Philippine independence of having “chosen the weakest point in our lines [Mindanao], and it is there that they concentrate their assault.” The editorial expressed that Leonard Wood’s tour of the region prior to the Philippine Legislature’s own inspection “cannot but trigger anxieties in the Filipino public,” suggesting that the Governor General had set up a number of obstacles to hinder their investigation. Leonard Wood’s hidden agenda (*designio*) was a clear threat, with *El Debate* speculating “[j]udging by the evidence, there is an agenda,

²¹⁶ “Ang kapayapaan sa Mindanao.” *Ang Republika*, November 3, 1923, 3. My emphasis.

²¹⁷ “El fracaso de Wood.” *El Comercio*, November 14, 1923, 1, 4.

regarding this portion of the Archipelago among those who do not sympathize with our political aspirations,” which prompted Wood’s “scandalous and false publicity here and in the United States” about the preferences of Muslim Filipinos, the causes of their unrest, and the effect of Quezon’s speech about an impending American withdrawal.²¹⁸ Anxieties around the Datu Santiago revolt had indeed solidified a strong current within Filipino public opinion according to which Leonard Wood actively incited unrest in the region with the purpose of forwarding the retentionist cause, be it of the entire archipelago or at least its southern reaches.

At any rate, by the second half of November it appeared that the Constabulary had defeated Datu Santiago’s followers, with the *Philippine Herald* even suggesting the entire event had been blown out of proportion.²¹⁹ Datu Santiago offered to turn himself in after Datu Abdula Piang of Cotabato mediated between him and the authorities.²²⁰ The use of Moro mediators to achieve the surrender of rebels was not uncommon: it had been used in the case of Sultan Tugaya a few months before,²²¹ and Hadji Butu suggested that it should be used going forward, instead of the Constabulary. Cooperation from Moro leaders continued to be important in the pacification of the region, playing a key role in the August 1925 capture of one of Datu Santiago’s last followers who remained at large.²²² Eventually, Datu Santiago and his followers were tried for sedition, prompting some discussion on whether his followers should receive pardons.²²³ He

²¹⁸ “Vibraciones de la prensa.” *El Comercio*, November 26, 1923, 3.

²¹⁹ “La banda de rebeldes moros encabezados por el Datu Santiago ha sido destruida.” *El Comercio*, November 21, 1923, 1. “Guingona ha sido nombrado miembro técnico del comité que investigará los sucesos ocurridos en la Morolandia.” November 22, 1923, 1. “Vibraciones de la prensa.” November 22, 1923, 3.

²²⁰ “Datu Santiago promete rendirse condicionalmente.” *El Comercio*, January 8, 1924, 1.

²²¹ “Paudak se rinde.” *Philippine Free Press*, September 22, 1923, 37.

²²² “Moro outlaw and slayer is captured.” *Tribune*, August 12, 1925, 2.

²²³ “Filipino editorial opinion.” *Tribune*, October 3, 1925, 4.

and six of his companions were sentenced to prison time and fines,²²⁴ an outcome that was triumphantly announced by Director Hidrosollo of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes as heralding the end of the age of bloodshed in Mindanao.²²⁵ Considering this announcement came in the midst of another bout of violence surrounding the murder of a Christian schoolteacher at the hand of a group of Moros, Hidrosollo was proven wrong almost immediately. Possibly further raising suspicions among Christian Filipinos who followed these events, Datu Santiago was quickly pardoned by Wood and reappointed to public office.²²⁶

Leonard Wood's behavior during the Datu Santiago revolt sharpened the gaze of Filipino commentators regarding the integrity of the country's geobody, who became convinced that Wood was actively pursuing a policy of dismembering it. *La Defensa* denounced Wood's imperialist "Machiavellianism," claiming that he was a part of a "corrosive campaign that after ripping the sacred vestments of our political and territorial unity, will rip the white sheet of North American honor into paltry pieces."²²⁷ *El Comercio*, on its part, published a report by an unnamed informant, according to which American imperialists aimed to "dismember this beautiful and great island from the rest of the Archipelago for its annexation to America." According to the informant, they were actively trying to attract many of the most prominent Moros to support the cause of annexation to the United States while simultaneously promoting hatred towards Christian Filipinos. This campaign was said to be backed by handsome sums of money coming from an unnamed "American commercial entity" based in Manila known for its interference in

²²⁴ "Datu Santiago will serve time." *Tribune*, October 29, 1925, 7. "News of the world." *Philippine Education Magazine*, December 1925, 360.

²²⁵ "Paz y prosperidad en la tierra de los moros." *El Comercio*, November 9, 1925, 1, 6.

²²⁶ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, 39.

²²⁷ "Vibraciones de la prensa." *El Comercio*, January 5, 1924, 3, 6.

political matters. This broad campaign was depicted as also being backed by American soldiers and residents in the region, who were said to be interested in the “virgin and immense plains of those brotherly islands.”²²⁸ Thus, we can see how the rhetoric had changed from portraying Wood and his allies as prejudiced and opportunistically pouncing on the unrest for their own purposes, to being active agents inciting the unrest to achieve the dismemberment of the country.

Corrective passivity: the unrest of 1925

If any Christian Filipinos speculated about what could be worse than a Governor-General who incited Moro unrest only to deploy corrective violence against it and thus “prove” that Christian Filipinos had failed in their *mission civilizatrice*, they would soon get their answer in the form of what may be called “corrective passivity,” to play with the “corrective violence” referred to by Charbonneau. Corrective passivity would be the act of doing nothing in the face of Moro unrest—unrest that was suspected of having been engineered by Wood and his allies. Rather than sending a message against the usual objects of state violence—in this case, the Moros—it appeared to send a message to the Christian Filipinos, one of calculated indifference and willingness to let Mindanao burn in order to further the narrative of the failure of their civilizing and pacifying mission in Muslim lands. This is what happened in a cycle of violence in 1925. When violence broke out again (presumably after being incited by Wood or his agents), the Constabulary was seen as deliberately being held back from engaging Moros who had broken the law. Rather than this being interpreted as a manifestation of the “soft touch” approach towards

²²⁸ “Americanos imperialistas consiguen atraer una buena porción de moros influyentes para la anexión de esta isla a América.” *El Comercio*, January 31, 1924, 1.

dealing with Moro unrest that had been advocated by some Moros in the wake of the Datu Santiago revolt, this was instead seen as an intentional policy to let violence spiral out of control, to then claim that a united future between both communities was beyond reach. Under such circumstances, only a geosurgical intervention would then be able to staunch the flow of blood and bring about a healthy Philippines.

A number of incidents made rumors of malicious intent plausible. As Moros stole water pipes from Camp Keithley, an American military outpost, to use them to manufacture *paliuntod*—improvised firearms—a correspondent from *Tribune* complained that American Governor Johnson had ordered the Constabulary to refrain from engaging with outlaws. It was rumored that these seemingly counterproductive orders came directly from Governor-General Wood himself.²²⁹ These complaints were repeated when a Constabulary detachment demolishing a supposedly surrendered kota barely survived after being ambushed by a group of Moros. “The soldiers, fearing lest they be investigated for fighting with the outlaws without the permission of Major Johnson, the governor here, did not give chase.”²³⁰ The seizure of telephone wires not only cut communications between military detachments, but the wire itself was used to tie fences around kotas, thus being doubly detrimental to the cause of State enforcement of order.²³¹ Furthermore, orders preventing the Constabulary from pursuing lawbreaking Moros could have consequences beyond bad publicity for the Philippines (with the concomitant undermining of the campaign for independence), they posed a threat to the colonizing enterprise in Mindanao as a

²²⁹ “Moros making guns of army water pipes.” *Tribune*, July 3, 1925, 1.

²³⁰ “Moro bandits in Lanao are still active.” *Tribune*, July 4, 1925, 1. “Surrender of Moros meant for a trick.” July 5, 1925, 1.

²³¹ “Wire interruptions caused by Moros.” *Tribune*, July 22, 1925, 6.

whole. When a group of Moros killed a “Filipino settler” to steal his carabao, *Tribune* commented that the Constabulary’s inactivity in these cases was prompting settlers to mull returning back to their own provinces.²³² Thus, the benefit of violence of this kind would be two-fold for Wood: it would bolster his narrative of irreconcilable antagonism between both communities, and, if it could trigger a mass return exodus, that would also facilitate his desired dismemberment of the colony. From a Filipino perspective that already strongly suspected Wood’s motives, seeing how American authorities allowed the Moros to blatantly arm themselves, ambush the Constabulary, and cut telephone lines, all constituted a very strong sign that they were actively pursuing a policy of facilitating the spread of unrest in the Lanao region.

Another violent incident in Lanao was reported in a way that strongly suggests that such rumors circulated in newsrooms—and presumably among Filipino politicians. When protecting the men restoring the telephone cables that had been cut down by Moro outlaws between Dansalan and Ganassi, a Constabulary force of about a hundred men under the command of Major Johnson himself was attacked by an unknown number of Moro assailants. After repelling the first assault without taking any casualties, Johnson called for more firepower and reinforcements, with which work continued as normal. However, as they were nearing completion, Johnson suddenly ordered the work stopped and an immediate return to base.

Whether Governor Johnson received orders from higher up or not is unknown, but he seemed suddenly to lose the determination which had been aroused by the conflict of the day before, and Saturday night dispatched the constabulary launch *Victa* to bring back

²³² “Moro outlaws rob and slay settler, P.C. fails to act.” *Tribune*, July 21, 1925, 1.

the soldiers and the linemen. They arrived in Dansalan on Sunday morning, wondering why the almost completed task should be left unfinished.²³³

Indeed, *Tribune* may not have known for certain what lay behind Johnson's decision, but in the very phrasing about "orders from higher up" they brought the shadow of Governor General Wood into play. Readers would be able to speculate that this might well be part of Wood's plan to let unrest run wild in the region in order to use it as evidence of the need to split the country.

Rumors surrounding what could lay behind the American authorities' inexplicable passivity in Lanao could only be compounded when other American officials made public remarks that undermined this policy. Carl Moore, the American governor of Sulu, orientalized the Moros to argue in favor of a policy of corrective violence against Moro unrest:

The Moro is at bottom a bad man. Once your control is loosened, and you tolerate things, the Moro takes advantage of it. *The trouble in Lanao more than anything else is fundamentally traceable to this laxity.* Things have been allowed to go on for a while, and the Moros have been accustomed to doing as they pleased. (...) The Moro is like an unruly child in school. If the teacher laxes (sic) in her control, the black sheep in the class goes on with his pranks until the habit is firm. But if you nip his pranks in the bud and make him understand that you will not countenance any wrongdoing, the Moro is the best behaved of all citizens.²³⁴

Coming from an American official, Filipino readers would have seen that there could be no good case to be made for the policy of keeping the Constabulary away from any engagement with

²³³ "Moro bandits going strong." *Tribune*, August 11, 1925, 1. "'Round the provinces." *Philippine Education Magazine*, September 1925, 203.

²³⁴ "Autonomy for Moros urged." *Tribune*, August 18, 1925, 1, 2.

Moro outlaws. In fact, justifications for this policy were absent in the Filipino-run press. What is more, Moore's comments on the Moros directly contradicted the narrative that Wood had been promoting since the Wood-Forbes Report, that argued that unrest was the result of overbearing Christian Filipinos seeking to impose regulations on Moros. Why the Constabulary had been ordered to stand down remained a mystery, precisely the kind of context in which the kinds of rumors and speculations that had already taken shape during the Datu Santiago rebellion could flourish. Although in later months this policy was reversed, both kinds of "correctives" (violence and passivity) contributed to Christian Filipinos speculating about the menacing motivations behind them.

"Sinister forces are today at work"

Speculation thus pointed in the direction of a grander, and more sinister, plan to split the country in two. Wood and other American agents were explicitly accused of instigating the violence in the region to be able to push the image of a region that had become completely ungovernable for Christian Filipinos. When Hadji Butu admitted that conditions had indeed been peaceful under Harrison and had only taken a turn for the worse under Wood, *Tribune* commented that

This testimony, coming as it does from a source that is under the influence of Malacañang, is the most effective proof of the truth of the claim that *sinister forces are today at work to sow misunderstandings between the Moros and the Christians*; that Mindanao is looked upon in certain quarters as a possible field for expansion and exploitation; that, to weaken the cause of independence, because it is fast gaining ground in America, the Moros must

be won over to the side of those who profit by an apparent division of our people on the vital question of our freedom.²³⁵

Hadji Butu's words, thus, were the 'smoking gun' that proved that the rumors that they had told each other but had referred to in print only in a somewhat oblique manner were all true. Conditions of unrest were not only a matter of negligence on the part of the Governor General, they were engineered by him and those Americans interested in the economic exploitation of the island. Thus, *Tribune* exhorted that Mindanao be settled once and for all with (presumably) Christian settlers, in order to retain "its resources in native hands." The focus continued to be on ownership of land and resources, rather than the horror of seeing fellow Filipinos (albeit Muslim ones) be torn away from the nation by such "sinister forces." Mindanao as a piece of territory was an asset, its people—the Moros—a liability.

Indeed, the activities of these "sinister forces" to use Moro unrest as a tool to split off Mindanao from the Philippines continued to be referenced in the press. *Tribune* specifically traced the origin of the wave of unrest to the Wood-Forbes Mission's sojourn through Mindanao. Furthermore, while they acknowledged that the number of reported encounters between the Constabulary and Moro outlaws appeared to have dropped recently, this was actually the result of the questionable orders that prevented the former from engaging the latter and destroying the kotas where they flew the flag of rebellion. With anxiety bubbling over what the intentions behind such an inexplicable policy might be, *Tribune* offered a hypothesis: "[T]he situation that has been created and allowed to continue is such that it may be an excuse for the unflickable (sic)

²³⁵ "An important testimony." *Tribune*, August 21, 1925, 4. My emphasis.

iron fist of military rule to be established again in Mindanao. [The numbers presented] disclose the painful truth that must be realized by all Filipinos that forces are at work to alienate Mindanao from us.”²³⁶

Another person affiliated with the College of Liberal Arts of the University of Manila, Constancio Leuterio, also weighed in on the issue in a lengthy op-ed. Anxiety and hints of suspicion of deliberate manipulation on the part of Wood and his supporters appeared throughout his text. He noted how the press had covered the surge of violence in the region since the end of Harrison’s administration and the replacement of Filipinos by Americans in administrative posts in the region, which in turn “gives rise to *serious doubts about America’s real intentions with regards to our country* and creates grave apprehensions as to the ultimate triumph of our cause.” Taking an apparent jab at Manuel Quezon, Leuterio demanded that rather than bombastic speeches, concrete actions should be taken against the “insidious campaign of misrepresentation and lies of our ‘invisible enemies’” to put an end to the unrest being “fostered by men with selfish interests to serve”—a clear jab at Governor Wood and American capitalists interested in investing in the rubber possibilities of Mindanao.²³⁷ Leuterio’s op-ed is a clear sign of the ‘siege mentality’ that had become widespread in this conjuncture. Failure to act decisively could lead to Mindanao and Sulu ending up like “the Confederate States of Lincoln’s time;” a reference to secession, rather than their eventual reincorporation into the geobody. Thus, over the course of this conjuncture, we can see how both action and inaction were taken as clues of malicious intent regarding the future of Mindanao on Wood’s part. Their effectiveness, however,

²³⁶ “The eloquence of figures.” *Tribune*, July 30, 1925, 4.

²³⁷ Constancio Leuterio, “A serious national problem.” *Tribune*, August 29, 1925, 4.

also depended on the currency, or lack thereof, that might be gained by a historicist argument regarding the amity or enmity between both communities.

“The old antagonism that exists between Moros and Filipinos”: Rhetorical warfare around unrest in Mindanao

Once again, a cartoon published in *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw* captured the zeitgeist. Titled “Those who harm Filipino camaraderie, by the new Machiavelli of the Philippines,” it featured a figure resembling a vampire (or perhaps an aswang) with bat-like wings, a spiky tail and Wood’s face, with the caption “Imperialist government” on its wings in Spanish and Tagalog. On both sides of the figure, brawls of many imaginable permutations of conflict are portrayed: Americans vs. Filipinos, Nacionalistas vs. Colectivistas, Veterans vs. National Leaders, and of course, Moros vs. Christians (and Moros vs. Moros).²³⁸ In this fashion, Wood was presented as a figure who, rather than bringing harmony to the country as a governor-general should, was instead inciting conflict. Regarding the issue of Christian-Muslim relations, this was a direct pushback against the overarching historical narrative that Wood tried to put forth to explain unrest in Mindanao. He put forward an argument according to which, whatever the triggers of specific outbreaks of violence were, they all really boiled down to “the old antagonism that exists between Moros and Filipinos.” Thus, this became a battle around history, both longer-term and contemporary. Christian Filipino commentators and politicians made sure to put forward their own version to counteract Wood’s.

²³⁸ “Ang mga nagagawang kasiraan sa pagsasamahan ng mga Pilipino, ng bagong Makiabelo sa Pilipinas.” *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw*, March 26, 1924, 4-5.

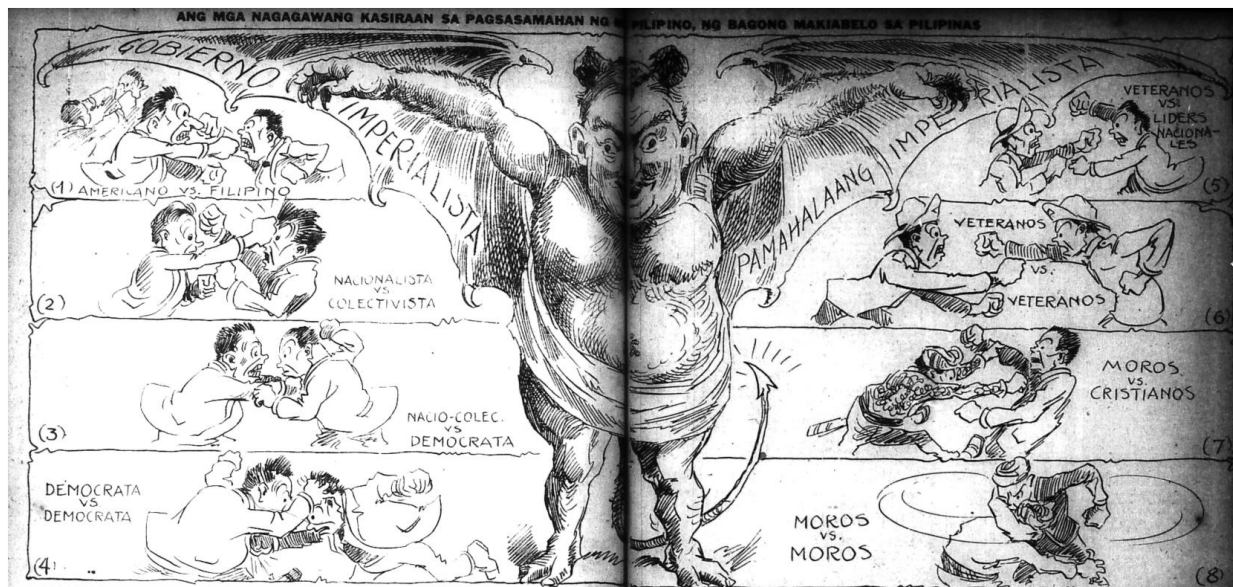


Figure 3: Those who harm Filipino camaraderie, by the new Machiavelli of the Philippines

While it is true that Wood's overall assessment might not have been historically inaccurate altogether—Abinales explains that tensions between Christians and Muslims from the Spanish colonial period “carried over into the American period, and mutual hostility was kept at bay only through the buffer zone that was the Moro Province,”²³⁹ Filipino actors knew that he had a propensity to jump to conclusions that benefitted his agenda. During an outbreak of violence prior to Datu Santiago's revolt, despite an almost complete lack of tangible information, he stated that he was “inclined to deduce (...) that the Moros have insinuated that they will only recognize an American governor.”²⁴⁰ During the Datu Santiago revolt, he stated that one of the causes of the disturbances was the “old antagonism that exists between Moros and Filipinos” — *before* heading out to Mindanao to investigate its causes.²⁴¹ Once Wood was in Mindanao

239 Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative*, 40.

240 “Témese otro nuevo levantamiento en Lánao.” *El Comercio*, September 11, 1923, 1, 2.

241 “Vibraciones de la prensa.” *El Comercio*, October 24, 1923, 3.

overseeing military operations against the rebels alongside General Crame,²⁴² he doubled down on his claim of ancestral antagonism between Christians and Muslims, and added the other key elements of his views on Mindanao: that unrest was also the result of Christian Filipino abuses and that Moros preferred to be ruled by Americans,²⁴³ two arguments that the *Philippines Herald* had accurately predicted he would put forward.²⁴⁴ In Wood's view, the detonating event of this particular bout of violence was a speech by Manuel Quezon in which the Filipino political leader stated that American military forces would soon be withdrawn from the islands.²⁴⁵

Almost two years later, Wood blamed the unrest on Filipinization and "long-standing antipathy" between Christians and Muslims, without even pretending to have engaged in a fact-finding mission or to have received a report from one. *Tribune* expressed its surprise that Wood had toured the south of the archipelago, yet had failed to visit Lanao, despite the unrest that was gripping the region.²⁴⁶ Instead, in a message to the joint session of the Legislature, Wood stated that

There was considerable unrest among the Moro population in the Province of Lanao, due in part to a belief among the Moros that some of their leaders were killed without sufficient justification, and in part to *the long-standing antipathy which exists between the Mohammedan Moro and the Christian Filipino*. There will be for years to come

²⁴² "La comitiva del gobernador Wood ya está en Mindanao." *El Comercio*, October 26, 1923, 1.

²⁴³ "La antigua hostilidad entre moros y cristianos." *El Comercio*, November 2, 1923, 1, 5.

²⁴⁴ "Vibraciones de la prensa." *El Comercio*, October 24, 1923, 3.

²⁴⁵ "El fracaso de Wood." *El Comercio*, November 14, 1923, 1, 4. "No hay oposición a gobernadores filipinos." November 14, 1923, 1, 2.

²⁴⁶ "Wood omits Lanao trip." *Tribune*, July 5, 1925, 1.

occasional disturbances in the Moro regions, *due in the last analysis to this antagonism*, which has been accentuated by the rapid Filipinization of these regions.²⁴⁷

Thus, Wood produced Filipinization as the specific trigger of Moro unrest, but that it was undetachable from a deep layer of historical conflict between the two communities. With this being the explanation for how the conflicts came about, it was not difficult to deduce what Wood's preferred solution would be: a simple removal of Christian Filipino authority in the Moro regions. And if Christian Filipinos would never be able to hold authority over Muslims due to their "long-standing antipathy," the only people who would be able to do so were the Americans.

Wood's claims would certainly be challenged by Christian Filipino commentators, but they also produced anxiety regarding its possible effect on relations with the Metropole. *El Comercio* speculated that "[r]ight now the radio must be vibrating reporting on the other side of the Pacific of an armed uprising in the Philippines, on the decapitation of Constables, the declaration of Martial Law, the intervention of the United States Army, the shooting of women and children, in other words, a total disaster!"²⁴⁸ It was clear that such a narrative would be detrimental to Filipino desires for independence and the integrity of their geobody. With Wood's known positions on these issues, they were certain that he would leverage them against the Philippine cause. These anxieties in turn prompted a number of calls for the formation of their own factfinding missions that could make their own reports, presumably so that they could contest what almost certainly would be an unflattering picture put forward by Wood.²⁴⁹ It would be

²⁴⁷ "Moro-Christian feud revived in Wood's message." *Tribune*, July 17, 1925, 1, 2.

²⁴⁸ "¡Fatalidad!" *El Comercio*, October 19, 1923, 4.

²⁴⁹ "Por la investigación de la situación de Mindanao." *El Comercio*, October 23, 1923, 1. "La cuestión de Mindanao es de las más graves que hay después de la independencia." October 31, 1923, 1. "El ex-Senador Guingona será

several years before these initiatives actually came to fruition, but it would continue to be the go-to proposal in subsequent years whenever conflict arose in Mindanao, reflecting the deep chasms of suspicion that existed between the Filipino political élite and Leonard Wood.

Unlike their reaction to the Wood-Forbes report, this time the Filipino press and political leadership made sure to reject the factual accuracy of Wood's claims. *El Comercio* characterized them as a "blatant lie that can only find room in the head of a frenzied imperialist." Manuel Quezon also piled on against Wood, labeling his claims an "old song" (*canción vieja*) and pointing out that during the Harrison administration, Christian Filipinos had taken over the administration of the Moro territories, and that "there was complete peace and tranquility in the entire archipelago, and the most perfect harmony existed between all of its inhabitants." It was only under the administration of Leonard Wood that disturbances in Mindanao had multiplied.²⁵⁰ Former Senator Guingona supplied numbers to back up this claim: between 1908 and 1913, there were 19 clashes per year between Moros and the military, between 1914 and 1920 (the period of Filipinization) these numbers dropped to 3 clashes per year, but between 1920 and 1923, the number of clashes per year had climbed up to 7.²⁵¹ Two years later, *Tribune* brought up the numbers again to challenge Wood's assertions that there was long-standing antipathy between Christians and Muslims. According to their figures, during the Military administration there were 20 encounters per year, with an average of 208 casualties per year, which dropped to 3 encounters and 63 casualties per year during the Harrison administration, and then jumped up

enviado a Mindanao." November 7, 1923, 1. "Guingona ha sido nombrado miembro técnico del comité que investigará los sucesos ocurridos en la Morolandia." November 22, 1923, 1.

²⁵⁰ "La antigua hostilidad entre moros y cristianos." *El Comercio*, November 2, 1923, 1, 5.

²⁵¹ "El fracaso de Wood está en los acontecimientos ocurridos en Mindanao." *El Comercio*, November 14, 1923, 1, 4.

to 9 encounters and 89 casualties per year under Wood.²⁵² The numbers backed up the Filipino narrative of more tranquility during the period of Filipinization than during Governor General Wood's tenure.

Other politicians also took a stance against Wood's claims. Senator Hermenegildo Villanueva attributed Wood's words to his desire to implement a policy of Americanization in Mindanao. Senator Camilo Osías, among others, attributed them to Wood's policy against independence. Representative Manuel Briones called Wood's words "completely unfounded."²⁵³ Representative Antonio de las Alas of Batangas argued that Filipinization led to peace in the region and instead suggested that the Wood-Forbes mission was behind the surge in unrest in Mindanao.²⁵⁴ Manuel Quezon gave a fiery speech in the Senate in which he too insisted on the narrative that under the Harrison administration conditions in Mindanao were peaceful and there was great fraternity between Christians and Muslims. It was under Wood and his allies that unrest and lawlessness had spiked. He too suggested this might be intentional on Wood's part:

The governor general, in his message to the legislature, dared hurl at our faces the statement that the present troubles in Mindanao are due to the natural hatred borne by the Mohammedan Filipinos against their Christian brethren. Undoubtedly *someone is trying to induce the United States not to fulfill her promise of independence made solemnly to the Filipino people, and wants to see Mindanao separated from the rest of the Philippines*. Well, we will give Mindanao everything that is in our power to give. The

²⁵² "The eloquence of figures." *Tribune*, July 30, 1925, 4.

²⁵³ "Moro charges not approved." *Tribune*, July 18, 1925, 2.

²⁵⁴ "Blame put on Wood, Forbes." *Tribune*, July 19, 1925, 1.

Christian Filipinos will gladly give their souls, their blood, to prevent her from being snatched away from the Filipino peoples.²⁵⁵

That “someone” Quezon alluded to was, without a doubt, Governor General Wood. Quezon in this case, rather than follow the implicit either/or logic according to which Wood was seeking either the indefinite retention of the entirety of the Philippines or the annexation of Mindanao if the entire archipelago could not be retained, instead suggested that Wood was seeking both.

Part of the intelligentsia also weighed in on this matter. One Isidoro M. Francisco, presenting himself as affiliated with the College of Liberal Arts, University of Manila, wrote an op-ed in which he criticized Governor General Wood’s claims from a more scholarly standpoint. He began by rejecting that the recent unrest was part of a larger pattern, instead labeling it as being caused by “some Moros who considered themselves above the law,” and that “one swallow does not make a summer.” He claimed that most Moros were actually favorable to Filipinization, and that the argument of long-standing antipathy between Christians and Muslims was something only a person not versed in Philippine history could put forward, hinting that Wood’s position came from ignorance, which he intentionally contrasted with his own academic background. He then went on to make a historical depiction of the causes behind what could have appeared as enmity between both communities. Rather than the conflict emerging between modern day Christian and Muslim Filipinos, Francisco framed it as something that only existed in the past, and which was completely the responsibility of the Spanish:

²⁵⁵ “Wood policy in Mindanao designed against cause of freedom, says Quezon.” *Tribune*, July 23, 1925, 1, 2. My emphasis.

The Moros resented the extension of Spanish power over their domain and it was only after a long period of time characterized by incessant hostility on the part of both sides that the Moros were completely subjugated. Long before the subjugation of the Moros, their Christian brothers had surrendered to the Spaniards and were actually forced to join the punitive expeditions against the Moros. In revenge, the Moros ravaged the coasts of the Visayas and carried away Christian captives. It must be understood, however, that (...) altho (sic) the revenge was directed principally against the Spaniards, their greed for plunder turned them against their Christian brethren.²⁵⁶

In this respect, Francisco perhaps overstated his case. While it was true that Christianized Filipinos were pressed into service in fighting against the Moros under Spanish expeditions, the impression he gave that this was an exclusively Spanish innovation was not entirely accurate. As stated previously, mutual raiding for loot and captives was widespread in the pre-colonial Philippines even before the arrival of the Spanish, and although they clamped down on this in the territories they colonized more effectively, the Moros, not having been conquered by the Spanish, simply continued with this age-old practice.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, in the usage of the terms “brothers” and “brethren,” Francisco attributed to colonial Filipinos an awareness of nation that simply had not taken hold in the region in that time period. Debatable as his bold claim that by the 1920s Filipinos on both sides of the religious divide had reconciled and acknowledged that their previous conflicts were entirely the responsibility of their “common oppressor” was, they most certainly did not feel the same during the Spanish colonial period—nor could they. While

²⁵⁶ Isidoro M. Francisco, “The Moro question.” *Tribune*, July 22, 1925, 4.

²⁵⁷ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*. Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting*. Scott, *Barangay*.

perhaps Wood fabricated recent history to whatever favored his agenda, Francisco manipulated more remote history to suit his. The historical framework he put forward not only refuted Wood's claims of a "long-standing antipathy," but also furnished a useful way of understanding the *current* bouts of conflict, as well as a manner to put it behind them. Much like Christian-Moro conflict during the Spanish period had been purely the result of an oppressive colonial power, *present* conflict could also be understood in those terms, except that the oppressor now spoke English rather than Spanish. Commenting that Wood's words were designed to "foment discord and disunion among Filipinos," his essay suggested to its readers that violence would disappear along with the current colonial oppressor.

Senator Hadji Butu also weighed in on the issue of Christian-Moro relations on the senate floor. While he admitted that there was *some* truth in Wood's words—the record in the press does not specify what exactly he was referring to—Butu still followed the narrative of his Christian counterparts, according to which there was no long-standing hatred between Christians and Muslims and that the unrest only began during the governorship of Wood. This was a particularly remarkable turn, as Hadji Butu had been appointed senator by Leonard Wood himself. *Tribune* even remarked that Butu switched from "an admirer of the governor general to that of a leader, pleading for aid for his people," referring to his support for the motion of sending a legislative committee to the region to investigate and resolve the causes of the unrest.²⁵⁸ A Muslim Filipino, and a former Wood ally at that, speaking against the narrative of longstanding antipathy between both communities was a boon in the fight against the Governor General.

²⁵⁸ "Hadji Butu denies alleged standing feud." *Tribune*, August 21, 1925, 2.

It should be noted, however, that discourse on neither side of the discussion generated by the Datu Santiago revolt was uniform. For all their heated denials of the claim that Moros did not want Filipino authorities, *El Comercio* reported that two major Datus of Mindanao had indeed declared that they preferred an American governor to a Filipino, and that many even wished to see the Filipino flag gone. The report surprisingly ended with “*We have always been certain that the Muslims hated us, so we are not surprised to see that such news should arrive from those territories.*”²⁵⁹ Meanwhile, some Christian Filipino politicians bucked the trend of blaming all the unrest on American conspiracies, and did admit that at least some responsibility for Muslim unrest lay in the hands of Christian Filipinos. Senator Laurel, for example, believed that a certain tactlessness on their part when collecting taxes from the Moros had a role to play, and thus presented a bill amending the administrative code in order to give them more time to pay their taxes.²⁶⁰ Nuanced assessments of Wood’s words also emerged among some Moros. Representative Abdula Piang, the only Moro representative at that moment, admitted and deplored that relations between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao were not optimal (although he added that relations between Moros themselves were not excellent either), which was also a factor in the outbreaks of violence. He could not, however, corroborate Wood’s claim that the unrest was due to Filipinization, or that further Filipinization would cause more unrest.²⁶¹ On the American side, upon returning to Manila from Mindanao, General Crame stated that in a meeting with Moro leaders in Lanao and Cotabato they told him that they had “immense satisfaction” with the administration of the Christian governors of Commander Santos (Lanao) and Captain

²⁵⁹ “De la Morolandia vienen noticias alarmantes.” *El Comercio*, November 5, 1923, 1. My emphasis.

²⁶⁰ “Laurel pleads for leniency for Moros.” *Tribune*, October 13, 1925, 5.

²⁶¹ “Piang admits existence of bitter feuds.” *Tribune*, October 17, 1925, 1.

Gutiérrez (Cotabato), and that they wished to see them remain in their posts.²⁶² Further slippages would characterize Christian Filipino discourse regarding Moros, as we will see in the following section.

Slippages in Christian-Muslim amity: anxieties over land, not people

The 'siege mentality' that had taken over the minds of many Christian Filipinos proved to be the condition of possibility for cracks to appear in the carefully cultivated rhetoric of Christian-Muslim amity and mutual understanding. We can see this connection in the words of writer José V. Clarino, in which he lambasted legislators for focusing on appropriating funds for road-building in their own provinces rather than thinking about the future of Mindanao: "[W]hat have our representatives done of suggested (sic) to ameliorate conditions in Mindanao, that den of *American imperialists*? Every day we receive news of manslaughters, robberies, and the like, being committed by the *fanatic Mohammedan brothers*, but what tangible solutions have our national leaders voiced or advocated?"²⁶³ While shadowy American imperialists were presented as being behind it all, Clarino conveyed an interesting juxtaposition when referring to the Moros. They were presented with the (usually) negative term "fanatic," yet they were also "brothers." This fraternity seems somewhat out of place, not just because of the "fanatic" qualifier, but the absence of a possessive. They are somebody's brothers, but they were not explicitly described as "ours," that is, Filipino. The term "fanatic Mohammedan brothers" thus perfectly captured the

²⁶² "No hay oposición a gobernadores filipinos." *El Comercio*, November 14, 1923, 1, 2.

²⁶³ "Roads for Mindanao." *Tribune*, August 15, 1925, 4.

in-between, tentative incorporation of Moros into the Filipino national community; they were technically a part of it, but also apart from it.

Slippages could also occur in more subtle ways. An editorial in *Tribune* that denounced covert activities in Mindanao stated that

There is no gainsaying the fact that there are forces at work in Mindanao sowing the seeds of dissension and discord among the Mohammedan elements, *gradually weaning them away from the Filipinos*. (...) Before we know it, this underhanded movement to separate Mindanao from the rest of the Philippines will have gained such momentum that it will be impossible to do anything to prevent the loss of this integral part of the Philippine archipelago.²⁶⁴

Indeed, unrest was characterized as being actively engineered by agents of American empire, all but calling out Governor Wood or American capitalists by name. But when using terms such as “Mohammedan elements” and “Filipinos,” the author unintentionally distinguished the former as a community outside that of the “Filipinos,” who simply went unqualified. The Christian as the standard. Even when speaking of “intermigration” as the solution for the Mindanao issue it was clear that rather than the bidirectional migration suggested by the word, the editorialist espoused unidirectional migration of Christians to areas populated by Muslims. Thus, once again, the anxiety of losing that “integral part” of the Philippines was centered on the territory, not its people. Christian Filipinos were the tool for unity; Moros the tool for dismemberment.

²⁶⁴ “The problem of Mindanao.” *Tribune*, September 10, 1925, 4. My emphasis.

This ambivalence regarding the “belonging” of Moros within the national community came into sharp display when they were encountered by Christian Filipinos outside their expected neck of the woods; that is, outside Mindanao and Sulu. While visits by delegations of datus, sultans, and princesses to the Christian regions of the Philippines could be met with curiosity or even fascination, such visits by commoners could be much more fraught. While Moro *land* indeed already belonged to the Philippines—it was only a matter of binding it more strongly to the geobody through the use of Christian settlers—Moros themselves still remained in a much more uncertain position within the Philippine body politic. They were simultaneously fellow citizens to be embraced and dangerous outsiders to be kept at bay.

The trip undertaken by a group of sixteen Moros on four *vintas* who sailed for three months from the village of South Ubian, in the Sulu archipelago, to Manila shows how, even under the best of circumstances, Moro presence in the northern reaches of the archipelago was unusual and potentially a cause for concern. The very fact that what must have been a commercially insignificant venture merited newspaper coverage speaks to how rare this event was; once in Manila, they were even able to secure meetings with Senator Hadji Butu and the Director of the Bureau of non-Christian Tribes. Through the positive tone of the report, hints of the expected trouble that such forays were expected to produce emerged. *Tribune* noted that these fishermen were allowed to “trade peacefully” throughout the Visayan Islands and that “[t]hese Moros seemed very peaceful indeed.”²⁶⁵ Such qualifiers would be unnecessary if the audience did not expect conflict between Moros and Visayans to emerge—probably at the

²⁶⁵ “Joloanos dare perils of the sea.” *Tribune*, August 7, 1925, 6.

initiative of the Moros. For all the rhetoric of brotherhood between both communities, it was clear that old suspicions remained. An editorial in the same issue, however, took advantage of this unusual event to flip the script on Wood:

There is a deeper significance in this voyage from their distant hamlet than appears on the surface. For if these people are willing to brave the dangers of the deep and leave their homes to trade and make a living among their Christian brothers, there certainly can be no truth in the assertion often made by imperialists that the Mohammedan Filipino distrusts his Christian brother and that there is nothing in the heart of one for the other but hatred and contempt.²⁶⁶

Thus, in clear distinction with then the Muslim Filipino behaved like the bad Other, where brotherhood may be referenced but not owned, when the Muslim Filipino behaved like the good Other, brotherhood became possessive: “their Christian brothers,” “his Christian brother.” The construction of bonds of fraternity between Christian and Muslim Filipinos were fraught with conditionals.

The conditionality of all this talk about the bond of brotherhood between Christian and Muslim Filipinos could be seen in an incident that took place barely ten days later, that revealed the degree to which distrust was the default position when it came to the presence of Moro sailors in northern waters. In an event that must have brought back historical memories of the Moro raiding parties of previous centuries—and more recently, the raids of the Moro pirate Jikiri from 1907 to 1909²⁶⁷—a group of twelve Moros was reported to have traveled from Sulu to

²⁶⁶ “A message of faith.” *Tribune*, August 7, 1925, 4.

²⁶⁷ Charbonneau, *Civilizational Imperatives*, 109–10. For the longer arc of Moro raids, see Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*.

Palawan, where they robbed and murdered a former Representative in the Philippine Assembly, Santiago Patero. Although the Constabulary tried to apprehend the perpetrators, they appeared to have already fled by sea.²⁶⁸ This murder prompted an immediate response by the sitting Representative for Palawan, Patricio Fernández, who proposed a series of measures for the protection of his district, including a blanket ban on Moro vintas fishing in the waters of Palawan.²⁶⁹ He acknowledged the problematic nature of this proposal—he was, after all, banning a community of Filipino citizens from traveling within their own country—by adding that the ban should only take effect if there were a legal way to implement it. Failing that, he would require a very strict policy of limiting permits for Moros and subjecting those who did sail north to Palawan to a stringent surveillance by a brand-new Constabulary Navy or Coast Guard. That Fernández was upfront about not knowing whether the measure was legal or not is a reflection of the degree to which Moros as a whole were still seen as “Others” by Christian Filipinos. While Christians were incentivized to settle in Muslim territories—even if this could result in violence—any act of violence by Muslims in “Christian” lands could prompt calls for them to remain only in ‘their own’ spaces. Fernández’s proposal reflected the logic that Mindanao indeed belonged to the Philippines, its inhabitants, on the other hand, were ‘ban-able’ Others.

Tribune politely disavowed Representative Fernández’s proposal to ban Moros from sailing outside their own islands. While recognizing that Fernández was animated by genuine concern for the safety of his constituents in Palawan, *Tribune* argued that “in the last analysis, such regulations are tantamount to reducing our Mohammedan brothers to the status of

²⁶⁸ “Moros murder man and wife.” *Tribune*, August 18, 1925, 2.

²⁶⁹ “Would taboo Moro vintas.” *Tribune*, August 21, 1925, 1, 2.

foreigners in their own land,”²⁷⁰ thus framing the entire Philippines as the land of Moros as well, and not just that of Christians, who were routinely understood to be allowed to move anywhere. The editorial pointed out that the ban would be counterproductive especially considering all the efforts made by Christian Filipinos to convince the Moros that they were co-equal citizens of a single polity. Indeed, we can see that the pushback against the instinctive “othering” of the Moros came in terms of tacitly admitting that they *may* be Others, but that it was important for the national cause to treat them as if they were not, that they truly were their brothers, even if that meant some sacrifice of the safety of the citizens of Palawan.

In the end, all the outrage turned out to be futile. It so happened that the murderers of Representative Paterno had actually been Christian Filipinos, not Moros.²⁷¹ Remarkably, at least one media outlet referred to them as “Christian” Filipinos with quotation marks, as though grudgingly admitting their cultural identity as such, yet implying that their actions meant that they were not true Christians. Of course, such tact was never observed when referring to Muslims who had killed people. At any rate, the ways in which Christian Filipinos reacted to Muslim sailors outside their usual waters showcase the cracks in the rhetoric of amity pushed forward by those who sought to push back against Wood’s rhetoric of antipathy. Once attention was even slightly taken away from the issue of the geobody, old prejudices could come to play immediately by some Christian Filipinos, while others reminded them to hold their peace to keep their eyes on the prize.

270 “For union and solidarity.” *Tribune*, August 22, 1925, 4. My emphasis.

271 “News of the world.” *Philippine Education Magazine*, November 1925, 321.

Conclusions

Over the course of this chapter we have seen the ways in which anxieties over the integrity of the Philippine geobody took shape over the course of the early years of the Wood administration in Manila. In the minds of Christian Filipino politicians and commentators, Leonard Wood and his shadowy allies were not only determined to make use of the existing cleavage between Christians and Muslims to pursue their objectives of indefinite retention of the Philippines or its mutilation, they actively instigated conflict and unrest in the region to this end. Due to their subaltern position vis-à-vis the Governor General, Christian Filipinos interested in the issue of territorial integrity could only take to public opinion as a battleground of contestation against his plans. In this respect, the battle became a historical one: what was indeed the historical relationship between Christian and Muslim Filipinos? Was it one of long-term, irresolvable antagonism that continued to inform all present conflict, as presented by Wood? Or was such conflict a thing of the past, with current relations instead being characterized by camaraderie and amity, as presented by Christian Filipinos?

Despite Christian Filipino messaging about interfaith amity—which was echoed by some of their Moro allies—cracks continued to surface. Anxieties over territorial mutilation continued to be framed in terms of the loss of land, not the loss of supposedly fellow Filipino citizens. It was the natural resources and future revenues that were at the center of Christian Filipino demands for territorial integrity. Not once did a message of sorrow for the potential “indefinite retention” of their Muslim brothers under United States sovereignty emerge—there were never any comments on ‘repatriating’ any Mindanawons to Luzon or Visayas in case of an American annexation of the southern islands. In the best of cases, Moros were perceived as faithful allies

to Christian Filipinos; in the worst, as a kind of ‘foreigners in a domestic sense’ who constituted a liability in the struggle between Christian Filipinos and Americans over the future control of Mindanao and Sulu. Thus, comments could still slip through, labeling the Moros as barbaric, or seeking to ‘contain’ them in their own part of the country—while Christian Filipinos could continue to migrate to the south.

The interest shown by élites in Manila towards the opinions and stances of the indigenous peoples of the disputed territories highlights the differences between the two case studies. Either as good Others who peacefully trade with Christian Filipinos or who support the cause of territorial integrity and independence, or as bad Others who reject fraternal relations with Christian Filipinos or who act violently at the incitement and seduction of foreign agents, their agency and stakes in the matter were, for the most part, not put in doubt. They were seen as a constituency of Filipinos whose Filipino-ness had to be recognized—although the fact that that needed to be said out loud signals the degree to which that continued to be contested—and who needed to be wooed towards their Christian Filipino brethren and away from American imperialists who would separate them from the Philippines. In Peru, discussions about separatism or the willing cession of territory around the same years completely overlooked the indigenous peoples of the territories being discussed. This sheds light on the way that American empire could inform the course of center-periphery relations in these two countries. Absolute American power to rearrange the territory of their Asian colony as they saw fit forced Christian Filipinos to seek out their Muslim Filipino Other to try to present a united front with which to sway their colonial overlord in a different direction. Clear-cut American presence—the imperial Other—forced Christian Filipinos to manufacture fraternity with the Muslims of the south.

Indigenous violence, thus, becomes a touchy subject, inasmuch as it would undermine the narrative of fraternity and pacification that was being put forward. The absence of direct foreign empire colored the way that Peruvians understood indigenous revolts in their own periphery. The Tasorentsi revolt, while understood as a threat to “civilization”, was not seen as a threat to the geobody.²⁷²

The role of the colonists from the “civilized” cores highlights this difference as well. While in Peru, the only threat to the geobody imaginable was that coming from Spanish-speaking, Catholic colonists in the Amazon region. Only they could plausibly form a nation-state of their own and be recognized as such by other nations, one that, it was automatically assumed, would continue social hierarchies whereby the indigenous would be subordinated to the “western”. It is the threat of this separatism that loomed over people’s minds in Lima. This concern was completely absent in the Philippines. There is no evidence in the written record of any anxiety over Tagalog- or Visayan-speaking settlers trying to set up their own nation-state (one potentially still subordinated to US empire) in Mindanao in order to secure its natural resources only for themselves. There is also no sign of suspicion that American agents were trying to woo these colonists either. This was inflected by US Empire, as partition in the Philippines would mean a new territorial jurisdiction in which it was assumed that the hierarchy between Christian and Filipino Muslims would be inverted, with the latter being above the former—but with the Americans remaining on top. Under such presumptions, any support for partition coming from

²⁷² Santos-Granero, *Slavery and Utopia*.

colonists from Luzon or Visayas was simply unimaginable. Their alignment alongside the Christian Filipino élite was taken for granted by Christian Filipinos and Americans.

The limitations of imperial authority to reorganize territory in its formal and informal empire will come to a head in the second half of the 1920s, when a bill to partition the Philippines was formally presented in the US Congress, and a treaty “ceding” the Putumayo region went for ratification in the Peruvian Congress. As we will see in chapters 3 and 4, it was actually in the sphere of “informal empire” where what was understood to be American territorial reorganization was more successful—far more successful than in its formal empire.

Chapter 3

Pushing back on dismemberment in a colonial context: the Bacon bill of 1926

As anxieties built up among Christian Filipinos regarding what the endgame of the “imperialistic schemes” in Mindanao might be, numerous commentators made use of the imagery of an octopus seeking to take hold of the southern island. *La Opinión* ran a headline saying “Mindanao will succumb squeezed by the octopus,” with the article reporting on the various efforts being undertaken by American politicians to entice the Firestone corporation to change its plans to invest \$100,000,000 in rubber plantations in Liberia, and instead relocate them to the Philippines.²⁷³ This imagery adopted graphic form in a cartoon in *The Independent*, wherein an octopus labeled “U.S. rubber firm” reaches out with several of its limbs towards Mindanao, where a lone Moro armed with a kris raises his fist in defiance. Atop the octopus’ head are three figures representing wealthy American corporations; the one in the middle (Harvey Firestone) points back at the Moro, saying “Permanent submission or you will be crushed!” He is backed up by large bags of money with the dollar sign on them.²⁷⁴ The rest of the Philippines—i.e., Visayas and Luzon—do not appear in the frame, highlighting the idea that capitalism was interested in taking hold of a specific part of the Philippine geobody, the southern island of Mindanao. The accompanying editorial—translated into Spanish as “Facing the octopus”—argued against the “reactionary, colonial, and despotic” campaigns of the large American rubber syndicates who desired to change Philippine Land Laws in order to allow for the purchase of larger swathes of

²⁷³ “Mindanaw sucumbirá estrujada por el pulpo.” *La Opinión*, January 16, 1926, 1.

²⁷⁴ “What Mindanao would be/Lo que será Mindanao.” *The Independent*, January 23, 1926, 3.

land.²⁷⁵ And eventually, as we will see in this chapter, when debate swirled around the Bacon bill to separate Mindanao, Jolo, and Palawan from the Philippines, a Manila newspaper suggested that it had been inspired by “Wall Street octopuses.”²⁷⁶ The imagery of the octopus could also be extended to the reach of Leonard Wood’s ‘khaki cabinet’ as well, as shown by an editorial in *Pagkakaisa*, wherein a double entendre was used; “*mga galamay na military*” could be read as both “military aides” and “military tentacles.”²⁷⁷ The octopus embodied the menace that Christian Filipinos imagined would tear apart its geobody; no matter how much they would fight it off, there would always be more corporate- or military-backed tentacles ready to pull away certain parts of the archipelago.

²⁷⁵ “Facing a danger / Frente al pulpo.” *The Independent*, January 23, 1926, 3-4, 21.

²⁷⁶ “El bill ‘Bacon’ no prosperará.” *La Opinión*, July 2, 1926, 8.

²⁷⁷ “Sino ang may-sala ng mga guló sa Mindanaw?” *Pagkakaisa*, June 14, 1927, 6.

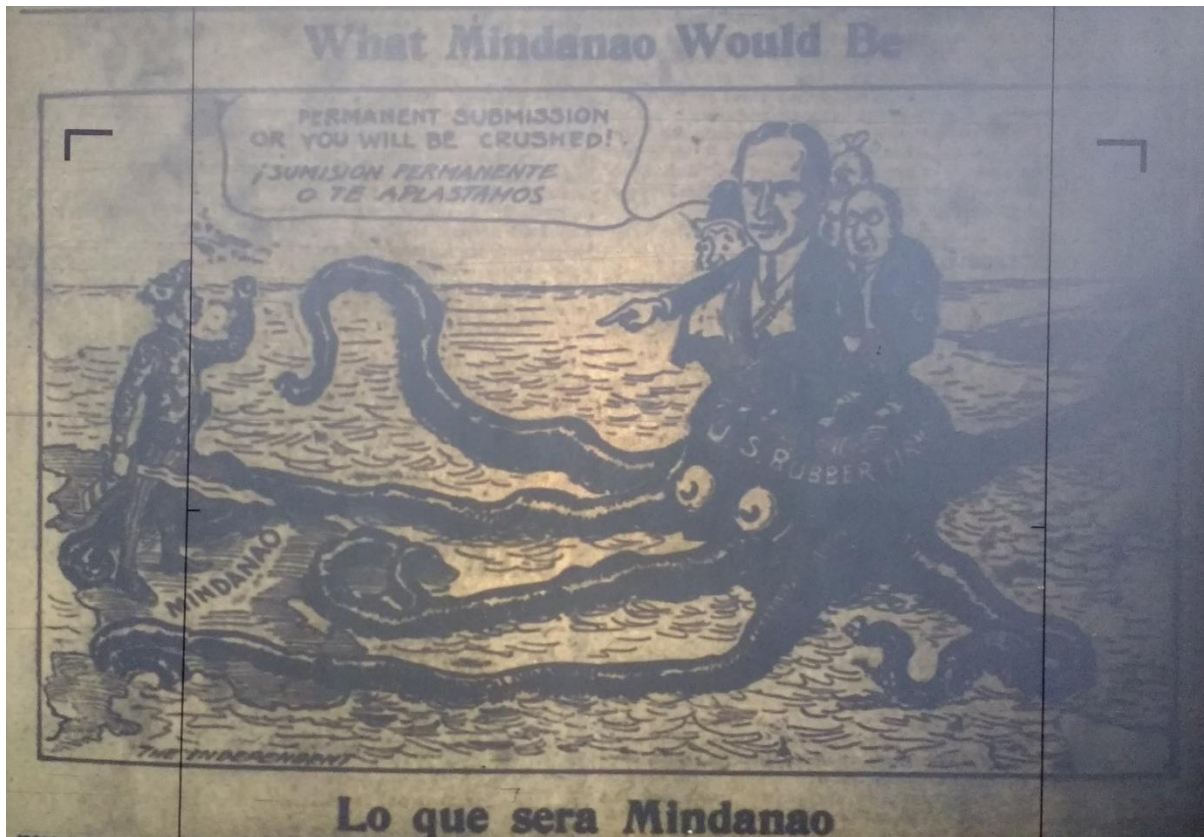


Figure 4: What Mindanao would be

In this chapter, I examine the diverse ways that Christian and Muslim Filipinos responded to the appearance of a concrete attempt to partition the country along religious lines: the Bacon bill of 1926 that proposed splitting off the islands of Sulu, Mindanao, and Palawan into a completely separate colony from the Philippines. I argue that the response from Christian Filipinos was multivalent. On the one hand, they accused Bacon of using the idea of seeking to protect Muslims from Christians as a mere excuse to achieve his real objective: putting the exploitation of the rich natural resources of Mindanao, particularly rubber, in the hands of American corporations in perpetuity. On the other, within a context of anxieties produced by the possibility of permanent colonial status or territorial mutilation (or both), it proved very difficult for the same Christian Filipino commentators to completely divorce themselves from a logic of

defending their own access to the same natural resources. References to defending Muslim Filipinos from perpetual American colonial subjection were very scarce, and often indulged in the rhetoric of continuing their own *mission civilisatrice* in Mindanao. Instead, land for Christian Filipinos and access to natural resources remained in the forefront of their minds. In a crisis context such as this one, in which they were aware of the contestable nature of their claims to Mindanao, material interests came to the forefront.

On their part, in the midst of this struggle between Manila and Washington D.C., Muslim Filipinos were split in their allegiances. Given the extant sources and their nature, it is very difficult to ascertain what the level of approval or disapproval of the Bacon bill among Filipino Muslims was, but it was clearly evident that there was no clear consensus among them. Furthermore, Muslim Filipinos had to negotiate a tricky scenario in which it must have been clear to several of them that, as mentioned above, despite all the protestations of brotherhood or paternal tutelage that both sides may have expressed for them, their well-being was decidedly taking a backseat to access to their natural resources and land.

This chapter highlights two major contrasts in the way the threat of territorial dismemberment was dealt with in the case of Peru. First of all, the Christian Filipino élite was able to leverage the mechanisms of formal American empire to check its designs of territorial reorganization. The Bacon Bill needed to be presented formally, following the rules of democratic institutions in the United States. Public knowledge of this Bill allowed the Christian Filipino élite to make use of the arenas of public opinion and the channels of access to politicians and lawmakers in the United States itself, to advance their cause in the metropole and counteract what was widely understood to be the will of the governor-general. As will be seen in chapter 4,

Peruvian opposition against another territorial reorganization that was understood to be informally mandated by the United States was cracked down harshly, rendering it far more ineffective than that of the colonized Christian Filipinos. And secondly, the ever-present threat of American empire played a role in the search for Christian-Muslim amity to a far greater degree than what took place in Peru between “mainstream” Peruvians and their Amazonian counterparts. In the Philippines, Muslim Filipinos were given voice, while in Peru indigenous peoples were completely ignored.

In this chapter I make use of the English-, Spanish-, and Tagalog-language Filipino press of Manila to gain insight into the media world that shaped the perspectives of the literate (and potentially illiterate as well) inhabitants of the capital and was shaped by them as well. This press engaged with numerous sources, such as dispatches from the United Press, the *Servicio Informativo Nacional*, their own correspondents, and “foreign” newspapers—both those located abroad and the Philippines itself, as in the case of American newspapers based in the Philippines. Reports, interviews, editorials, and op-eds give us the broad parameters within which the Christian Filipino relationship with Mindanao was understood, as well as the ways they understood their geobody and what dismemberment meant. As to Muslim Filipinos, naturally those voices that opposed the partition were highlighted, but careful reading of these sources can give us at least a glimpse into the complicated scenario that Muslim Filipinos had to negotiate in this period.

The octopus’s appetite for commodities

As described by Frank Golay, the Leonard Wood years were characterized by constant acrimonious confrontation between him and the Philippine Legislature in general and Manuel Quezon in particular. This manifested in numerous showdowns during which Wood made use of his extensive veto powers to halt legislation dear to the Christian Filipino legislators, attempted to expand his powers at the cost of those of the Legislature (which had increased its autonomy significantly during the Harrison years), and pushed for the sale of numerous state-owned businesses. Christian Filipino leaders scrambled to salvage as much of these “extra-legal” powers—as Golay describes them—they had carved out during the Harrison years, in order to preserve the state’s stake in the sugar, banking, and railroad sectors, and to continue their campaign for independence in the United States. Confrontation between the American Governor General and the Philippine Legislature reached such a point that Wood surrounded himself with an alternate ‘khaki cabinet’ composed of his closest military advisers, rather than follow the precedent of cooperation with the locals established by his predecessor.²⁷⁸ In retrospect, Wood’s recalcitrant attitude towards the autonomy of Filipinos, appears to be a case of white male fragility *avant la lettre*, whereby the scenario that he inherited from Francis Harrison—one in which the white American governor general had almost become a mere figurehead of a government run by brown-skinned colonials—deeply offended his racial sensibilities. Although he may have taken care to word his statements to not include explicitly racist messaging, his earlier career pursuing Native Americans alongside Theodore Roosevelt and his fascination with

278 Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States-Philippine Relations, 1898-1946*, Monograph (University of Wisconsin--Madison. Center for Southeast Asian Studies) ; No. 14 (Madison : [Philippines]: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Southeast Asian Studies ; In cooperation with Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 229–69.

physical, masculine White prowess to subject other races (see chapter 2) showed that he was indeed a believer in the superiority of the 'White race' and its duties to dominate over other peoples of the world. For someone who took pride in his masculinity, virility, and leadership (and whose pride might have been additionally wounded by his almost complete sidelining during World War I), a situation in which he had to take a backseat to feminized and infantilized civilian non-Whites must not have sat well with him at all.

Wood's animosity towards the Christian Filipino leadership intersected with a significant moment in the history of capitalism and commodities: the Stevenson rubber scheme of 1922-1928. With the British Empire smarting due to the post-World War I economic crisis and a general depression of rubber prices, a committee headed by James Stevenson suggested that a policy of restriction of rubber exports be effected, whereby the rubber plantations in Malaya and Ceylon would cut back on their production in a bid to raise prices. Having control over about two thirds of the world production of rubber at the beginning of this period, the British scheme prompted American politicians and businessmen to seek an alternative source of the commodity, one that would not be under the British flag.²⁷⁹ American businessmen soon began singing the praises of the rubber producing possibilities of the island of Mindanao,²⁸⁰ and Wood tried to introduce legislation allowing for twenty-five-year leases on up to twenty thousand hectares of public lands.²⁸¹ But even from that early moment, concerns emerged among Filipinos about what the

²⁷⁹ John H. Drabble, *Malayan Rubber: The Interwar Years*, Studies in the Economies of East and South-East Asia (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1991), 9–18. Harp, *A World History of Rubber*, 90–91.

²⁸⁰ James W. Strong, "Reasons why Mindanao should supply America's crude rubber." *The Mindanao Herald*, March 3, 1923, 7.

²⁸¹ Golay, *Face of Empire*, 244.

implications of large-scale rubber exploitation by US capitalists would have on Philippine independence, with a cartoon in *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw* capturing this well.



Figure 5: Goma being so sticky, can it still be removed?

The cartoon features a dialogue between Resident Commissioner Guevara and the Firestone Rubber Co.—who might bear Harvey Firestone’s face—and plays with a double entendre of the word “goma.” Guevara points at a (presumably) rising sun labeled “independence of the Philippines,” and tells Firestone that he is concerned Filipinos would no longer be able to see the sun if the two maps Firestone is handling were stuck with “goma” and subsequently hung up. In this context, the Tagalog word *goma* (itself a loan word from Spanish)

means “rubber,” but the other meaning it had borrowed from Spanish was “glue.”²⁸² As Firestone applies glue to the map of the Philippines with a brush, he replies “No, don’t you worry.” In the background, “Hwan,” a stock character representing everyday Filipinos, warns Guevara to be careful, as he too might end up stuck in the “*goma*”.²⁸³ Indeed, the fear was that if the United States were to develop a complete dependence on the Philippines for its rubber supply, its indispensability within American empire would mean that independence would simply never come for the islands.

Although Mark Finlay has shown that, within the broader sweep of American attempts to achieve rubber autonomy, the Philippines was a lower priority than establishing production within the continental United States or the Western Hemisphere in general,²⁸⁴ the impact the campaign for rubber autonomy would have a major impact on the Philippines itself in 1926, when rubber prices had surged immensely. Interest in the Philippines by major American corporations could be weaponized by Wood to place Christian Filipino leaders in a dilemma, as was pointed out by Senator Tirona once the uproar over the Bacon bill broke out:

To have Mindanao made into a state under the United States flag, while the rest of the Philippines is granted independence; or no independence at all with Mindanao’s integrity respected as part of the Philippine territory. The crucial test will come when Big Business

²⁸² This meaning of “*goma*” as glue appears to have fallen out of use, but it appears to have remained in dictionaries at least until the 1970s.

²⁸³ “Kung madikit kaya ng goma ay matanggal pa?” *Bagong Lipang Kalabaw*, July 11, 1923, 13.

²⁸⁴ Mark R. Finlay, *Growing American Rubber: Strategic Plants and the Politics of National Security*, Studies in Modern Science, Technology, and the Environment (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 45–73.

tells the Filipino leaders: You get independence and we get Mindanao, or no independence for the Philippines in sight yet (...)²⁸⁵

One possibility would be to modify their land laws to enable large American corporations to acquire huge expanses of land, which would have the effect of elbowing out Filipino smallholders *and* turning the Philippines into an absolutely indispensable component of American empire. As the cartoon from a few years prior showed, this could mean permanent retention as a colony of the United States. The other option was certainly not attractive either, as it would involve a partition of the country whereby the potentially rubber producing areas of the south would become a permanent possession of the United States, while the rest could aspire to a mutilated independence. The Bacon bill would be understood as a mechanism to force the issue along these lines.

The connection between the Stevenson scheme and the Bacon bill has been previously pointed out by Howard Fry, who has described the latter as an “exercise in divide-and-rule.” Representative Robert Bacon, a childhood friend of Leonard Wood, had traveled to the Philippines in August 1925 just as rubber prices were rising sharply. Once in country, he visited the Muslim-majority regions alongside Wood and assimilated his perspectives on the issues of American empire, the Philippines, and Mindanao. Upon his return to the United States, Bacon lobbied in Congress to prevent the independence of the Philippines and to obstruct any measure towards that end, preparing a memorandum recommending the separation of Moro territories from the Philippines. Bacon was able to plug himself into a network of politicians who believed

²⁸⁵ “Local leaders vigorously score Bacon, Herald-Tribune editorial.” *Tribune*, July 20, 1926, 1, 4.

that the United States had a “mission” in Asia to promote Western civilization and Christianity—while also taking advantage of commercial opportunities. As has been pointed out by Fry, however, “economic interest was all that mattered” to Bacon. This might be particularly clear in the inclusion of Palawan in the proposed Muslim colony, which although it did have an indigenous Muslim population, its smaller proportion than those of the more densely Islamic provinces in Sulu and Mindanao (only 8% Muslim, compared to Sulu’s 98%, Lanao’s 91%, and Cotabato’s 65%), and distance from those islands meant that it was not always included in discussions of separating the Moros.²⁸⁶ Although a partition that included Palawan had been discussed in previous decades, enthusiasm for planting rubber in Palawan suggests that its inclusion was motivated by economic, not religious or ethnographic, reasons.²⁸⁷

Much like the idea of turning parts of the Philippines into a major rubber production area was not entirely new, neither was that of separating Mindanao from the Philippines. American businessmen and officials had already floated the idea before, in 1905 and 1909; on their part, at least part of the Moro élite had asked for the same as well in 1910, 1913,²⁸⁸ and, as discussed in chapter 2, in 1921, in the context of the Wood-Forbes mission. Even during the Wood administration itself, the American Chamber of Commerce tried to push the “Malaya Plan” whereby the Philippines would become the “Territory of Malaya” composed of three parts: Luzon,

²⁸⁶ Howard T Fry, “The Bacon Bill of 1926: New Light on an Exercise in Divide-and-Rule,” *Philippine Studies* 26, no. 3 (1978): 257–73.

²⁸⁷ Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 22. “Cultivarán gomeros en Mindoro y en Palawan.” *La Opinión*, February 5, 1926, 1, 6.

²⁸⁸ Bayona, “Inherited Destinies: Discourses of Territorial Loss in Postcolonial States across the Pacific (Peru and the Philippines, 1903-1927).”

Visayas, and Mindanao, with the United States preserving the option of annexing Mindanao directly.²⁸⁹ Bacon would take these two trends and combine them into a single, momentous bill.

A further intersection came in the form of a bill introduced by Republican Edgar Kiess of Pennsylvania, which was designed to give more power to Governor General Wood. Even Robert Bacon himself had introduced a bill to this effect (and to amend the Land Laws), which he had eventually withdrawn.²⁹⁰ But in the context of the struggle between Wood and the Legislature, the Kiess bill was a response to President Coolidge's call for legislation that would empower the governor general of the Philippines vis-à-vis the Philippine Legislature, transferring control over US excise taxes on Philippine goods from the hands of the latter to the former.²⁹¹ Such a move would provide Wood with the financial resources to carry out his own agenda free from any restrictions on the part of the colonized. The protests that broke out in the context of the Bacon bill often included attacks on the Kiess bill as well, seeing them both as part of a package to roll back Filipino autonomy.

“Bringing home the Bacon”: Christian Filipino responses to the Bacon bill

News of Bacon's bill sent shockwaves through the Philippines. *Tribune* dedicated an entire extra edition to the news, with a huge headline reading “Separation of Mindanao from P.I. territory proposed in US Congress,” and informing their readers that the 800,000 people in the southern islands would be placed under the “permanent protection” of the United States. *La*

²⁸⁹ Golay, *Face of Empire*, 236.

²⁹⁰ “El tropezón de Mr. Bacon.” *La Opinión*, February 19, 1926, 4. “Otros indicios alentadores.” *La Opinión*, April 10, 1926, 4.

²⁹¹ Golay, *Face of Empire*, 262–63.

Opinión ran a huge headline announcing “They want to take Mindanao and Jolo from us.”²⁹²

Christian Filipino responses broadly cast the Bacon bill as the endgame of Wood’s bizarre policies in Mindanao in the years prior, all of which was motivated by an attempt to secure the natural resources of the southern island for American corporations, whether it be through permanent retention of the entire Philippine archipelago, or through a partition which would put the richest (and least populated) part of the archipelago in the hands of American corporations. This partition was repeatedly referred to as a “dismemberment,” the Philippines being textually and graphically depicted as a (geo)body that would be left mutilated by such an act.

Such framings of the issue were, of course, complicated by Christian-Muslim relations. For all their protestations of a single, homogenous body that was under the axe of imperialism, Christian Filipinos were keenly aware that their bonds with Mindanao were not as strong as those between Luzon and Visayas. And while they occasionally acknowledged the existence of this religious difference, this usually still resulted in claims that they continued to be a single ‘Filipino race’, and that as the “more advanced” brothers, Christian Filipinos had a *mission civilisatrice* to accomplish with their own “little brown brothers.” Despite all of this, the vast majority of the condemnations of the Bacon bill continued to follow the lines of the impact that the deprivation of the natural resources of Mindanao would have on Christian Filipinos, rather than the prejudicial effects it could have on the (Muslim) Filipinos who would remain perpetually under the subjection of American empire. The most commonly proffered remedy for ‘erasing’ the dotted line along which imperialistic American geosurgeons could dismember the country was a

²⁹² “Separation of Mindanao from P.I. territory proposed in US Congress.” *Tribune* (extra), June 12, 1926, 1. “Quieren quitarnos Mindanao y Joló.” *La Opinión*, June 12, 1926, 1, 4. “News of the World.” *Philippine Education Magazine*, July 1926, 94.

policy of “intermigration,” whereby these divisions between Filipinos would be blurred.²⁹³ “Intermigration,” however, was a euphemism for unidirectional migration of Christian Filipinos into the less populated ancestral lands of Muslim Filipinos. In this respect, this idea was more similar to the policy of *kolonisatieproof* (colonization) implemented by the colonial government in the Dutch East Indies, whereby colonists from densely populated Java were transferred to the outer islands—which according to Halwi Dahlan had the effect of reducing the spaces ruled by traditional law (*adat*).²⁹⁴ Thus, the aim was a complete demographic transformation that would result in the land no longer being “Muslim,” and thus inseparable from the Christian Philippines. In a sense, it was an erasure of Muslim Filipinos. Christian Filipino commentary condemning the Bacon bill because of its effects on Muslim Filipinos—permanent subjection to United States empire—was extremely rare.

Broadly, then, the context of crisis surrounding the Bacon bill gives us insight into the way Christian Filipinos perceived their relationship with Mindanao and its Muslim population. Anxious about preserving “their” territory, Christian Filipinos let down their guard, and expressed some of their true feelings about the southern reaches of the archipelago. Much like physical pain can remove social filters, the *expectation* of pain can have a similar effect, in this case the expectation of the pain of dismemberment itself.

The shadow of Wood

²⁹³ “Es preciso fomentar la inter migración de colonos.” *La Opinión y El Comercio*, May 21, 1926, 4.

²⁹⁴ M. Halwi Dahlan, “Perpindahan penduduk dalam tiga masa: kolonisasi, kokuminggakari, dan transmigrasi di provinsi Lampung (1905-1979),” *Patanjala: Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya* 6, no. 3 (September 1, 2014): 335–48.

Given Wood's track record of confrontation with the Philippine leadership, his stance against Filipinization, and his suspicious policies in Mindanao in the previous years, Christian Filipino commentators immediately suspected him as the brains behind the Bacon bill. Wood, however, affected a pose of detached, yet coy, neutrality. "I have received no cable from Washington regarding the matter. I know nothing about it and cannot comment on it before I receive word from the federal government," he was quoted as saying, with Filipino reporters taking note that he gave the statement while sporting a cheeky smirk (*medio sonriente*).²⁹⁵ *La Opinión* reported on how he had cabled General McIntyre of the Office of Insular Affairs to obtain the synopsis of the Bacon bill, so that he could form an opinion on it should Congress ask him for one. Once he received it and his opinion was officially requested, Wood continued to act coyly around the Manila press, stating that he would emit an opinion "only after a thorough examination of the entire details."²⁹⁶

This affectation of ignorance and cold objectivity did not convince his detractors among Christian Filipinos. With the information that Wood and Bacon were indeed childhood friends being common knowledge in the Philippines,²⁹⁷ it seemed implausible that Bacon would not have floated the idea of splitting the archipelago to Wood; what is more, it might have been the governor general who suggested such a plan to the congressman. A "prominent Filipino" speculated that given Bacon's friendship with Wood, the plan probably had the governor

²⁹⁵ "Wood says he has not been advised about Bacon bill." *Tribune*, June 13, 1926, 1, 4. "El gobernador Wood y el 'bill' de Bacon." *La Opinión*, June 14, 1926, 1.

²⁹⁶ "Wood desea conocer bien el 'bill' Bacon." *La Opinión*, June 19, 1926, 1. "Coolidge not behind Bacon." *Tribune*, June 20, 1926, 1, 4. "Coolidge not behind Bacon." *Tribune*, June 20, 1926, 1, 4.

²⁹⁷ "Las ironías de la vida." *La Opinión*, June 14, 1926, 8. "Bacon bill is seen as grave menace to P.I." *Tribune* (extra), June 12, 1926, 1.

general's backing, and *Tribune* directly challenged Wood's affectation of ignorance stating that "it is of common knowledge that if he is not the author, his consent and approval must have been secured before Representative Bacon ever dared to present his proposal."²⁹⁸ Further confirmation of their concerns was surely spread by another article that reported that "an American enjoying some degree of intimacy with the Governor General" believed that Wood would not only not be opposed to the Bill, he would actually sympathize with it.²⁹⁹

The Bacon-Wood connection would only appear reinforced inasmuch as the congressman appeared to parrot the narrative that Wood had been putting forward since the days of the Wood-Forbes Report, and especially since the Moro unrest of 1923. He described Moro conditions as "pitiful," and their representation in the Legislature as a "farce and a mockery." Furthermore, he highlighted that (Christian) Filipinos were their "hereditary enemies" who held complete control over them, and that the (Christian) Filipino plans to assimilate the Moros were "a complete failure." He pointed out the amount of violence that had plagued the region in the recent past as proof that "[i]t is hopeless to expect the situation to be remedied as long as it is left in the hands of the Philippine government."³⁰⁰ As seen in chapter 2, Christian Filipino commentators already suspected that Wood's embrace of the narrative of "long-term antipathy" between Christians and Muslims and his incitements to violence in Lanao were part of a plan. The Bacon bill mutilating the Philippines appeared as its final move.

²⁹⁸ "Bacon bill is seen as grave menace to P.I." *Tribune* (extra), June 12, 1926, 1. "What government is ours." *Tribune*, June 15, 1926, 4.

²⁹⁹ "Think officers of Army favor Bacon measure." *Tribune* (extra), June 12, 1926, 1.

³⁰⁰ "Wood says he has not been advised about Bacon bill." *Tribune*, June 13, 1926, 1, 4.

An editorial in *La Opinión* shows to what degree this interpretation was present. They took the bill presented by Bacon—a “rabid imperialist”—as proof that the “insidious, destructive work” carried out by the Wood administration in Mindanao had an ultimate objective: the “disintegration of the Philippine territory”:

From the moment that, due to a burning hatred for our national aspiration, doctrines against the union and harmony between Christian and Mohammedan Filipinos were spread in Moroland, and the suspicious tolerance in the granting of licenses to bear firearms, and the spread of advice regarding Moro public school attendance and tax payments, we immediately figured out that they were trying to realize a diabolical program with the aim of inciting the spirit of the Mohammedans against the Christian population and authorities, and provoking conflicts or alteration in the public order, to thus have either the basis to request a special military regime, or to attain something even worse—that which Bacon has embodied in his latest bill—that is, the dismemberment of Mindanao and Jolo from the rest of the archipelago.³⁰¹

Another editorial also referenced plans to incite hatred against Christian Filipinos among the Muslims, describing the unrest in Mindanao (see Chapter 2) as “diabolically prepared.”³⁰² *La Opinión* referenced some comments by Pedro Guevara that imperialists had not demanded the separation of the Mountain Province, even though the same social and political conditions that supposedly justified the separation of Mindanao were also prevalent there. The reason behind this difference was, according to Guevara, that rubber was only viable in the south. It then went

301 “Otro proyecto de Bacon.” *La Opinión*, June 12, 1926, 8.

302 “Frente al peligro.” *La Opinión*, June 17, 1926, 8.

on to state that it was public knowledge that the imperialist campaign of “Christianophobia” targeted the south far more than the Mountain Province, and that this was because they knew that it would have greater success among the Muslims and because Mountain Province was close to Manila, enabling a quick (Christian) Filipino response to their activities. “Thus, this is a plan whose elaboration has taken into account all the circumstances that could ensure its complete coupling with the material needs of the nation and Wall Street concupiscence,” it concluded.³⁰³ From the angle of satire, a columnist imagined Wood looking at an alligator skull gifted to him by Abdullah Piang of Cotabato, and saying that it bore some resemblance to imperialism, which “wants to swallow Mindanao, Palawan, and Jolo.”³⁰⁴ At any rate, it is clear that Christian Filipinos were convinced they were witnessing the unfolding of a carefully thought-out plan by Wood.

The matter remained of figuring out to what degree the partition of the Philippines was a *fait accompli* or not. While Wood’s involvement in, and support for, this outrage seemed undisputable, the amount of support the measure would have in the United States Congress and on the part of the president was less clear. Regarding President Coolidge, reports went from him not being informed of the bill, and thus neutral towards it, to him having requested Wood’s opinion before throwing his weight behind it, which in itself was taken as a sign that he supported it.³⁰⁵ As to Congress, it was reported that most members of Congress said they were not familiar

³⁰³ “El por qué de una exclusión.” *La Opinión*, June 15, 1926, 8. *The Independent*, however, fired back at his reasoning, considering it “tantamount to a suggestion for those provinces to also be removed from the jurisdiction of the Philippine legislature. Doesn’t Commissioner Guevara realize how terribly he is defending the National Cause?” “Sin Malicia.” *The Independent*, June 19, 1926, 28.

³⁰⁴ “Lo que inspira un cráneo de un caimán.” *La Opinión*, June 16, 1926, 8.

³⁰⁵ “Coolidge well posted on P.I.” *Tribune*, June 17, 1926, 1, 4. “Coolidge not behind Bacon.” *Tribune*, June 20, 1926, 1, 4. “Ningún bill sobre Filipinas será tratado por hoy en el congreso.” *La Opinión*, June 21, 1926, 1, 7.

enough with the bill to take any stance on it,³⁰⁶ and Quezon himself stated that he did not believe the US Congress would approve it.³⁰⁷ However, *La Opinión* pointed out that if Coolidge were to make up his mind to push for approval of the bill, “a simple presidential summoning will suffice for the congressional majority ‘leaders’ to hold a meeting and make the President’s point of view theirs, as has happened in many cases.”³⁰⁸

As dire as things may have looked, some relief came for Christian Filipinos when, a little over a week after the news of the Bacon bill arrived in Manila, American Congressional leaders set the agenda for the remaining few days of the session, excluding the aforementioned bill from consideration.³⁰⁹ The press reported that no new Philippine legislation would be discussed until Colonel Carmi A. Thompson completed his visit to the Philippines and submitted his report. With that information in hand, they would be able to set an agenda for December.³¹⁰ As the possibility of a sudden partition of the colony disappeared, Governor General Wood’s coyness faded, but he still refused to come down on the issue on one side or the other, stating that “[t]here isn’t enough time, and even if there were, conditions obtaining here at present would have to be reported on first before any action could be taken.”³¹¹ Although numerous columns, essays, proclamations and events against the Bacon bill took place as soon as it was announced in the

³⁰⁶ “Bacon did not consult Davis.” *Tribune*, June 25, 1926, 1. “Después de segregar Mindanao, Joló y Palawan, aumentarán los poderes del gobernador general.” *La Opinión*, June 25, 1926, 6.

³⁰⁷ “Wood says he has not been advised about Bacon bill.” *Tribune*, June 13, 1926, 1, 4.

³⁰⁸ “Frente al peligro.” *La Opinión*, June 17, 1926, 8.

³⁰⁹ “Coolidge not behind Bacon.” *Tribune*, June 20, 1926, 1, 4. “Ningún bill sobre Filipinas será tratado por hoy en el congreso.” *La Opinión*, June 21, 1926, 1, 7. “De aquí y de allá.” *The Independent*, June 26, 1926, 34. “News of the world.” *Philippine Education Magazine*, August 1926, 158, 162.

³¹⁰ “Ningún bill sobre Filipinas será tratado por hoy en el congreso.” *La Opinión*, June 21, 1926, 1, 7.

³¹¹ “Thompson’s report to precede action on Bacon measure.” *Tribune*, June 22, 1926, 1, 4.

Philippines, the end of the legislative session bought the Christian Filipino leadership more time to reorganize and present their opposition to the mutilation of their geobody.

Protesting dismemberment

Christian Filipinos unanimously opposed the dismemberment represented by the Bacon bill, and sought methods to oppose it, with a first wave of protests to be scheduled for Rizal's birthday on June 19, just a week after the news of the bill first arrived in the Philippines, and a later "monster meeting" taking place on June 27, by which time it had become clear that the Bacon bill would not be discussed in the short term. This "monster meeting," organized by the Supreme National Council, and supported by the leaders of the Demócrata and Nacionalista parties, and was to be held in the Manila Grand Opera House. It featured a star-studded slate of speakers, which included Senate President Manuel Quezon, President Tan of the Municipal Board, former Representative José Generoso, Representative Claro Recto, Speaker Manuel Roxas, Senators Tirona, Osías, and Sumulong, President Santos of the Manila University, and the president of the Federation of Filipino Students, Leocadio Pineda. Preparations for the meeting were intense, with the Opera House being decorated with the flags of the participating organizations, Nacionalista and Demócrata cadres distributing flyers throughout the cities, and a marching band drumming up attendance by playing in front of the Opera House. Attendance was expected to be so large that they installed two Magnavox speakers outside the locale so that the overflow audience could listen to the speeches as well.³¹² The meeting also had the support of

312 "El gran miting de protesta se celebrará el 27, domingo." *La Opinión*, June 19, 1926, 1. "Coolidge not behind Bacon." *Tribune*, June 20, 1926, 1, 4. "El mitin se seguirá, y en el Opera House." *La Opinión*, June 22, 1926, 1.

the local Filipino media, with *Tribune* and *La Opinión* exhorting their readers to attend the meeting in large numbers.³¹³

The “monster meeting” appears to have been a runaway success, with *Tribune* even devoting an entire extra edition to it, triumphantly announcing that 10,000 people had been in attendance, and describing the crowd as “one of the biggest seen in Manila in recent years.” Pictures indeed showed a packed Opera Hall, with those in attendance appearing to be all-male and smartly dressed in white suits. Highlighting the success of the meeting and the organizers’ forethought, a picture showed the overflow audience listening to the speeches through the Magnavox speakers, with *Tribune* commenting that “[i]t is said that the speeches were heard better outside—and of course it was cooler outdoors than inside the Opera House.” As a broad summary, *Tribune* said that representatives from “Moroland, Visayas, and Luzon”—the inverted the usual order in which these regions were mentioned, perhaps to highlight the participation of southerners—accused the Kiess and Bacon bills as imperialistic and having a retentionist spirit.³¹⁴

Even though Manuel Quezon was absent due to his wife falling ill, and so was Sumulong because he fell ill himself, the rest of the speakers, Camilo Osías, Emilio Tirona, José Generoso, Representative Gaston of Misamis, Leocadio Pineda, Governor Perfecto Abordo of Palawan, Bienvenido Tan, and Speaker Manuel Roxas all gave fierce speeches strongly condemning the bill.

“Meeting of protest against Bacon and Kiess to be impressive event.” *Tribune*, June 26, 1926, 1. “Mañana, la magna reunión en el Opera House.” *La Opinión*, June 26, 1926, 1.

³¹³ “The country’s fight.” *Tribune*, June 24, 1926, 4. “La reunión pública de mañana.” *La Opinión*, June 26, 1926, 8. “Tonight’s meeting.” *Tribune*, June 27, 1926, 4.

³¹⁴ “10,000 hear imperialism denounced in meeting.” *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926, 1. “De aquí y de allá.” *The Independent*, July 3, 1926, 26. “Speakers in last night’s monster meeting.” *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926, 1. “El pueblo indignadísimo, contra los desmanes del imperialismo.” *La Opinión*, June 28, 1926, 1, 8. “Those who couldn’t get in ‘listened in’.” *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926, 2.

Some of the themes that ran through several of the speeches were describing it as a betrayal of the promise of independence for the entire country and the culmination of Wood's imperialistic designs, as well as appealing to the consciences of "liberty-loving Americans" to reject this abuse of power. The voice that appeared to be missing in this meeting, however, was that of the Muslims in the territories earmarked for separation themselves. While it is true that Representative Gaston of Misamis and Governor Abordo of Palawan gave speeches, they both represented Christian-majority portions of the projected US territory, while their names suggest an equally Christian background. Thus, commentary that he "voiced the sentiments of the Moroland" or that of the Moros were disingenuous at best.³¹⁵ Misamis, for instance, was even excepted from a later version of the Bacon bill.³¹⁶ This was, however, one of the few times that Christian Filipino voices from Mindanao were amplified.

One speech in particular that prompted some discussion in the press was Manuel Roxas'. He described the Philippines' current situation as one of war, a "peaceful war to be sure, but war—tremendous, exacting war just the same!", followed by characterizing protests as pointless. Instead, he hoped that the meeting would "inaugurate a renaissance of Filipino nationalism." Regarding the partition of the country, he said that "[w]e must show to the American people that we would rather have an autocratic government here with Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, than a seemingly democratic one without them." He called on everyone to cease being apathetic, to put their differences aside, and to be willing to make sacrifices for the Philippines.³¹⁷ What exactly he

³¹⁵ "Monster mass meeting registers vigorous protest against Kiess and Bacon before Congress." *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926 1, 3. "El pueblo indignadísimo, contra los desmanes del imperialismo." *La Opinión*, June 28, 1926.

³¹⁶ "Ang ikatlong paghuhunos ng 'ahas' (Bill Bacon)." *Pagkakaisa*, May 26, 1927, 1, 4.

³¹⁷ "Roxas condemning people's apathy, urges offensive." *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926, 1, 4. "El pueblo indignadísimo, contra los desmanes del imperialismo." *La Opinión*, June 28, 1926, 1, 8.

had in mind, other than protests, remained unclear, and that would be the crux of the discussion of how to deal with dismemberment dictated “from above.”

Such a line of thinking was not a complete innovation on the part of Roxas. In days prior, Manuel Quezon had already stated the need to “speak less and do more” in response to territorial dismemberment,³¹⁸ perhaps referencing his 1924 attempts to contest Wood’s challenges of the funding for the Commission on Independence, which included a court action, a boycott of American goods, and a call for voluntary contributions from public servants.³¹⁹ Other commentators seemed to go further, however, seemingly into the territory of more direct action, or even rebellion. An enigmatic op-ed by one Crispin M. Rivera, for example, had argued that the protests scheduled for José Rizal’s birthday, were unwise and ineffective, contrasting the absolute failure of Rizal and other *ilustrado*’s speeches and protests with Andrés Bonifacio’s more effective revolution. Instead, he suggested that Filipinos remain silent and be ready for the moment to defend the country from dismemberment.³²⁰ Another cryptic criticism against protests asked “Do our fellow countrymen know why the great powers fear the weak and defenseless Chinese? *Qui potest capere, capiat* (He who gets it, let him get it),” it concluded, probably referencing how the massive strikes associated with the May Fourth Movement had had an impact in China.³²¹

Editorials in *Tribune* and *La Opinión* agreed with Roxas’ message about doing more than merely protesting, but they seemed unclear as well as to what this would entail. They agreed that

³¹⁸ “Ha llegado la hora de hablar menos y obrar más, dice Quezón.” *La Opinión*, June 17, 1926, 1, 3.

³¹⁹ Golay, *Face of Empire*, 254.

³²⁰ Crispin M. Rivera, “Against public demonstration.” *Tribune*, June 18, 1926, 4.

³²¹ “Sin malicia.” *The Independent*, June 19, 1926, 28.

whatever it should be, it should be done within “peace and order” or “peace and legality.”³²² Another editorial complained that Filipinos had been left “groping in the darkness” after Roxas’ speech and that they were left with no idea of what the plan to oppose dismemberment was.³²³ Other commentators were even less charitable with Manuel Roxas’ vagueness. Rosauro Almario referring to him with a derisive “Manoling,” and mocked him for apparently having floated the idea of a legislative strike, which he characterized as an act of cowardice unworthy of the old Bonifacios, Matanglawins, Eliases, and Simouns, but rather of a group of craven Sancho Panzas. All that would accomplish would be to make things easier for Wood. He later found that the silver lining in the entire Bacon bill discussion in that, rather than content themselves with chitter-chatter (*bungangear*- a word that itself is a mix of Tagalog and Spanish), Filipinos were now patriotic, united, and ready for action.³²⁴

Yet *The Independent* seemed to be Roxas’ harshest critic, and it once again seemed to slip towards calling for armed struggle:

No more protests!, yelled Manoling Roxas when talking about the Bacon bill, and the public expected him to threaten the mass resignation of all Filipino officials, general strike of all workers, boycott of American goods, or a revolution with all its consequences, but it did not come to pass: the Speaker limited himself to rant against imperialism and failed to propose anything practical. What a disappointment!³²⁵

³²² “Let us act.” *Tribune* (extra), June 28, 1926, 4. “El momento de obrar.” *La Opinión*, June 28, 1926, 8. Patricia Buckley Ebrej, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Second edition., Cambridge Illustrated History (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 271–72.

³²³ “Groping in the darkness.” *Tribune*, June 29, 1926, 4.

³²⁴ “Hablemos claro...” *La Opinión*, June 30, 1926, 4. “Hablemos claro...” *La Opinión*, July 1, 1926, 4.

³²⁵ “Sin malicia...” *The Independent*, July 3, 1926, 31-32.

The columnist went on to extensively quote Patrick Henry and his call to arms against British rule, which it commented with an enigmatic, “Let us meditate, Filipinos, let us meditate...” It then went on to comment on Osías’ speech, and how he said that the Philippines had a greater population than the US did when they started their independence, and more population than many countries in Europe, saying “All of this is true; but so long as our demands are limited to hot air, *nulla est redemptio!* [there is no redemption!] Freedom is not conquered by the tip of one’s tongue...” Furthermore, when commenting on Resident Commissioner Guevara’s call for Muslim Filipinos to have the right to elect their own representatives, *The Independent* remarked that the time for reform was over, that it was time for “the restoration of the Philippine Republic through any means.”³²⁶

It appears that the Filipino political élite never disclosed in the media what their plans to contest the dismemberment of the archipelago were, apart from written protests or popular meetings, nor did they explain why such a plan was never presented to the public. What seems likely is that whatever plans they might have had in mind—and whose existence appears to have made their way into the speeches and statements they gave—quickly became obsolete when the Bacon bill was excluded from consideration in the current legislative session. That exclusion gave them several months to lobby congressmen in the United States and to engage in other behind-the-scenes maneuverings that would preclude the need for any sort of mass movement. As members of the economic and social élite who knew well that mass movements could get out of hand, they must have considered them as a weapon of last resort. It is also possible that within

³²⁶ “Sin malicia...” *The Independent*, July 3, 1926, 31-32.

the configuration of speakers, Roxas' original speech was meant to set up Manuel Quezon's announcement of the measures to be undertaken (Strikes? Boycotts?), but the latter's last-minute absence meant that the former was left hanging and without time to rewrite his speech.

Opposition to the Bacon bill was naturally not limited to Manila, but widespread throughout the Christian-majority territories of the Philippines. The press took note of these protests, reporting that at least the provincial boards of Pampanga, Cagayan, Bulacan, Pangasinan, Laguna, Davao, and Bataan passed resolutions protesting against the Bacon bill,³²⁷ as well as a large number of municipal councils.³²⁸ The press emphasized the role an American citizen, Washington D. Corn, had in passing the resolution against the Bacon bill in the town of Catbalogan, Samar, indubitably as proof of how fair-minded Americans were also against this "imperialist measure."³²⁹ In more *ad hoc* protests, Palaweños residing in Manila organized their own meeting of protest against the Bacon bill, while Fourth of July celebrations in Davao and Cebu were punctuated by boycotts by either Americans or Filipinos.³³⁰

³²⁷ "Pampanga against Bacon's measure." *Tribune*, July 1, 1926, 4. "Morong protests against Bacon bill." *Tribune*, July 2, 1926, 2. "Resolutions of protest against Bacon mounting." *Tribune*, July 3, 1926, 6. "Filipinos refuse to join liberty day observance." *Tribune*, July 8, 1926, 4. "Cagayan protesta contra Bacon." *La Opinión*, July 8, 1926, 8. "Negros town is bitter against Bacon and Kiess." *Tribune*, July 9, 1926, 2. "Davao protesta." *La Opinión*, July 15, 1926, 3. "Bataan files protest against Bacon bill." *Tribune*, August 1, 1926, 7.

³²⁸ "Morong protests against Bacon bill." *Tribune*, July 2, 1926, 2. "Filipinos refuse to join liberty day observance." *Tribune*, July 8, 1926, 4. "Negros town is bitter against Bacon and Kiess." *Tribune*, July 9, 1926, 2. "Negros town is bitter against Bacon and Kiess." *Tribune*, July 9, 1926, 2. "Camarines joins anti-Bacon protest." *Tribune*, June 19, 1926, 1. "El concejo de Cabuyao protesta contra el bill Bacon." *La Opinión*, June 26, 1926, 6. "Pangasinan se levanta contra el imperialismo." *La Opinión*, June 29, 1926, 1, 8. "Protesta contra los bills Bacon y Kiess." *La Opinión*, July 3, 1926, 4. "Pangasinan town protests Bacon bill." *Tribune*, July 21, 1926, 6. "Urdaneta protests against Bacon bill." *Tribune*, July 25, 1926, 2. "More join chorus of protest against Bacon." *Tribune*, July 28, 1926, 2. "Coolidge verá que en Filipinas condenamos la codicia de Bacon." *La Opinión*, August 3, 1926, 6.

³²⁹ "Protesta contra Bacon." *La Opinión*, July 8, 1926, 1. "American protests gainst Bacon bill." *Tribune*, July 22, 1926, 2.

³³⁰ "Vigorosa protesta de los hijos de Palawan." *La Opinión*, June 30, 1926, 1. "Ningún yanqui asistió al 4 de julio de Dávao." *La Opinión*, July 6, 1926, 1. "Ausencia de filipinos en las fiestas por el '4' en Cebú." *La Opinión*, July 7, 1926, 1. "Filipinos refuse to join libety day observance." *Tribune*, July 8, 1926, 4.

Visualizing the language of dismemberment

The language of the physical mutilation of the geobody continued to be present in editorials against the Bacon bill. “No other contemplated act of congress is as fraught with serious consequences as this proposed dismemberment of Filipino territory,” *Tribune* stated in an editorial.³³¹ Sergio Osmeña chimed in as well, saying that the Bacon bill “is nothing other than an attempt to destroy our country and shatter our unity,” also labeling it “an attempt to dismember the Philippine nation in the interest of the great American rubber companies.”³³²

Dismemberment of the Philippine geobody was also depicted in graphic form, yet accurate representation of it appeared to be considered too shocking to be presented without dilution. For example, a map published in *Tribune*, could not bring itself to print a map of a truly mutilated Philippine geobody. Rather than print a map that encompassed solely Luzon and Visayas in the frame, to truly show what the Philippines would look like if the Bacon bill were to become a law, they made sure to still include Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan, albeit unshaded. With its emphasis on representing the entire Philippine geobody, it even included the Batanes islands north of Luzon, which frequently went unrepresented for simplicity’s and framing’s sake. The territories that were under threat of mutilation had to literally remain in the frame in this representation, suggesting that they were not lost yet. The map impelled action on the part of its readers, with a caption stating “The above, in black, is all that will remain to the Filipinos if

³³¹ “Our opposition.” *Tribune*, June 13, 1926, 4.

³³² “Su fin es destruir nuestro país y unidad, dice Osmeña.” *La Opinión*, June 14, 1926, 1, 4. “Bacon draws nationwide denunciation.” *Tribune*, June 15, 1926, 1, 4.

Mindanao and Palawan are separated from the Philippines as proposed by Representative Bacon.

Will the Filipinos let such a thing happen?"³³³



Figure 6: Taking home the Bacon

³³³ "Taking home the Bacon." *Tribune*, June 15, 1926, 1.

Such a call for action was echoed in a cartoon published by *The Independent*. Truly embodying the idea of the Philippine geobody, the cartoon depicts how the anxieties around dismemberment manifested the foreshadowing of imminent pain. The Philippines was explicitly depicted as a female body, with each of her parts identified with a major set of islands (the head, torso, and arms are labeled as Luzon, the space between the waist and the knees are labeled Visayas, while the lower legs are labeled Mindanao), hence forming a literal geobody. She lies prostrate and helpless while Representative Bacon mutilates her with an axe, chopping off the lower part of her legs.³³⁴ In this feminine representation of the country's territory, we find a reflection of the images of "Mother Philippines" identified by Reynaldo Ileto among subaltern groups in the Philippines in the 19th and 20th centuries.³³⁵ The cartoon—titled *Bacon's Dream* or *El sueño de Bacon*—depicts the exact moment of imminent trauma, the moment in which limb is dismembered. The dream (or nightmare?) could become true at any time, and at the will of forces beyond Filipinos' direct control. In contrast to female helplessness, it is male actions (or lack thereof) that drive the message of the cartoon home. A male American mutilates the female Philippine geobody while the stock character of Juan watches in horror, yet does nothing. A spectral Rizal asks him from beyond the grave what he will do about it, trying to spur him into action.

³³⁴ "Bacon's dream / El sueño de Bacon." *The Independent*, June 19, 1926, 3.

³³⁵ Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979).

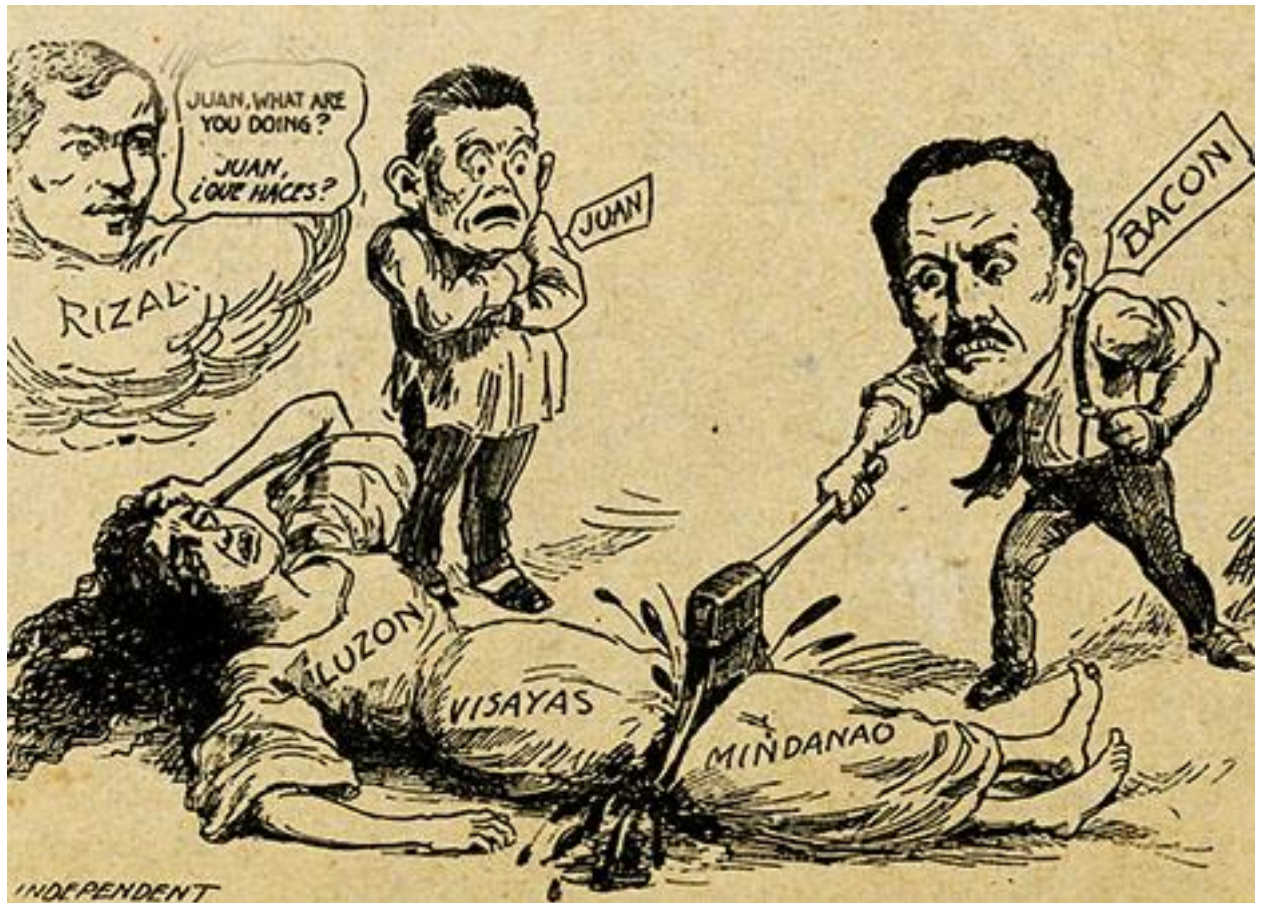


Figure 7: Bacon's dream/El sueño de Bacon

The phantom of one chosen trauma (the failure of the Philippine revolution of 1896-1897 during which José Rizal was executed, and the defeat in the Philippine-American War of 1899-c.1910 that led to the Philippines being at the mercy of American dismemberment) emerged to try to prevent another trauma and its consequential haunting and pain. It is up to the new generation of Filipino males, represented by Juan, to prevent this territorial mutilation or dismemberment from happening. The Philippines' prostrate state seems to reinforce the continuity between the existing trauma and the potential one. The events of the turn of the century have left her helpless at the hands of the Americans, and Bacon is finishing off the job.

In depicting a feminine geobody, the cartoon also reproduced the prevalent stereotypes and hierarchies of the Philippines. Mindanao, the region characterized by Muslim and Lumad populations that did not conform to the mainstream Catholic orientation of what had been the Spanish Philippines, was represented as the lower legs and feet of the Philippines' geobody. Luzon, the site of the capital city and of the Tagalog-speaking region, encompasses the head and the upper part of the torso, including the heart; Visayas, another Christian-majority region, encompasses the lower part of the torso, including the stomach and reproductive areas. Thus, the loss of Mindanao, as painful and traumatic as it may be depicted, is thus not necessarily the complete death of "the Philippines" as such. The country, despite its mutilation, could still muddle ahead. While associating the head and torso with the natural position of "up" aligns with the conventions of Western cartography (North-up) the cartoon also unwittingly reveals the geographic hierarchies embedded in Philippine conceptions of the national geo-body. Separating Luzon and the Visayas, for example, would spell certain death in this graphic representation.

Between giving civilization and giving voice to Muslim Filipinos

Christian Filipinos were caught up in a complicated relationship of ambiguity regarding Mindanao and Sulu. While they were absolutely convinced of the "Filipino-ness" of the lands, the same condition was not systematically extended to its inhabitants, particularly Muslim inhabitants. For the most part, Christian Filipino objections to the Bacon bill erased the Muslim population altogether, or alternatively, saw them as a potential liability to be erased by growing numbers of Christian Filipino settlers. Once local Muslim majorities were diluted by Christian settlers, the thinking went, the "dotted line" along which dismemberment could take place would

be erased, finally homogenizing the Philippine geobody. It was only exceptionally that Christian Filipino commentators would protest the Bacon bill for the sake of the *inhabitants* of the land, rather than for the land itself. But even when Muslim Filipinos were introduced into the equation in a positive way, they were more often than not seen not as fellow citizens, but rather as objects of a Christian Filipino ‘civilizing process,’ one whose very existence could give Christians a claim to be among the ‘civilizing’ peoples of the world, rather than the ones in need of civilization—and colonization.

Despite having been positioned as subordinates, or even liabilities, by their nominal fellow citizens, Muslim Filipinos were given the possibility to speak back, both at Christian Filipinos and American colonizers—to a much farther degree than was ever considered in Peru regarding its Amazonian peoples. Being caught in a crossfire between two groups of Christians—a neighboring one and an extra-continental one—Muslim leaders could try to play one against the other to obtain their own objectives. At the same time, the evidence shows that there was not a clear consensus for or against the Bacon bill, which suggests that the self-interest of the different Muslim groups was read in different ways by different leaders. Sometimes, a single leader may have adopted what appeared to be contradictory, disloyal positions regarding the Bacon bill, in what were attempts at jockeying for position and benefit. No one characterized this ambiguity better than Hadji Butu, as we will see.

Resolving the “Moro problem”

As could have been expected, the Bacon bill crisis triggered calls for the default “solution” to the “Moro problem”: colonization by Christian Filipinos. In the immediate wake of the news

of the bill, the National Supreme Council approved a plan to promote Christian Filipino migration to Mindanao. They emphasized that the success of the resulting agricultural colonies should not be measured in financial terms, but should rather be considered “public improvements, assuring the greatness of the nation.” Ludovico Hidrosollo, director of the Bureau of Non-Christian tribes, pointed out that another benefit of this plan would be that Muslims would learn from Christians and live side by side with them.³³⁶ In this context, it would have been understood that such Christian settlers and “assimilated” Muslims would become “anchors” that would keep the nation “great” by preventing the dismemberment of a contested area. That mass colonization by Christians was widely understood to be the ‘common sense’ solution to all problems in Mindanao—including dismemberment—can also be testified to by the fact that the political class was accused of having been negligent with this issue, an accusation that politicians such as Secretary Apostol and Senators Jose Laurel and Isabelo de los Reyes angrily denied.³³⁷ An editorial supporting Christian Filipino migration to Mindanao highlighted the differences between “Filipinos” and Muslims in this significant paragraph:

the immediate need is the *economic conquest of the island by the Christian Filipinos*. That conquest, if it will ever be achieved, is largely a question of settlement. *Bring thousands of Filipinos to Mindanao*, let them settle in permanent homes and communities where the usual agencies and forces of government and civilization shall follow them, and the key to the Moro problem shall have been found.³³⁸

³³⁶ “Gen. Aguinaldo cables Coolidge protesting against separation of Mindanao from P.I.” *Tribune*, June 18, 1926, 1. “Council sees grave danger in Bacon bill.” *Tribune*, June 19, 1926, 1.

³³⁷ “Filipino leaders need free hand to rule Mindanao.” *Tribune*, June 19, 1926, 4.

³³⁸ “Settle Mindanao.” *Tribune*, June 18, 1926, 4. My emphasis.

Thus, the interchangeable use of “Christian Filipinos” and “Filipinos” showed the unquestioned presumption that Moros could not be unqualified “Filipinos.” “Muslim Filipinos,” perhaps, but they needed the qualifier that Christians, the “default” Filipinos, did not. As only qualified Filipinos, Moros could not guarantee continued “Filipino” sovereignty in Mindanao; instead, as protagonists of the “Moro problem” they were liabilities that could lead to partition or dismemberment. The land was already Filipino, the population, not yet.

Such public calls for mass, state-sponsored migration to Mindanao had their own possible drawbacks. *La Opinión* defended the Christian Filipino position from attacks in the American-owned media, according to which the Bacon bill had not been caused by imperialism or Wall Street, but by the stubbornness of the Philippine Senate to not confirm some appointments in Moroland, to their desire to impose Manila’s will on the Moros, their aim of subordinating Mindanao’s needs to those of Luzon, and the plans for a forced migration to Mindanao to subdue the Moros. While it remained clear from Bacon’s own testimonies that the motivation behind his bill was entirely economic,³³⁹ at the very least the last two issues pointed out by the American press were true. *La Opinión*, however, described such accusation as fantasies, and instead argued that the American newspaper simply “had not wanted to attribute the disturbances in Mindanao to the responsible group, and instead blames them on the Filipino rulers.”³⁴⁰ The ‘responsible group’ that the editorial was referring to was, without a doubt, American imperialists themselves.

Christian Filipino imposition in Mindanao through migration or politics also opened up the flank of self-determination. Not only did American military officers clearly sympathize with

³³⁹ “Las cinco conclusiones de Bacon.” *La Opinión*, July 12, 1926, 8. Fry, “The Bacon Bill of 1926.”

³⁴⁰ “Los motivos del ‘bill’ Bacon.” *La Opinión*, June 23, 1926, 8. My emphasis.

the idea of Muslim self-determination that would lead to partition,³⁴¹ but the American-owned *Manila Times* pushed the argument of self-determination as well, arguing that Christian Filipinos were demanding it for themselves, but denying it to Muslim Filipinos. In response, *La Opinión* ran an editorial in which they argued that that was entirely false, that they wanted self-determination for all Filipinos, not just Luzonians and Visayans, but for Christian and Muslim alike. The editorial also angrily denied the American newspaper's accusation that it was the Moros themselves who wanted to secede from the Philippines, instead flipping the argument on the Americans. It was indeed not a matter of the Muslims being denied self-determination, but rather American imperialist agents manipulating them: "[I]f there ever was a slight glimpse of that [Muslim separatism], it was a ruse of the very agents of imperialism who, taking advantage of this or that Moro datu, made them declare themselves against the Christian Filipino administrators, to the point they even gave them the speech or statement quite well prepared (*bien preparadito*)."³⁴²

Not all Christian Filipino commentators necessarily rejected the argument for self-determination of Muslims out of hand. In its biting column "*Sin malicia...*" ("Without malice"), *The Independent* struck a dissonant chord. It wondered out loud:

But why don't we, who have effusively applauded the theory of self-determination put forward by that dreamer, Wilson, suggest that the Moroland issue be resolved by 'self-determination'? If we insist on keeping the Moros under our jurisdiction against their will, are we not playing the same role as the Americans who insist on governing us against our will?³⁴³

³⁴¹ "Think officers of Army favor Bacon measure." *Tribune* (extra), June 12, 1926, 1.

³⁴² "Amor con amor se paga." *La Opinión*, June 29, 1926, 8.

³⁴³ "Sin malicia..." *The Independent*, June 26, 1926, 30.

The columnist did not resolve this quandary, and left it to their readers to figure out. At any rate, this was one of the very few instances of a (presumably) Christian Filipino not only being concerned with the human issue of the partition of the country, but also interested in what the Moros might think about the matter.

Direct concern over the fate of Muslim Filipinos under perpetual United States colonialism, however, was extremely scarce. One of the exceptionally few who voiced his concern in this respect was Senator Tirona. Leaning into the language of brotherhood and solidarity between all Filipinos, he stated that “...if with the segregation of Mindanao we were to be given independence, I would hesitate to accept it, for if we are to be independent, we must be alongside our Mohammedan brothers, and I would prefer that we remain subjected if they are to remain in that condition.”³⁴⁴ While several more would make comments on how indefinite colonialism could be preferable to immediate independence and partition, it was usually framed in economic terms, with an independent polity of Luzon and Visayas being considered unviable. Pedro Guevara, Resident Commissioner in the United States, came close, by calling into question Bacon’s supposed concern about “defending the defenseless Moros from the Filipinos,” and pointing out the American Congressman’s project “aims to secure for American capital the means to harvest millions at the expense of the naïve and innocent Moros.” However, although he was supposedly trying to avoid the exploitation of Muslim Filipinos at the hand of Americans, he closed his comments with the argument that the issue with the Bacon bill was that Americans would have access to the resources of Mindanao, and not Christian Filipinos.³⁴⁵ For all of their

³⁴⁴ “Quieren quitarnos Mindanao y Joló.” *La Opinión*, June 12, 1926, 1, 4. “Wood says he has not been advised about Bacon Bill.” *Tribune*, June 13, 1926, 1, 4. “De varios colores.” *The Independent*, June 19, 1926, 19.

³⁴⁵ “El plan siniestro del Rep. Bacon.” *La Opinión*, August 4, 1926, 1, 8.

concern over the fate of Muslim Filipinos under American colonialism, however, there was never any talk of 'repatriating' any of them to Luzon and Visayas in case the Americans should partition the colony.

Rather than concern for Muslim Filipinos for Muslim Filipinos' sake, much of the 'positive' attention—i.e., that which did not consider them outright as a liability to be erased through migration—instead followed a logic of a *mission civilizatrice*. In other words, a hierarchical relationship in which Christian Filipinos could place themselves in the 'civilizing' role vis-à-vis Muslim Filipinos, a role that could potentially enhance their own positionality with the Americans. Rather than another people in need of a civilizing process, Christian Filipinos could place themselves as co-civilizers. An editorial in *The Independent* argued that "[t]he Filipino people, that is, the civilized element which recognizes the American sovereignty and has contributed toward the re-establishment of normalcy" at the very least shared in the civilizing responsibility with the Americans, opposing 'civilized' Christian Filipino with 'uncivilized' Moro. Thus, the harmful effect of the Bacon bill was that "its principal purpose [is] to deprive a majority of the Filipino people of their right to have a hand in the governing of the Moros." The editorial further argued that the solution to the "Moro problem" was simple: let the Christian Filipinos continue their civilizing mission without the intervention of "foreign elements" who have been inciting trouble in the region.³⁴⁶ *La Opinión*, on its part, argued that Christian Filipinos "were morally obligated to help the Moro population participate of the benefits of civilization and a properly arranged civil life."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ "The Moro problem." *The Independent*, June 26, 1926, 3-4. "El problema moruno." *The Independent*, June 26, 1926, 11.

³⁴⁷ "Las cinco conclusiones de Bacon." *La Opinión*, July 12, 1926, 8.

Within this complicated web of relations of meaning between Christian and Muslim Filipinos, the Manila press still sought to include Muslim voices in its pages, either to show the degree of support the cause of unity and independence may have, or out of an exoticizing curiosity for what the thought process of those who supported partition was. *The Independent* published an impressive array of letters dating from 1923 to 1925 in which numerous prominent Moros protested against the possibility of dismemberment of Mindanao and in support of a united Philippine independence. The texts were all said to be “translations,” but for the most part the original language they were written in was left unstated. Only one was said to have been translated from Arabic by a Menandang Piang, who will appear below, entangled in a dispute over translation.³⁴⁸ On his part, the Sultan sa Ramain also rejected the Bacon bill, stating that “[t]he only way of forcing us to become separated from our brothers (the Christians) is to sink the island (Mindanao) into the sea.”³⁴⁹ Furthermore, the *Servicio Informativo Nacional* made sure to report on how the municipal council of Jolo had also passed a resolution against the Bacon bill. Perhaps wishing to emphasize Moro opposition to the bill, it highlighted that the resolution was introduced by a Moro councilperson named Mujuk and seconded by another Moro councilperson named Maharan. It even went so far as to state “All the Moros of this locality are openly against the projected segregation of Mindanao and Sulu.”³⁵⁰

Judging by the amount of coverage it garnered, a letter by a group of Moro students at the Central Luzon Agricultural School in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, appeared to be the *pièce de résistance* of the Muslim voices against the Bacon bill. This may be understood from several

³⁴⁸ “Our Moro brothers want independence.” *The Independent*, July 17, 1926, 5-9.

³⁴⁹ “Habla el Sultán sa Ramain.” *La Opinión*, July 24, 1926, 8.

³⁵⁰ “Joló lanza su protesta contra el “bill” Bacon.” *La Opinión*, July 28, 1926, 6.

angles. First, with these Muslim youths undergoing technical training in a school in Luzon, they embodied several desirable traits. They were the ‘good Moros’ (as opposed to the ‘bad Moros’ of which the *juramentado* was probably the most notorious) who not only traveled in peace to the Christian-majority areas, but did so in a manner that acknowledged the hierarchy which placed them below their Christian hosts. This trajectory showcased the effectiveness of the Christian Filipino narrative of their own *mission civilizatrice* vis-à-vis the ‘backward’ Muslims. The former were indeed ‘civilizing’ the latter, and in so doing, those young Muslims had become true Filipinos who sought unity despite their difference in religion. In this liminary status as students in contact with their more ‘advanced,’ ‘knowledgeable’ Christian countrymen, they distanced themselves from those who had stayed behind in Mindanao and Sulu, whom they referred to as “ignorant”; their superior knowledge enabled them to speak in the name of their more ‘backward’ relatives. Secondly, the Muslim students emphasized their youth in contrast with their older countrymen, who may have engaged in violence against Christian Filipinos. As such, they presented themselves as the generation of the future, and as such, they constituted a promise of a united Philippines.³⁵¹

Muslim voices supporting partition were understandably not featured as prominently in the Filipino-run press. On the rare occasion that they did, they were masked in an aura of mystery, as in the extensive essay “Lanao, the mysterious.” The essay was unusually candid in its presentation of the stance Moros took on the issue of the Bacon bill, openly discussing how there indeed were Maranao Moros who favored (Christian) Filipino rule, while others preferred

³⁵¹ “Escolares moros que condenan a R. Bacon.” *La Opinión*, July 28, 1926, 1, 8. “32 Moro students denounced Bacon as aiming to perpetuate slavery of Moros under American control.” *Tribune*, July 29, 1926, 2. “De aquí y de allá.” *The Independent*, July 31, 1926, 30-31.

separation from the Philippines under American rule. It did, however, clarify that even though such divisions preexisted the arrival of Wood and his allies, it suggested that the current administration had directly favored those who were against Christian Filipinos. Its author, Esteban Nedruda, went so far as to present an interview with a “frenzied anti-independence” datu named Amai Manabilang. Depicted as a mysterious character whose white skin might denote Arab descent, he was said to not want to see “the Philippine flag waving alongside the American.” The essay said that he was rumored to be one of those who incited unrest in Lanao.

-Why are you against the independence of the Philippines?

-*Oh boy* [in English in the original Spanish printing], replied Manabilang, “I’ve had it up to here with independence.” (*estoy hasta la coronilla*)

-Does this mean you are not Filipino? (...)

With a gesture of impatience and annoyance, Manabilang replied intensely: “I am a Moro!”³⁵²

Nedruda’s essay also explained just how Wood supposedly manufactured unanimous support for partition. “[T]he Philippinists [those who supported independence alongside Christian Filipinos] are never summoned to any of the conferences organized by the chief executive, thus when the matter of independence comes up, opposition is unanimous. And when the question of whether they want a Filipino governor or not, opposition is naturally unanimous.”³⁵³ As seen in chapter 2, the idea that Muslim opposition to independence or their support for partitioning the country were actively manufactured by biased American officials had much currency in this conjuncture.

³⁵² Esteban Nedruda, “Lanao, la misteriosa.” *La Opinión* (supplement), July 3, 1926, 4, 13.

³⁵³ Esteban Nedruda, “Lánao, la misteriosa.” *La Opinión* (supplement), July 10, 1926, 6, 11.

Lost in translation: the Hadji Butu fracas

As suggested by Vicente Rafael, the experience of the colonial Philippines was one of a war of translation whereby American colonial officials sought to impose English as a lingua franca in the country that would serve not only for communication between the colonizers and the colonized, but also between the colonized who spoke a multiplicity of different languages. In this sense, translation would be a constant struggle in the minds of the colonized as they switched between their vernaculars and the new language of empire—as well as the old language of empire, Spanish. However, the final victory of English would constitute a victory in the war of translation, but also a victory in the war *on* translation, as once the colonized population achieved full proficiency, no more translation would be necessary anymore.³⁵⁴ However, in a context in which exasperated American officials fretted over whether English would ever completely impose itself over the vernaculars even in urban areas, that victory seemed even further away in the Muslim regions of the south. While translation was constantly taking place in the Philippine press—any given statement by a major politician, be they American or Christian Filipino, would be printed in English, Spanish, or the vernaculars—the act itself and the language they were translated from were rarely mentioned in the 1920s. The situation was slightly different when it came to Muslim politicians, around whom translation was more frequently invoked, although the exact language they were being translated from was often left nebulous. One such instance of (mis)translation led to a scandal involving Senator Hadji Butu.

³⁵⁴ Vicente L. Rafael, *Motherless Tongues: The Insurgency of Language amid Wars of Translation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

In the context of the Thompson Mission, the Muslim senator's position regarding the Bacon bill remained unknown as he went for an interview with the Colonel. Having been appointed by Governor General Wood, there were concerns that the Muslim senator would side with his patron in favor of partition. Much to the relief of Christian Filipino analysts, however, Butu appeared to come out against the bill and in favor of independence. *La Opinión* reported that, when speaking with Thompson and other Americans he had rejected the "insidious rumors" about hostility between Moros and Christians. "It may be (...) that our different religious creeds and some minor incident or another between Moros and Christians be exploited by imperialists to turn them into political capital, but in moments of true challenge, all Filipinos, no matter their beliefs and ideas, are united and ready to fight for our cause."³⁵⁵ The next day, however, *Tribune* reported that he had said the exact opposite to a group of American journalists and Brigadier General Halstead Dorey, a close associate of Wood's, and that it was understood that the content of this interview was essentially the same as the conversation he had had with Thompson. According to this version of events, Butu said that perhaps Christian Filipinos were ready for independence, but that Moros were not, and that they wanted a separate Moro state with an American Governor General directly responsible to the President of the United States. He claimed that Moros had had a good relationship with Americans since the times of Pershing, but that they feared trouble would befall them should they be left in the hands of Christian Filipinos. Furthermore, Butu stated that Moros were anxious to get American investment to develop the island with (presumably Muslim) labor imported from Borneo and Java—perhaps a reflection of

³⁵⁵ "Entrevista de Hadji Butu con Mr. C. Thompson." *La Opinión*, July 15, 1926, 1, 8.

Muslim anxieties over increased Christian presence in their midst. He added that education had been slowed in Mindanao because Moros did not wish to send their children to schools run by Christian Filipinos, and instead desired to be educated by American teachers. “I personally favor the Bacon bill and endorse its provisions,” he was reported as saying through his Moro interpreter.³⁵⁶

Butu’s words evidently caused quite an impression. Was the earlier report of his support for unity false? Was he trying to play both sides? Did he change his mind suddenly? Condemnation came swiftly. With his support for the Bacon bill having been reported by *Tribune* in the morning, the afternoon edition of *La Opinión* already carried a biting op-ed by Rosauro Almario. The author savaged Hadji Butu for his pro-Bacon stance, referring to him as “Mr. Hadji Butu” (using the English honorific in an otherwise Spanish-language essay) and a “former countryman” whose only Filipino trait was his betel and skin color. Almario accused Butu of flip-flopping, for he had been in favor of Christian Filipino governors and Christian-Muslim brotherhood during the Harrison years. He concluded that Butu had either been misquoted “like an inside-out sock” (*un calcetín al revés*), or that he had “fallen under the magnetic influence of General Dorey and caught the anthrax of imperialism that was impregnated in the cushions” of the official car where he spoke with the American officer.³⁵⁷

Hadji Butu very indignantly (*indignadísimo*) rejected the words that were attributed to him, releasing an English-language statement that clarified his views. He started by questioning the process of translation:

³⁵⁶ “Butu desires America and big business.” *Tribune*, July 16, 1926, 1. “News of the world.” *Philippine Education Magazine*, August 1926, 158, 162.

³⁵⁷ Rosauro Almario, “Hablemos claro.” *La Opinión*, July 16, 1926, 4.

My interpreter is a Joloano and I do not know if he really said those things despite me not having said them. But the truth is I never gave those statements, because I know that the Filipino people would not agree with me. Saying that Christian Filipinos could not handle independence alongside Muslim Filipinos would be the same as saying that both peoples do not have Filipino blood in their hearts. Saying that Moros are in favor of the Bacon bill would be equivalent to taking their own bolos to cut their own necks. I categorically state that Moros would never favor the exploitation of Mindanao by foreigners.³⁵⁸

He then went on to give the expected talking points, that Mindanawons were united by bonds of brotherhood with Luzonians and Visayans, and that they shared in the ideal of independence as much as any other Filipino. To continue clarifying Hadji Butu's actual words, his son, Gulamu Rasul, visited President Quezon, to whom he reiterated that the words they had attributed to his father were false. Another person who spoke with Quezon was Brigadier General Dorey, who was present in the car where Hadji Butu supposedly spoke his pro-Bacon words.

Hadji Butu's decisive denial seemed to have a positive effect on Rosauero Almario. In an immediate addendum to his original op-ed in the same issue, Almario praised Butu for characterizing the words attributed to him as an infamy, prompting him to erase "everything I have said against him. And by removing the *Mister* I had put before his name I now very happily and proudly bestow upon him again the treatment of brother [the Tagalog word *kapatid* in the original Spanish]. Hadji, give me five and praise be to Allah!"³⁵⁹ Of course, although the addendum speaks of erasure of the previous insults, the newspaper did not actually do that, as

³⁵⁸ "¡Falsas! Dice el Sen. Hadji Butu muy indignados." *La Opinión*, July 16, 1926, 1, 4. "News of the world." *Philippine Education Magazine*, August 1926, 158, 162.

³⁵⁹ Rosauero Almario, "Hablemos claro." *La Opinión*, July 16, 1926, 4.

the original damnatory op-ed still ran in the issue. Whether this was simply a result of it being impossible to modify the issue that much at such short notice, or that the original text of the column remained as a signal of what his opinion would be of those Moro leaders who should side with Bacon would be, is difficult to ascertain.

The incident did not entirely end with Butu's clarification. Was it the interpreter who had mistranslated his words? Was it the American reporters who had misreported the correctly translated words of the interpreter? As it stood, it shifted the blame on an unspecified third party. However, Butu's interpreter, the aforementioned Menandang Piang, signed a statement reaffirming essentially everything that had appeared in the press previously. He added a few more details, such as that Butu stated that Christian and Muslim Filipinos indeed were like brothers, but that Americans were like a father, and that "the love and care of a father is better than the love and care of a brother." Furthermore, he elaborated on Moro dislike of Christian Filipino teachers and his preference for Americans, as the former were characterized as only caring for their paychecks and abusing Moro girls.³⁶⁰ Any refutation Butu may have made against his interpreter does not appear to have made it to the media at least.

At any rate, Butu backed up his disavowal of the pro-Americans words attributed to him with actions. He conspicuously voted in favor of a resolution demanding immediate independence, reportedly answering Quezon's phrase "We want to be free right now" with a resounding "I second the motion!" when the senate president gave a speech in the chamber. *La Opinión* writers delighted in imagining the disappointment felt by Wood, his entourage, and

³⁶⁰ "Butu joins in legislators' liberty plea." *Tribune*, July 17, 1926, 1, 8. "News of the world." *Philippine Education Magazine*, August 1926, 158, 162.

retentionist American journalists upon witnessing Butu's about-face. Almario particularly pictured Butu turning towards Dorey with a smirk and saying "Gotcha, General!" (*Narices, mi General!*).³⁶¹

What lay behind these abrupt *volte faces* involving the translation of Butu's words to Brigadier General Dorey and the American reporters? Was this a case of mistranslation by the interpreter, or did Butu have one discourse ready for one audience, and another for the other? To start with the interpreter, Menandang Piang, it seems unclear why exactly he would intentionally mistranslate Butu to give the impression that he supported the Bacon bill. Back in 1925, Piang had translated a letter "from the original Arabic" (the letter might actually have been written in Tausug, but in Arabic characters) by a number of Muslim leaders to President Quezon, in which they testified that they were against the idea of Mindanao becoming a United States territory, and were in favor of independence,³⁶² showing that he had associated with anti-partitionist Moro leaders before. This suggests that he had no major personal objection to that cause, making it seem unlikely that he would intentionally manipulate Butu's words to make him seem like he was in favor of partition. Furthermore, the details of the version given to American reporters and Brigadier General Dorey, as well as the further details furnished by Piang, seem to ring true. They are consistent with the kind of rhetoric a person in favor of the idea of partition would use in such a context. At the same time, however, any person who had been carefully following the story in the media would also be able to produce such talking points. But perhaps

³⁶¹ "Butu joins in legislators' liberty plea." *Tribune*, July 17, 1926, 1, 8. Rosauro Almario, "Hablemos claro." *La Opinión*, July 19, 1926, 4. "La decepción de unos corresponsales." *La Opinión*, July 17, 1926, 8. "News of the world." *Philippine Education Magazine*, August 1926, 158, 162.

³⁶² "Our Moro brothers want independence." *The Independent*, July 17, 1926, 5-9.

the most salient element is that it is possible that for Menandang Piang, his own reputation as a reliable translator and interpreter was probably of greater import than Butu's attempts to salvage his political reputation.

Thus, what seems more likely is that Butu himself was stuck in a war of translation of his own. If, following Foucault, politics is war through other means,³⁶³ Butu may have been facing a two-front war. Necessarily aware of the cleavages between Christian and Muslim Filipinos, and the interest shown by both Americans and Christian Filipinos for colonizing Mindanao and exploiting its natural resources, it is entirely possible that he would try to play both parties against each other in search for the best deal possible. This could involve trying to pass as supporting each party in their objectives. It does seem surprising, however, that a savvy politician such as himself would not have foreseen that his words might transcend his interlocutors—although perhaps he agreed to speak with them off the record, an agreement that was later broken by the reporters. This we will never know with certainty.

However, it does seem that Butu had a reputation for inconstancy in his political positions. A report from Zamboanga stated that his words in support of the Bacon bill had prompted much discussion and speculation. Some did not believe that it could be true, as he had previously expressed himself in favor of independence and against the segregation of Mindanao from the Philippines. He had recently said that he opposed the Bacon bill, comparing the Philippines to “a human being who would die if a vital part of their body were cut off,” which highlights the degree to which the idea of mutilation and geobody was part of the discussion. In Joló, Hadji Butu's

³⁶³ Michel Foucault, *“Society Must Be Defended”: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, 1st edition. (New York: Picador, 2003).

followers refused to believe that he had made any statement in favor of the permanent annexation of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan to the United States, because he and his family had always taken a stance in favor of the independence of the archipelago. Others, however, did not pay his words much heed, arguing that Butu had already lost his prestige because of his constant shifts in his stances.³⁶⁴

From anger to laughter: preemptive restoration of the geobody through claims on Guam

As a response to the entire Bacon Bill crisis surrounding the dismemberment of Mindanao from the Philippines, in September of 1926, Representative Eduardo Marcaida from Masbate submitted a concurrent resolution to the Philippine Assembly proposing the annexation of Guam to the Philippines. In a circumspect text, Marcaida argued that Guam should belong to the Philippines due to the history of it having been where the revolutionary rebels who had fought the Americans during the Philippine-American War were exiled, as well as the commonality of race between Filipinos and Guamanians.³⁶⁵ As explained by Ann Pobutsky and Enrico Neri, despite “invisibilization” of Filipinos in Guam, links between both locations were indeed of a very long duration, with linguistic evidence suggesting that Guam was probably populated by immigrants from Luzon around 1500 BCE, and that contact remained robust throughout the Spanish colonial period through the arrival soldiers, convicts, missionaries, and other immigrants who brought words and crops with them. Filipino “disappearance” from Guam (at least until the end of World War 2) was the result of intermarriage between Filipino men and Chamorro women,

³⁶⁴ “Zamboanga no da fe al sem. Hadji Butu.” *La Opinión*, July 20, 1926, 1. “No creen en lo atribuido a Hadji-Butu.” *La Opinión*, July 29, 1926, 4.

³⁶⁵ “Guam sought as territory for P.I. Govt.” *Tribune*, September 15, 1926, 1.

who would then register their children as Chamorro in order to seek an advantageous position within the Spanish taxation system.³⁶⁶ Buschmann, Slack, and Tueller have also placed Guam and the Philippines in a field of analysis that highlights their connected histories of Spanish conquest and conversion, and parallel developments regarding the articulations of family names within the context of Spanish colonial rule.³⁶⁷ In some ways, connections between Luzon and Visayas and Guam could be understood to have been stronger than those between the two former groups and Mindanao.

However, coverage of the Pacific islands formerly ruled from Manila during the Spanish colonial period was very sparse in the 1920s and does not seem to reflect any kind of forlorn irredentism over such “lost territories,” suggesting that their “recovery” was not an actual long-term objective of the Philippine élite. Territorial jockeying at the end of World War I whereby Japan took control of a number of Pacific Islands that left Guam and the Philippines cut off from each other, for example, was covered in a matter-of-factly way that suggests more interest in its geopolitical implications,³⁶⁸ and a visit to Manila by the Governor of Guam did not prompt any reaction either.³⁶⁹ Further afield in the Pacific, celebrations of the Japanese dynasty in the Caroline Islands were also covered matter-of-factly, not prompting any reference to their former status under Spain (and the Philippines).³⁷⁰ The “loss” of Guam and the Carolines in 1898 did not represent a palpable collective trauma for the Filipino élite. The island territories that were now

³⁶⁶ Ann Pobutsky and Enrico Neri, “Cultural Integration and Separation: The Pre-Historical and Historical Links between Guam and the Philippines, or Where Did All the Filipinos Go?,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 42, no. 1/2 (2014): 1–15.

³⁶⁷ Buschmann, Slack, and Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake*, 97–118.

³⁶⁸ “Guam aislada de Filipinas.” *El Comercio*, January 4, 1921, 3.

³⁶⁹ “El gobernador de Guam y su señora visitarán Manila.” *El Comercio*, February 28, 1921, 1.

³⁷⁰ “Las Islas Carolinas celebran el aniversario de la dinastía imperial japonesa.” *El Comercio*, February 19, 1921, 2.

under American or Japanese administration might have been “amputated” from the Philippines, but they apparently were never truly incorporated into its geobody, and thus did not prompt territorial trauma.

Thus, the motion for a resolution presented by Eduardo Marcaida came as a surprise, one only prompted by the proposed separation of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan from the rest of the Philippines. Despite its earnest tone, it was a tongue-in-cheek, “tit for tat” kind of measure. As pointed out by Cheauré and Nohelj, humor can be a productive lens through which to study a historical context. Humor, they argue, can serve to point out the ridiculous or to point out the strange, and thus to defuse the threat that it may represent.³⁷¹ In this respect, Marcaida’s absurd proposal was an attempt at engaging in an economy of absurdities, to propose an exchange of the bizarre. In response to the Bacon Bill, he offered another preposterous territorial adjustment, and in so doing sought to expose the ridiculousness of the plan to dismember the Philippines. In this respect, and following Cheauré and Nohelj, humor was serving the purpose of criticizing a system—or in this case a specific measure thereof—by resorting to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

As mentioned above, Marcaida’s proposal was couched in the expected kind of rhetoric: Guam was of historical importance to Filipinos as it was where nationalists were banished (an argument brought up over the issue of Mindanao as well, and further afield over Papua as a part of Indonesia), and it shared the same “race” as the population of the Philippines.³⁷² Underscoring the degree to which Filipinos did not take the “loss” of Guam all that seriously (while that of

³⁷¹ Elisabeth Cheauré and Regine Nohejl, *Humour and Laughter in History: Transcultural Perspectives*, 1. Aufl., Historische Lebenswelten in Populären Wissenskulturen/History in Popular Cultures 15 (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2014), 7–9.

³⁷² “Guam sought as territory for P.I. Govt.” *Tribune*, September 15, 1926, 1.

Mindanao continued to be an existential threat to the country), other legislators took the joke even further. One “prominent senator” said that he objected to the resolution’s limited ambition, for it should also seek the transfer to Manila of Hawai’i and the mainland territory of the United States; “[o]thers when approached about the matter had some difficulty in repressing their laughter.”³⁷³ In contrast with Wood, whose smirks may be taken as signs that he believed that he had finally pulled one over his stubbornly insubordinate colonial subordinates, Filipino laughter in this context represented instead being in on the joke. This was not a serious resolution to “recover” Guam, it was a form of jocular pushback on colonial mutilative seriousness.

The fracas surrounding the tongue-in-cheek call for annexing Guam to the Philippines prompted the publication of an illustrated essay titled “Guam, the paradise that belonged to the Philippines,” in which the author, José Megofña Taytano, waxed poetic about the idyllic island. He pointed out that Guam had been a province of the Philippines up to a little over a quarter of a century before, then segueing to a brief history of its “discovery” by the Spaniards and the long war of conquest in which he confessed to not know who was more admirable, the conquerors or the conquered. After the Spanish-American War, he related that Guam was transferred to the Department of the Navy, whereby it was definitively separated from the Philippines.³⁷⁴ What is of importance here is that while he did mention that the “original race” had disappeared entirely only to be replaced by a mix in which the “Filipino type” predominated, and that Filipino customs and dress had become commonplace, this was not followed up with a call for its reincorporation

³⁷³ “Resolution asking for Guam should also include Hawaii and—the US.” *Tribune*, September 16, 1926, 1.

³⁷⁴ “Guam el paraíso que fue de Filipinas.” *El Comercio (supplement)*, September 25, 1926, 5.

into the country. His essay, after all, referred to it having “belonged to the Philippines” (*fue de Filipinas*) rather than something to the effect of it being “the missing piece” of the Philippines.

The Guamanian Congress, however, did not appreciate the humor in Marcaida’s proposed resolution, unanimously rejecting the idea in very earnest terms, and preparing memorials against it to be sent to the United States.³⁷⁵ An editorial in the New York Times ironically remarked that Guamanians were so upset about the idea that were it not for the presence of the US fleet in Manila Bay, they would raid the Philippines. According to the editorial, Guamanians rejected this Philippine “impudence” and worried about the “menace” that the archipelago represented in the Pacific.³⁷⁶ American authorities in Guam supported their position, with Governor Lloyd Stowell Shapley emphasizing that Guamanians desired to build closer relations with the United States and pointing out in detail the differences in customs and manners with the Filipinos. Nevertheless, at least some Americans still took the matter lightly as “[o]fficials in the Navy Department are inclined to smile at the seriousness with which the Guam congress has undertaken to fight ‘annexation’ because the possibility has apparently not been given a thought in Washington.”³⁷⁷

Other American politicians took the matter as earnestly as the Guamanians did, however, with a “well-known senator” arguing that the immaturity of such a resolution proved that Filipinos were not ready for independence, then seriously referencing what other Filipino politicians had said as a joke, that “[i]f the Philippines were allowed to annex Guam, they would

³⁷⁵ “Congress of Guam unanimously opposes annexation of island to Philippines.” *Tribune*, October 10, 1926, 1.

³⁷⁶ “Guam annexation bill provokes N.Y. Times which labels proposal piece of ‘impudence’.” *Tribune*, December 2, 1926, p. 7.

³⁷⁷ “Guam desires no annexation.” *Tribune*, October 19, 1926, p. 8.

next want to annex Hawaii,”³⁷⁸ reproducing the trope of a Philippine expansionistic “menace.” The aforementioned N.Y. Times editorial also wondered why, if the rationale for the annexation of Guam to the Philippines was the large number of Filipinos residing there, the Philippines would stop there and not extend their demands to Hawaii, where a large number of Filipinos also lived.³⁷⁹ The joke was evidently lost on these interlocutors, but their earnestness may have had an effect, as no new movement on the resolution appeared in the Philippine press. Of course, Marcaida and his supporters may have thought the joke had played itself out long before these responses even reached the Philippines.

Conclusions

Christian Filipino political élites read the Bacon bill as a direct attack on their territorial integrity engineered by Governor General Leonard Wood, and pushed back directly against it in the media, through protests, and by lobbying in the United States Congress. While the quick stagnation of the bill in Washington DC made more direct action against the plan attributed to the governor general unnecessary for the time being, Filipino protests against it continued for several months, even triggering a tongue-in-cheek demand for the annexation of Guam. Eventually, with Wood’s death in 1927 and his replacement with Henry Stimson, the conflict over the future of the Philippine geobody petered out.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ “Resolution to annex Guam taken as argument against independence for Filipinos.” *Tribune*, October 26, 1926, 2.

³⁷⁹ *Tribune*, December 2, 1926, p. 7. “Guam annexation bill provokes N.Y. Times which labels proposal piece of ‘impudence’.”

³⁸⁰ Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 42.

The reactions prompted by the Bacon bill reveal the ways that Christian Filipino politicians and commentators understood their relationship with Mindanao. Broadly speaking, Mindanawon *land* was understood to be fully “Filipino,” and any loss there would be interpreted as dismemberment. Mindanawon *inhabitants*, however, were seen instead as a liability due to their yet incomplete “Filipino-ness.” Filipino Muslims in particular continued to be understood as an ongoing “problem” inasmuch as they were a constant source of unrest. Although the interpretation that unrest was the result of deliberate incitation by Wood and his agents, this continued to be possible due to their incomplete inclusion into the Filipino community. But in this context, the “Moro problem” developed into more than a perennial source of unrest featuring “foreigners in a domestic sense”—it became the condition of possibility for a dismemberment of the Philippine geobody. Thus, although there were Christian voices that expressed their solidarity with their “Muslim brothers” and sought to defend them from perpetual American colonization, for the most part the go-to solution became to overwhelm the Muslims with Christian settlers. Once Muslims should become a minority not only relative to the overall population of the Philippines, *but also* in Mindanao itself and in any of its provinces, the “Moro problem” would be resolved. Not only would Muslim Filipinos become more ‘civilized’ because of their contact with Christian Filipinos, and thus presumably their unrest would die out over time, but also no discrete section of the archipelago could be understood to be dismemberable along ethnic or religious lines.

Despite their ambivalent attitude towards Muslim Filipinos, Christian Filipinos did give them voice in their media—at least those that did support unity and independence. These would be portrayed as loyal Filipinos who, despite any differences in religion, had come to see the truth

of a common history and/or race. Those who instead sided with the Bacon bill and with pro-American policies in general, on the other hand, were usually understood to have been manipulated by scheming American agents, which rhetorically kept the door open to their eventual reincorporation into the body of “Filipino-ness.” Muslim Filipinos, however, must have realized the degree to which they were a secondary priority for both parties who were disputing the future sovereignty over Mindanao, as both were clearly more focused on the resources to be extracted from the land rather than the benefits they could provide to its inhabitants. At best, providing for the welfare of Muslim Filipinos would be a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. In this respect, their politicians also had to try to play both sides against each other, and strike a delicate balance trying to figure out which scenario seemed to offer them the greater possibilities to reproduce their culture and religion, either through permanent incorporation as an integral part of the Philippines or permanent retention as a colony of the United States. Sometimes, as could be seen in the case of Hadji Butu, trying to tell both sides what they wanted to hear could backfire.

When seen in dialogue with chapter 4, this chapter sheds light on the complicated nuances of formal and informal imperial hegemony. The colonized Christian Filipino élite in the Philippines was able to make use of all the tools that the ‘civilizing’ American empire had brought to the colony to oppose the designs of some of its political and economic agents. They took to the arenas of public opinion to harshly criticize the governor-general and his agenda of territorial dismemberment and lobbied in the imperial metropole itself to prevent it from taking place. Shackled by the rhetoric of democratization and freedom of the press as integral components of the package of benefits brought by American colonization, its *raison d’être* even, anti-

independence colonial authorities could not crack down on the upstart colonial subjects. Empire was deterred by its own mechanisms. The Peruvian case studied in chapter 4 will show a very different context. Under a president that had placed the independent republic almost completely under the guidance of informal American empire, he was not hindered by the same kinds of metropolitan restrictions under which Wood must have chafed. In a context of what was understood to be an American-mandated territorial reorganization between Peru and Colombia in the Putumayo and Amazon rivers region, President Leguía could engage in outright political crackdowns to enforce the will of American empire. In such a context, Peruvian opposition to dismemberment would be muted by political authority, and it would prove to be much less effective than that of the colonized population in the Philippines. And finally, ambivalence towards Muslim Filipinos notwithstanding, Christian Filipinos dialogued with them and amplified their voices in the press. This will stand in stark contrast with Peruvian attitudes regarding the indigenous peoples in the Amazon in another context of threats to the national geobody.

Chapter 4

A double act of silencing: The Salomón-Lozano Treaty of 1927

Discussion about, and opposition to, the Salomón-Lozano treaty that set independent Peru's border with Colombia took place in a markedly different manner than that surrounding the Bacon Bill in the colonial Philippines. In contrast to the public furor triggered by the bill separating Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan from the Philippines, the treaty whereby the region between the Putumayo and Caquetá rivers, in addition to a corridor stretching to the left bank Amazon (known as the "Leticia trapezoid") led to two almost complete acts of silencing. For a treaty that was later described as very unpopular,³⁸¹ and sufficiently so to have later triggered a war (1932-1933) to try to reverse the cession of the Leticia corridor that gave Colombia sovereign access to the Amazon River, the treaty was almost completely absent from the pages of the press in Lima, except for a few scattered allusions, almost all in defense of it. Criticism, however, was completely absent. As a matter of fact, it seems that in keeping with the secret status of the treaty, many people had only a very hazy notion of what its terms were, and only knew for sure once it was ratified and exchanged; that is, once it was too late to do anything about it. It was only with the fall of the Leguía régime that the floodgates opened and public criticism of the treaty flowed freely, eventually leading to war, and contributing to one of Peru's most violent periods of domestic political violence.

³⁸¹ Ronald Bruce St John, *The Foreign Policy of Peru* (Boulder: L Rienner Publishers, 1992), 165.

The other silencing was that of the indigenous peoples of the disputed region. While, as we have seen in chapter 3, the relationship between literate *élites* in Manila and the Muslim leaders in Mindanao and Sulu was one of ambiguity, and sometimes even suspicion, all the parties involved agreed that the voice of the non-Christian, “tribal” peoples of the region was, at the very least, a factor in the equation. The matter may be determining *who* the authorized voices of the Muslim communities were, not whether they should count or not. In the case of the indigenous peoples of the Putumayo, however, they did not factor into the equation almost at all. Most of the time, the territory was discussed as if they simply did not exist; and when their existence was acknowledged, they were essentially portrayed as part of the scenery or mere natural resources alongside rubber trees or fluvial facilities. When the self-determination of the peoples in the disputed areas was discussed, for the most part, the texts suggest that they referred to the “civilized” settlers, not the indigenous inhabitants.

Furthermore, as has been suggested by Ronald St. John, rumors circulated that the United States had pressured the Leguía administration into granting Colombia access to the Amazon River through the Salomón-Lozano treaty as a means to compensate Colombia for their loss of Panama some twenty years earlier.³⁸² These rumors do not appear to have made it into print, at least in during the Leguía régime itself, which means that they could well have been an after-the-fact explanation for what seemed, from the Peruvian perspective, like a lopsided agreement. There are, however, some glimpses in the sources that suggest that those rumors and speculations indeed had circulated. At least for those who were invested in that narrative, then,

382 St John, 166–68.

the Salomón-Lozano treaty could be understood within the framework of American empire. The same empire that imposed its will in the Caribbean and had supported the dismemberment of Panama from Colombia for the sake of building a transoceanic canal under its sovereignty had now interfered in the mutilation of Peruvian territory for the sake of repairing their relationship with Colombia. With the Leguía régime's obsequious subservience to the United States, in addition to the need for US backing in the dispute with Chile over Tacna and Arica, there was little Peru could do but acquiesce to the desires of the hegemon.

Thus, from the perspective of United States empire in both ends of the Pacific Ocean, the comparison of the proposed separation of Mindanao from the Philippines and the Putumayo region from Peru offers an intriguing insight. It was in the colony subjected to direct United States authority that US empire faced stiffer opposition as far as territorial reorganization was concerned. Multiple editorials, letters, and resolutions openly lambasted the proposed partition and questioned the motivations of the backers of the Bacon bill in the press, and great meetings of protest were advertised and organized. The highest executive authority in the colony was savaged in the press and portrayed unflatteringly in cartoons. In the independent country subjected to "indirect imperialism" or neocolonialism, however, when the "neometropole" supposedly decided on territorial reorganization (or dismemberment), the press remained silent, and those who spoke out against the treaty were persecuted by the régime. This complicates the borders between colonialism and neocolonialism, or direct imperialism and indirect imperialism. These cases can show how within a context of open colonialism, the mechanisms implemented to bolster the narrative of "benevolent assimilation" could effectively put a brake on territorial

ambitions in the metropole, while the ‘backrooming’ inherent in neocolonialism could actually be a more effective, if slower, path towards the desired outcome.

With this being said, this chapter does not aim to be a diplomatic history of the design, signing, and ratification of the Salomón-Lozano treaty. Instead, it uses this particular event to shed light on how a society experienced what they believed to be US empire and territorial dispossession, thus highlighting the issues of how the geobody was understood, defended, and overruled in a context of autocratic rule by a pro-United States strongman. These discussions give us insight into the ways that Peru’s settlements in the Amazon region in general, and the Putumayo region in particular, were understood, and to what degree this continued to be a scramble over indigenous territory by two Creole republics, and how its indigenous population continued to be erased or reduced to being part of the scenery.

“A great contour-less republic, a legendary unbounded republic”

The signing and ratification of the Salomón-Lozano treaty took place in a context in which even the exact shape of Peru’s geobody was unclear. While the archipelagic nature of the Philippines allowed its élite to have a firmer notion of what the contours of the nation were supposed to be, the continental nature of Peru made that much more difficult for its élite.³⁸³ Both élites knew what “provinces” were supposed to belong to them: “Mindanao” for the Filipinos, or “Maynas” for the Peruvians. However, while the exact contours of the island of Mindanao were undisputable, and international controversies may be reduced to specific

³⁸³ The exception may be the Philippine claim on northern Borneo, but at least in the context of the Bacon bill, it was not brought into play.

outlying islands, the exact contours of the colonial province of “Maynas”, ensconced as it was in a part of the continent that had been very lightly explored by the agents of the Creole republics, were extremely diffuse. Indeed, conceptually “Maynas” may belong to Peru, but its exact borders were up for interpretation. After the Salomón-Lozano treaty had been ratified by the Peruvian Congress, Leguía loyalist Clemente Palma congratulated the President’s resolve to put an end to the nation’s border issues, and reflected on the ethereal condition of Peru’s shape prior to Leguía’s decisive measures:

We preferred to be a great contour-less republic, a legendary unbounded republic, ventilated with the memory of its tradition of Inca and colonial territorial greatness, than engage in any transactional or forceful act that would set and define the lines that bound the national territory (*heredad*). It was believed that the diffuse and imprecise contour of a huge Peru, whose borders would have to be sought in the colonial files and archives was preferable to having to address the demarcation of the dividing lines in a discussion and executive agreement with the neighboring countries.³⁸⁴

In this respect, Palma was setting himself apart from those who criticized the treaty. While the latter tried to establish through documentation what the ‘ancestral’ geobody of the nation was, the former instead subscribed to the notion that the real, legal borders of a country were the result of concrete transactions with neighboring nations. Palma thus rejected the maximalist, yet hazy, interpretations of Peru’s geobody that were so widespread at the time, instead characterizing them as unrealistic or ethereal.

³⁸⁴ Clemente Palma, “De jueves a jueves.” *Variedades*, March 24, 1928.

Thus, in such a context of a “contour-less republic,” multiple contours of the Peruvian geobody could coexist with the “official” shape promoted by the State. The official version was perhaps a map published with the endorsement of President Billinghurst in 1913.³⁸⁵ It featured a maximalist interpretation of Peru’s borders in the north, essentially depriving Ecuador of any territory in the rainforest, and setting the border with Colombia on the Caquetá River. The border markings and shadings established those spaces as completely Peruvian—although the map did introduce some measure of ambiguity by introducing the text “Territory under litigation” in the regions bordering Ecuador and Colombia. This particular shape did not hold a complete hegemony in the press printed in Lima in the 1920s, however. *West Coast Leader* would follow this shape in some instances such as in its April 8, 1920 issue, in which they ran a map borrowed from *La Prensa*,³⁸⁶ but could print a completely different shape for Peru in another map in an issue barely two weeks later, this time in a map borrowed from an English-language publication, the *Geographic Review*.³⁸⁷ The latter map essentially granted all the territory in the northern “bulge” or “hump” to Ecuador and Colombia—in addition to portraying the occupied provinces of Tacna and Arica as unmistakably Chilean. An advertisement even featured a map in which Ecuador’s territory stretched eastward to the point of sharing a border with Brazil,³⁸⁸ while *Variedades* printed a map of South America with a similarly shaped Ecuador.³⁸⁹ Not all the

³⁸⁵ Sociedad Geográfica de Lima, “El Perú en 1913 – trazado por la Sociedad Geográfica de Lima y mandado a publicar y distribuir gratuitamente en el XXV aniversario de su institución por su socio fundador Excmo. Sr. Guillermo E. Billinghurst, Presidente de la República.” 1913. Retrieved from Biblioteca Nacional de España, Mapas de América.

<http://www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Guias/12Octubre/MapasAmerica/GaleriaMapas/DetalleImagen25.html>

³⁸⁶ “[Map and description are taken from *La Prensa* of April 4th].” *West Coast Leader*, April 8, 1920, 16.

³⁸⁷ “Sketch map showing the cotton-producing areas of South America.” *West Coast Leader*, April 22, 1920, 8.

³⁸⁸ “The Anglo-South American Bank.” *West Coast Leader*, December 4, 1920, 12.

³⁸⁹ “La hazaña aérea argentina.” *Variedades*, August 14, 1926.

alternative shapes of the Peruvian geobody that coexisted with the “official” State-sponsored versions were unflattering to Peru’s territorial ambitions, however. An article in *Mundial* extolling the philanthropic initiatives of Peruvian *hacendado* Víctor Larco Herrera included a picture of the interior of one of the primary schools he had built and equipped and turned over to the State. On the wall there was a large map of Peru that respected the contours of the northern bulge, but added the huge triangle of Acre stretching deep into Brazil, as Peruvian territory.³⁹⁰ A similar map hung on the wall of the offices of the *Consorzio Fabbricanti Italiani per l’Esportazione*.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ “Las filantrópicas iniciativas de D. Víctor Larco Herrera.” *Mundial*, December 9, 1920.

³⁹¹ “Consorzio Fabbricanti Italiani per l’Esportazione.” *Mundial*, July 28, 1922.



Figure 8: El Perú en 1913



Figure 9: Variedades, August 14, 1926.



Figure 10: Map in the Consorzio Fabbrianti Italiani per l'Esportazione

One particularly curious case of ambiguity was a three-dimensional relief map of Peru prepared by a Jesuit priest that was praised by the weekly magazine *Mundial*. As may be expected

in this politico-physical genre, the map carried much detail regarding mountains and rivers for the territory deemed Peruvian by the mapmaker, while the spaces beyond its boundaries remained completely blank. There is no noticeable distinction between the Pacific Ocean and Brazil, as though the territory of the nation existed in a vacuum. Although this could be understood as a case of clear-cut cartography of the geobody, it featured a few artefacts that instead point to its undefined nature. First of all, instead of leaving Ecuadorian territory blank just as he had with Colombia and Brazil, it was represented with the same level of detail as that of Peru. The black and white photograph makes it unclear whether Ecuador was shaded in a different color, or whether there was a line representing the border. Perhaps the mapmaker wished to avoid dealing with the prickly issue of exactly where the border was (it was the last Peruvian border to be finally resolved, in 1942 and 1995), and chose to leave it ambiguous. Furthermore, the extreme northern end of the map, where the borders of Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia were supposed to meet (and where they were the least clear) was simply cut off, also conveniently saving the mapmaker the trouble of coming up with an exact depiction of the complicated region. The mapmaker's avoidance of portraying what was supposedly a completely Peruvian part of the country is all the more remarkable when *Mundial* states that "according to our sources, [another part] is ready for attachment to the southern end of the map, which will encompass the Peruvian provinces of Tacna, Arica, and Tarapacá."³⁹² While Tacna and Arica continued to be contested and under Chilean occupation, Tarapacá had been ceded unconditionally forty years before as a result of the War of the Pacific. Thus, even territories

³⁹² Patriota. "Mapa en relieve del Perú." *Mundial*, July 21, 1922.

acknowledged to be outside of Peru's current control were considered more of a priority than the diffuse northern border.



Figure 11: Peru in relief

Although the Salomón-Lozano was supposed to settle the border with Colombia once and for all—and along with it, the contour of the geobody in that direction—the older contours of the country continued to be used after the ratification of the treaty. The *Banco del Perú y Londres* ran an ad with a map of Peru that still encompassed the Caquetá River and the Leticia corridor shortly after the ratification,³⁹³ and even two years later, para-official Peruvian agents continued to use maps with the Caquetá as the border, as may be seen in the map they put up as part of their mineral exhibit in the Seville Exposition of 1930.³⁹⁴ Thus, for all of Clemente Palma's enthusiasm for the idea that President Leguía had settled the issue and finally given definition to Peru's previously diffuse shape, this lack of clarity continued for several years, eventually leading to the failed attempt to overturn the treaty in the War of 1932-33.

The silencing of dissent

Numerous scholars have pointed out how unpopular the Salomón-Lozano treaty was in Peru. Peter Klarén characterized the treaty as “extremely unpopular,”³⁹⁵ while Contreras and Cueto state that the Peruvian population considered it “disastrous” (*funesto*).³⁹⁶ Basadre pointed out that Boal, the US minister in Peru, acknowledged that the treaty was very unpopular in Lima, Congress, and even the Foreign Ministry,³⁹⁷ while Ronald St. John has pointed out the secrecy of the negotiations and the Leticia corridor were particularly irksome to Peruvian nationalists.³⁹⁸

³⁹³ “Banco del Perú y Londres.” *El Comercio*, January 1, 1928, 9.

³⁹⁴ “Las instalaciones del pabellón del Perú en la exposición de Sevilla.” *Mundial*, January 18, 1930.

³⁹⁵ Klarén, *Peru*, 258.

³⁹⁶ Contreras, *Historia del Perú contemporáneo*, 243.

³⁹⁷ Jorge Basadre, *Historia de La República Del Perú (1822-1933)* (Lima: El Comercio, 2005), vol. 14, pp. 121–22.

³⁹⁸ St John, *The Foreign Policy of Peru*, 165.

Pease and Romero have pointed out that it was seriously criticized by members of the Peruvian army, which led to the erosion of their loyalty towards Leguía.³⁹⁹ Campodónico et al. have stated that many Loretanos considered the treaty a sell-out and unpatriotic, and demanded that Luis Sánchez-Cerro, who deposed Leguía in 1930, declare it void.⁴⁰⁰ The consensus in this respect is very clear.

However, as previously pointed out, studying exactly how Peruvians experienced this “dismemberment”—as commentators repeatedly characterized the Salomón-Lozano treaty—is more difficult than it is for the case of the Philippines. To begin with, the treaty, unlike the Bacon bill, was kept secret from the public, which may go a long way towards explaining the silence with which it was met in the press. As seen in Chapter 1, part of the motivation for the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22 was the rumor that the Leguía régime was planning to cede the Putumayo region to Colombia, thus showing that the idea of territorial dismemberment did circulate in Peru in the years prior to the secret signing of the Salomón-Lozano treaty. There are several more clues that indicate that, despite the press blackout, the notion that some kind of agreement was in the works or had been secretly signed indeed circulated in the press rooms of Lima. For example, in July 1922—after the secret treaty had been signed—a columnist in *Mundial* remarked that there had never been a better moment to finally resolve the border issues between Peru and Colombia.⁴⁰¹ Basadre has commented on how the Colombian Minister in Peru, Fabio Lozano, was able to put his skills as a diplomat and flatterer to the service of the cause of the Colombian

³⁹⁹ Pease García and Romero Sommer, *La política en el Perú del siglo XX*, 83.

⁴⁰⁰ Molina Campodónico, Varela Tafur, and Lossio Chávez, *El río deja de ser. Introducción al estudio de la historia y la cultura contemporánea de la Amazonía peruana*, 49.

⁴⁰¹ Carlos Neuhaus Ugarteche, “La evolución política en Colombia.” *Mundial*, July 21, 1922.

corridor to the Amazon,⁴⁰² but the Peruvian press could match even the most extravagant instances of flattery as well. A columnist in *Mundial* characterized him as “heroic” (*perínclito*), and described him thusly:

I always knew that Fabio Lozano was a formidable intellectual. Upon engaging him, one can assay the purity of the gold in his brain, and I could easily fathom the infinite horizon of his culture. Due to his intelligence, his gentleness, his kindness, the aristocracy of his intellect, he seems less like the emissary of a nation and more that of a spiritual group. (...) Lozano does not believe in the foul ideas of an astute, hermetic, Machiavellian, inquisitorial, and specious diplomacy. He commits himself completely, and holds no secrets, he encourages with fatherly care the impulses of the young, he covers for the mistakes of those who have gone astray, he advises unity and preaches effort.⁴⁰³

Coverage of the extraordinary talents of Lozano and even his sons—both were described as intellectual or literary geniuses—continued throughout 1922. Alongside Leguía’s publicly stated aim of finally resolving all of Peru’s border issues, perspicacious readers would have been able to put together that there was movement in that direction. What they could not have deduced from the material available to them in 1922 was that the terms would eventually be deemed catastrophic for Peru.

The clearest signal that the treaty could be interpreted as unfavorable to Peru—and that public discussion thereof was suppressed—was the manifesto published by Germán Leguía in 1923. The former Minister of Government and cousin of President Leguía had been considered

⁴⁰² Basadre, *Historia de La República Del Perú (1822-1933)*, vol. 14, p. 125.

⁴⁰³ “La conferencia del ministro de Colombia.” *Mundial*, July 21, 1922.

the natural successor to the presidency once Augusto's term was up, but when the president ordered the Constitution of 1919—one that had been tailor-made for his needs—to be amended to allow for reelection, Germán Leguía broke with his cousin and announced his own presidential run. Among the numerous outrages committed by the president he had been a right-hand man for, he denounced

the huge detrimental cession that our Chancellery unashamedly made of the entire left bank of [the Putumayo] river, up to the Caquetá, in a border treaty that, according to official sources, will soon be sent to the national representatives for their knowledge. I hereby already declare traitors to the fatherland those who with their votes should approve that iniquitous pact, and I commit to punish them with a penalty fitting such a crime against the nation.⁴⁰⁴

Having been a high-ranking cabinet minister and successor-in-waiting when the treaty was drafted in March of 1922, he most certainly knew about the treaty himself, and had given it his approval, so there is much performativity in his angry denouncement. However, he curiously did not divulge the most scandalous part of the treaty, the cession of the Leticia trapezoid granting Colombia sovereign access to the Amazon River, which had been included even in the original 1922 draft. It is difficult to ascertain why he would have chosen to hold on to that card, considering that his break with the president was so complete, that he himself ended up being arrested and exiled—a kind of punishment that, ironically, he had pioneered in his days as Minister of Government.

⁴⁰⁴ Germán Leguía y Martínez, "El manifiesto ilustrado, corregido y... aumentado (continuación). *Mundial*, August 31, 1923.

What should have been a scandalous revelation that prompted innumerable editorials, meetings, and public resolutions, however, was met by almost complete silence in the press. One of the most accessible versions of Germán Leguía's manifesto came from the weekly *Mundial*, in which they reproduced the text, but interspersed it with cartoons and limericks mocking the words of the former Minister of Government. Regarding the border treaty, they portrayed him as an unflattering Jupiter/J Zeus, dressed in only a loincloth, holding a spear in his left hand and a bolt of lightning in his right. Around him smartly dressed men flee, with one of them bearing the label "Border treaty" and possibly resembling Chancellor Alberto Salomón—the one who had negotiated the treaty. The limerick said:

And furious Jupiter let loose his thundering sword on the fools who blindly and irresponsibly signed that pact.

Traitors, the national flag no longer shines on the left bank!

Everyone is an idiot, only I am a patriot!

I was told so by Luján.⁴⁰⁵

This was in keeping with the overall tone of the barbs directed at Germán Leguía in the other cartoons and poems, where he was in general portrayed as a bombastic, arrogant fool who considered himself the only one capable of coming up with his critiques and proposals. Other writers also castigated Germán Leguía's manifesto. Clemente Palma, in his weekly column in *Variedades* criticized him for promising that which he failed to accomplish in his time as President

⁴⁰⁵ "El manifiesto ilustrado, corregido y... aumentado (continuación). *Mundial*, August 31, 1923.

Y Júpiter tonante su espada fulminante / furioso descargó / contra la estulta gente / que ciega e inconsciente / aquel pacto firmó. / ¡Traidores, en la orilla / izquierda ya no brilla / la enseña nacional. / Todo el mundo es idiota / ¡Yo solo soy patriota! / Me lo ha dicho Luján.

Leguía's right-hand man, and actually being an accomplice or active participant in many of the outrages he accused the president of committing. *Mundial* commented that he was now an "orphan," for he was bereft of support from all the people he had mistreated over the years when he was Minister of Government. But specifically about the "iniquitous pact," little was said; Palma only commented that Germán Leguía promised to correct the mistakes made in the international order, but pointed out that in his role as an internationalist he "consented the diplomatic mistakes that he now reproaches."⁴⁰⁶

As pointed out in Chapter 1, President Leguía had relatively quickly established a firm control over the press in the country—the kind of control that was far beyond the capabilities of Governor-General Wood in the Philippines—which explains why there was not more discussion in the press of the matters surrounding Germán Leguía's denouncement of the terms of the treaty. Although the manifesto must have provoked much commentary among citizens in the capital, especially given Germán Leguía's high profile and the possibly scandalous intra-family feud that it represented, the dearth of sources makes it hard to determine exactly what was said about his accusations regarding the Putumayo, as we can only find them indirectly. Among such indirect sources, there are a number of documents that intellectual Pedro Ugarteche found after the fall of Leguía in 1930, which he published with his commentary in *El Comercio*, which give us clues in this regard. Related to a number of instances in which Chancellor Salomón sought to backtrack on the matter of a sovereign corridor to the Amazon for Colombia, the reasons put forward were along the lines of the unpopularity of the treaty in Peru. In instructions sent in

⁴⁰⁶ Clemente Palma. "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, August 18, 1923. "Política al día." *Mundial*, August 24, 1923.

November 1922 to the Peruvian minister in Bogotá to try to convince the Colombian Chancellor of the necessity of modifying the treaty, Salomón referenced “the resistance provoked by the Treaty once it became known that it gives Colombia access to the Amazon” and that such a modification would put an end “to the propaganda of those who considered that [the treaty] harmed their interests, and to the political initiatives of the enemies of the Government who used the borders it establishes as a pretext for revolutionary activity.”⁴⁰⁷ In February 1925, Salomón cabled the Peruvian minister in Washington DC that from the moment the terms of the treaty had been leaked by Ecuadorians, the treaty faced a “wave of resistance, that has grown to the point that it would be impossible for Congress to approve it now, as it has received the echoes of the opposition it faces in various spheres of the country.”⁴⁰⁸ None of these initiatives to modify the treaty came to fruition.

The exact terms in which this opposition was argued in the period 1922-1925 is unclear, as it appears to have been articulated orally rather than in writing, and expressed in private conversations behind closed doors in Congress and élite establishments such as the *Club Nacional*. It is also unclear to what degree the exact terms of the treaty were known, as later protests that did make it into written form make very clear mistakes regarding where the international border had been set.

There is more evidence of written criticisms of the treaty when the matter of the treaty picked up steam again in 1926 and 1927. However, none of these made it to the press in Lima

⁴⁰⁷ Pedro Ugarteche, “Las gestiones secretas para rectificar el pacto Salomón-Lozano.” February 1, 1933. In Pedro Ugarteche, *Documentos que acusan (el tratado Salomón-Lozano)* Lima, 1933. (Lima: Lib. tip. Estanco del tabaco, 1933), 17–21.

⁴⁰⁸ Pedro Ugarteche, “Documentos que acusan.” March 23, 1933. In Ugarteche, 31–35.

despite attempts to that end. Senator Julio César Arana of Loreto, who was firmly opposed to the treaty, had to resort to publishing a 91-page pamphlet for distribution among his fellow senators, explicitly referencing “the difficulties faced when trying to publish in local newspapers the texts and documents included in this opusculé,” as the articles he and his friends had tried to publish in the capital had been rejected due to “fears and apprehensions” (*temores y recelos*).⁴⁰⁹ In a further attempt to underscore the difficulties faced by those who opposed the Salomón-Lozano treaty, Arana included a footnote explaining that a telegram protesting the treaty was censored by the company running the communications system, and that it only arrived belatedly in Lima, in letter form.⁴¹⁰ In another case that shows the restrictions on dissent in Lima, when Pedro Ugarteche wrote an open letter in support of Arana and congratulating him for the publication and distribution of the pamphlet, Arana was unable to get the letter published in any local newspapers; he did offer to try to get it published in Iquitos, though, where crackdowns still had not taken full effect. That was not all, however, for when Arana tried to get the letter into the Congressional record, Salomón threatened to have Ugarteche judicially investigated for his knowledge of the secret treaty⁴¹¹—knowledge that, as we have seen, Salomón acknowledged was actually quite widespread. As a result, Ugarteche was forced to leave the country.⁴¹² Years

⁴⁰⁹ Julio César Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional* (Tall. Gráf. La Tradición, 1927), 3. Ugarteche, *Documentos que acusan (el tratado Salomón-Lozano)* Lima, 1933., 44–46.

⁴¹⁰ “Radio telegramas.” January 6–7, 1927. In Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 45–48.

⁴¹¹ Pedro Ugarteche, “Carta al senador Arana.” December 12, 1927. In Ugarteche, *Documentos que acusan (el tratado Salomón-Lozano)* Lima, 1933., 7–10. Julio C. Arana, “Respuesta del senador Arana.” December 15, 1927. In Ugarteche, 11–12.

⁴¹² Alberto Tauro, *Enciclopedia ilustrada del Perú : síntesis del conocimiento integral del Perú, desde sus orígenes hasta la actualidad* (Lima: PEISA, 1987), 2142.

later, after the fall of Leguía, the *Centro Progresista de Loreto* publicly thanked Ugarteche for having

the perilous integrity of revealing before the nation the denigrating significance of [the Salomón-Lozano treaty's] baneful historical transcendence, in his well-remembered open letter to then-Senator Arana. Our gratitude is all the deeper when one takes into account that by defying the inquisitorial vengeance of the tyrant, you were bringing upon yourself all the responsibility of your patriotic posture.⁴¹³

Indeed, the over-the-top rhetoric suggests that letters such as Ugarteche's were indeed few and far between, and confirmed that any opposition to the treaty would incur the wrath of Leguía, with all the consequences that that may have.

Judicial persecution was not the only tactic to accost those who conspicuously opposed the treaty. After the régime's fall, Ugarteche published explosive documents showing how in December 1927, Leguía had instructed the Prefect of Loreto, Colonel Molina Derteano, to let it be known that no act obstructing the execution of the Salomón-Lozano treaty would be tolerated. He closed out the telegram with an ominous "adjust your procedures to what you deduce is in accordance with the spirit of this radiogram"⁴¹⁴—in effect, a tactful way to tell him to do whatever he found necessary, without having to spell it out. Molina Derteano had indeed been persecuting those who opposed the treaty, having reported to the foreign ministry in January 1927, as a response to the protest of the residents of Caballo Cocha, that there were people in Loreto who were trying to coordinate the drafting and signing of protests against the Salomón-

⁴¹³ "Homenaje del Centro Progresista de Loreto" December 15, 1930. In Ugarteche, *Documentos que acusan (el tratado Salomón-Lozano)* Lima, 1933., 13–14.

⁴¹⁴ Ugarteche, 43.

Lozano treaty, and that he was “taking all the necessary measures to discover who the authors of such acts are in order to apply the corresponding punishment in accordance with the Ministry of Government.” In another letter to the capital, the Prefect reported that Arana had him in his sights because “I do not allow the people in this Department, including Iquitos, to protest against the treaty.”⁴¹⁵ The crackdown on dissent against territorial dispossession was far greater in Peru than it was in the Philippines.

As a matter of fact, in the newspaper of record, *El Comercio*, there was far more discussion about how the Salomón-Lozano treaty was being covered *in other countries* than it was in Peru. There were reports about how it was criticized harshly in Ecuador, as they considered that Peru and Colombia had split between them territory that was Ecuadorian,⁴¹⁶ or the acrimonious debate in the pages of the Chilean *Diario Ilustrado*, in which the newspaper and the Ecuadorian minister accused Peru and Colombia of having engaged in a dishonest negotiation at Ecuador’s expense, while the Colombian minister denied the charges and accused Ecuador of never having cooperated in a trilateral agreement.⁴¹⁷ Perhaps most interesting was the coverage about Argentina, where the treaty not only received praise,⁴¹⁸ but also a word of caution about how “a good portion of Peruvian public opinion has remained inflexible in anything related to giving Colombia sovereign right to even a part of the disputed territory.”⁴¹⁹ It is significant that one of

⁴¹⁵ Ugarteche, 43–44.

⁴¹⁶ “Sobre el tratado con Colombia.” *El Comercio*, January 4, 1928, 9. “Sobre el tratado con Colombia.” *El Comercio*, January 5, 1928, 7.

⁴¹⁷ “Glosario de la semana.” *Mundial*, January 6, 1928, 8. “El Ministro colombiano replica al del Ecuador.” *El Comercio*, January 14, 1928. “Nuevas declaraciones del ministro de Colombia.” *El Comercio*, January 15, 1928, 8. “La polémica sobre el tratado con Colombia.” *El Comercio*, January 17, 1928, 1 (afternoon edition).

⁴¹⁸ “Sobre el tratado con Colombia.” *El Comercio*, December 9, 1927, 7. “Sobre el tratado entre el Perú y Colombia.” *El Comercio*, February 24, 1928, 1 (afternoon edition).

⁴¹⁹ “Sobre el tratado entre el Perú y Colombia.” *El Comercio*, December 10, 1927, 1 (afternoon edition).

the few instances in which one can find such an allusion to the unpopularity of the Salomón-Lozano treaty was when it was reported from the foreign press. Directly stating that the treaty was unpopular might have risked a crackdown from the Leguía government, reproduction of a wire from the United Press that included that passage might have deflected some of that attention. There is, however, little evidence that this was part of an attempt by *El Comercio* to shed attention on criticism of the treaty, as this reference was an anomaly that was not repeated.

The United States-Colombia connection

As pointed out earlier, one of the factors that appears to have loomed large in the minds of those who experienced the Salomón-Lozano treaty was that of subservience to American empire, whose interests in this case aligned with granting Colombia large amounts of territory at Peru's expense. Leguía's extreme Americanophilia has been mentioned before, especially in his decision to take out enormous loans from US banks, driving Peru deep into debt and financial dependency. He even supported the United States occupation of Nicaragua and declared the Fourth of July a national holiday. Drake has even identified instances in which Leguía told the US embassy that he wanted to make Peru a protectorate of sorts of the United States. In the context of modernizing the state apparatus, particularly education, in the image of the United States, he stated that his hope was "to put an American in charge of every branch of our government's activities."⁴²⁰ Under his authoritarian rule, during his eleven years in power, Leguía could shape Peru into the pseudo-colony that he desired. This stands in complete contrast with the Philippine

⁴²⁰ Drake, *The Money Doctor in the Andes*, 216–17.

context at the time, where an American would-be autocrat faced constant opposition in his attempts to put more power and resources in American hands while taking them away from Filipinos.

Several scholars have alluded to the idea that the Salomón-Lozano treaty was pushed by the United States as a mechanism to compensate Colombia for their loss of Panama. Basadre specifies that while there does not appear to have been any pressure from the United States to sign the initial deal in 1922, and St. John acknowledges that while there was speculation to that effect, the secret nature of the negotiations makes it impossible to prove or refute conclusively. However, they both agree that after the initial signing, the United States put repeated and insistent pressure on all the involved parties to finalize the treaty, convincing Brazil to withdraw their objections to the treaty in 1925, and then finally pushing Peru towards a ratification of the treaty in its Congress. Both authors acknowledge that there was considerable subordination to Washington's wishes under Leguía, and although St. John points out that the accusation that the Peruvian government was essentially run by the United States Department of State is an exaggeration, he suggests that Peruvian interest in avoiding antagonizing the Secretary of State just when he was going to make a ruling on the Tacna-Arica issue was also a factor to take into account.⁴²¹

However, such accusations of US interference in the treaty as a measure to compensate Colombia for its loss of Panama are absent in the primary sources criticizing the treaty, leaving us with the question of whether this was really a line of speculation that was present when the

⁴²¹ Basadre, *Historia de La República Del Perú (1822-1933)*, vol. 14, pp. 121–25. St John, *The Foreign Policy of Peru*, 159–67.

treaty was being debated, or instead, an ex post facto rationalization for what may have seemed like an inexplicable surrender of Peruvian territory. It is not that critiques of US imperialism were unimaginable for Peruvians during the *Oncenio*. Firebrand student politician and Leguía opposer Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre had founded APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance-*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*) in 1924, and its first foundational pillar (out of five) was the struggle against (American) imperialism. Foundational socialist intellectual and editor of the magazine *Amauta*, José Carlos Mariátegui, was also an outspoken critic of US imperialism, thus proving that denunciation of US interference in Peru was not unfathomable. As seen above, criticizing Leguía's policies was already enough to attract retribution from the régime, so at least for the harsher critics of the Salomón-Lozano treaty, there did not seem to be a good reason to hold back from criticizing US empire as well.

The absence of direct references to US imperialism as a driving factor behind the Salomón-Lozano treaty notwithstanding, there are a few tantalizing details that suggest that even if they did not put those thoughts to print during the Leguía years themselves, Peruvian analysts had all the pieces to come to that conclusion. The treaty between the United States and Colombia settling the Panama issue had circulated in the Peruvian press since 1922.⁴²² Furthermore, while the terms of the Salomón-Lozano treaty may have remained secret (yet hazily known), it was public knowledge that the United States had made great effort to pave the way for its ratification through a tripartite agreement reached in Washington DC.⁴²³ But there are further hints that Arana was hinting at some kind of arrangement between the United States and Colombia. In his

⁴²² "Treaty between the United States and Colombia." *West Coast Leader*, July 18, 1922, 5-6.

⁴²³ "El tratado de límites con Colombia y el acta tripartita de Washington." August 1927 (?). In Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 20–26.

pamphlet against the treaty, when trying to give a notion of the size of the territory being ceded to Colombia, the first country he mentioned as broadly equivalent in size was Panama,⁴²⁴ and in the copy of the US-Colombia treaty he highlighted two passages—with no explanation why—that when read together would prove suggestive:

[The Government of the United States of America] in its own name and in that of the people of the United States, expresses sincere feeling [*sentimiento*—perhaps a euphemism just short of ‘regret’] for anything that may have happened that may have led to interrupt or alter the relations of cordial friendship that for so long had existed between the two Nations. (...) The United States of America agree to pay the Republic of Colombia, within six months of the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, the sum of TWENTY FIVE MILLION GOLD PESOS (\$25,000,000) in United States currency.”⁴²⁵

Arana could have been suggesting to his readers that since the United States admitted it was at fault in the Panama issue (weasel words notwithstanding), it was trying to provide additional “compensation” to Colombia. This treaty was also ratified by the United States less than a year (1921) before the Salomón-Lozano treaty was negotiated (1922), which would have made the timeline suspicious for Peruvians who would follow this kind of thinking. The United States’ pressure to resolve Brazilian reservations against the treaty could also fit within the narrative. Furthermore, considering that one of the ideas that Chilean negotiators were proposing was that their occupation of Tacna and Arica actually constituted a “concealed cession” (*cesión encubierta*)—a thesis Peruvians naturally rejected out of hand—, the treaty between Colombia

⁴²⁴ Arana, 60–62.

⁴²⁵ Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 76–82. Capitalization in the original.

and the United States could be read in a similar manner: it might not *explicitly say* that they were going to compensate Colombia for the lost territory with territory from a third country, but its spirit seemed to suggest that. The Salomón-Lozano treaty could be understood as the perfect salve for Colombian pride from a US perspective: it gave them a territory comparable in size to Panama, and while Colombia might have lost sovereign access to a key waterway (the interoceanic canal), the treaty with Peru gave them sovereign access to another: the Amazon River.

Thus, even though the written record does not appear to have explicit references of American imperialism being behind this territorial dispossession—at least in the period prior to and around its ratification—there are a few clues that do suggest that this idea indeed circulated. Perhaps this absence speaks to the experience of indirect empire and territorial reorganization. The need for American support in the Tacna-Arica dispute with Chile—militarily, Peru understood itself to be far inferior to Chile at the time—was so great, that even those who might have believed that Peruvian territory was being rearranged to fit Washington’s designs could not even address the issue in their letters of protest. This also speaks to the differentiated ways that territories were understood: the Putumayo region being “ceded” to Colombia could very well be understood as economically ruinous, but Tacna and Arica could be understood to be *truly Peruvian* in a way that the Putumayo was not. Risking US support in the recovery of Peruvian land and citizens in Tacna and Arica for the sake of a remote region that was sparsely populated by “civilized” people (yet many “savages” or “semi-savages,” as we will see in the next section) could be understood as a bad trade. Antagonizing the United States could still result in the loss of Putumayo, with the added drawback of no longer counting on their support for the recovery of

Tacna and Arica. This may explain why, after the Treaty of Lima of 1929 that resolved the border with Chile (Tacna was reincorporated to Peru, Arica remained in Chile) and the fall of Leguía, it became easier to talk about how US empire had backstabbed Peru in order to repair their relationship with Colombia.

Pushing back on the treaty

As a result of the secrecy of the proceedings relating to the Salomón-Lozano treaty and the government crackdown on dissent, a far smaller corpus of letters, editorials, resolutions, and telegrams against the Salomón-Lozano treaty has survived than is the case for the Bacon Bill in the Philippines. Most of the surviving documents share certain tropes in common. First and foremost was the matter of Peru's legal rights to the territory being "ceded" to Colombia, harking back to the *Real Cédula* of 1802. This was a document whereby the Spanish Crown transferred back the—mostly unexplored—"province of Maynas" to the Viceroyalty of Peru from the Viceroyalty of New Granada. To this *de jure* argument, they added the *de facto* condition of the territory; in several of these letters and protests, the ceded territory was portrayed to be occupied exclusively by Peruvian settlers, not Colombian ones, and that its productivity was the result of Peruvian investment and toil. Furthermore, there was the economic argument: by means of this treaty, Peru was ceding an immensely rich territory whose wealth would now go on to enrich Colombians, rather than the Peruvians who had sacrificed so much for it. Finally, there was the geopolitical argument, which found the cession of the Leticia corridor particularly offensive, as it was the cession of *truly* Peruvian territory inhabited by actual Peruvian citizens—a tacit concession that the territory and peoples between the Putumayo and Caquetá was to

some degree “less” Peruvian—and that it effectively gave Colombia the ability to completely cut off Peru from the Atlantic. They gained the ability to starve Iquitos and the rest of the Peruvian colonies in the Amazon region. Due to all of these reasons, the Salomón-Lozano treaty constituted a highly detrimental dismemberment—a word that was constantly used—of Peruvian territory, and thus needed to be rejected. Some of these letters and entreaties appealed to President Leguía’s patriotism and his background as a veteran who had defended the country from Chilean aggression and who was pursuing the reincorporation of the Chilean-occupied territories of Tacna and Arica.⁴²⁶

The fragmentary evidence from Peruvian opposition to the Salomón-Lozano treaty also shows to what degree they were taking place in an information-poor environment. Although it seems clear that they were aware that the left bank of the Putumayo River would be recognized as Colombian territory and that sovereign access to the Amazon River would also be granted, the exact terms of the treaty continued to be ethereal. In their objections to the treaty, the regional deputies representing Loreto and San Martín in the Northern Congress, and an unnamed former police commissioner (*comisario*) independently from each other stated that the territories it would cede included the settlement of Pebas on the left bank of the Amazon River, which as a matter of fact ended up being more than 100 km inside Peru’s borders.⁴²⁷ A Loreto-based sailor named José Domingo Barreto also objected to the treaty, pointing out that it would involve the

⁴²⁶ Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*. Ugarteche, *Documentos que acusan (el tratado Salomón-Lozano)* Lima, 1933. Gaspar de Las Casas, *Un scandale diplomatique: le Traité Salomon-Lozano* (Paris: Fontenay-aux-Roses, impr. de L. Bellenand, 1933).

⁴²⁷ Juan Vergara, Oswaldo Corpancho, Antonio Acosta, Pablo del Águila, “Pedido de los diputados regionales por Loreto y San Martín en sesión secreta del 23 de junio de 1927, en el congreso de Tumbes.” June 23, 1927. In Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 29–32. “Opinión del excomisario en Leticia.” August 18, 1927. In Arana, 27–28.

cession of the settlement of Zancudo and the region of Yaguas, both of which remained within Peru in the actual treaty.⁴²⁸ These letters of protest acknowledged that they had not seen the actual terms of the treaty, and that they were forced to speculate about them on the basis of the reports appearing in the Colombian and Brazilian press. Thus, despite official secrecy of the treaty, it is evident that its existence and broad outline were known, but that the specifics still eluded vast swathes of the population.

Many of the—mostly privately discussed—arguments against the treaty were publicly refuted by Clemente Palma, editor of the weekly *Variedades* and Leguía loyalist.⁴²⁹ He too stated that he was operating on fragmentary information, claiming that he based his analysis on his conversations with those who were in favor and against the treaty. He argued that the legal claim based on old colonial documents was irrelevant in the face of realities on the ground; Peru was only recognizing as Colombian what President Pardo had already given up in a *status quo* agreement in 1906. Hence, it may be understood that the economic factor was moot as well: Peruvians could not gain any benefit from territory that was already under Colombian control. He also downplayed the cession of sovereign access to the Amazon, referring to it as a “small corridor.” And as to the geopolitical aspect, he argued that by granting this “small corridor” to Colombia—rather than being forced to give it up as the result of a war or arbitration—, Peru would secure the former’s gratitude, guaranteeing peace between the two nations and paving the way for a great *entente cordial* between Peru, Colombia, and Brazil. In general, Palma cast

⁴²⁸ José Domingo Barreto, “Al margen del protocolo Salomón Lozano y del acta tripartita de Washington.” August 1927. In Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 5–19.

⁴²⁹ As president of the *Ateneo de Lima*, a learned society, Clemente Palma appointed President Leguía as its honorary president. “Por Palacio.” *El Comercio*, May 11, 1927, 1.

opposition to the treaty as emotional and based on fantasies of what Peru's territorial rights were. Those who, like him, pondered the matter more objectively on the basis of hard facts and the potential concrete benefits to Peru's international standing, would come to the natural conclusion of supporting the treaty.⁴³⁰ There was, of course, no recourse for those who disagreed with Palma to 'speak back' to him through the press.

Silencing indigenous voices

What neither side of the debate about the fate of the disputed territories truly took into account was the matter of the well-being or desires of the indigenous peoples whose ancestral territories both Creole republics were splitting between themselves. Those who opposed the treaty did not bring up the need to hold on to the territories to protect its indigenous inhabitants from Colombian dispossession or ill-treatment. Those who defended the treaty did not bring up that the indigenous people in the territory wished to be citizens of Colombia, not Peru. In fact, we have little to no knowledge of what positions indigenous peoples in the disputed region took, as they were never given a voice. Unlike the Philippines, where indigenous voices were heard, if only perhaps as leverage for their own interests, in Peru, whatever stances they may have had were all silenced.

Among the protests that *did* mention the indigenous peoples of the region was that of the citizens of the town of Caballococha, near the border with Brazil, and across the river from the border that was agreed upon in the Salomón-Lozano treaty. When enumerating the riches

⁴³⁰ Clemente Palma, "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, August 13, 1927. Clemente Palma, "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, December 3, 1927. Clemente Palma, "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, December 17, 1927. Clemente Palma. "De jueves a jueves." *Variedades*, December 24, 1927.

that would be lost with the cession of territory, they included the “countless native people (*naturales*) of rather advanced civilization, who work in various industries.”⁴³¹ While obliquely referencing Peru’s *mission civilizatrice*, it did not go as far as giving voice to those indigenous peoples *as* indigenous peoples. In a way, they were one more natural resource to be lost—and only of some value inasmuch as they had been assimilated sufficiently into “civilization” to be productive for capitalism. Otherwise, they might have gone unmentioned altogether. It is worth noting, however, that when going through the list of signatures, one does find a handful of indigenous surnames, such as Catashunga and Marapará. These were always preceded by Spanish given names, and completely outnumbered by Hispanic, and even Portuguese surnames. Thus, it suggests that even if they were indigenous or partly indigenous, they could “speak” only inasmuch as they were already assimilated into the Spanish-speaking culture of mainstream Peru, and incorporated into a settler town such as Caballococha, not as an autonomous indigenous people who, as a group, could pledge their loyalty to Peru or Colombia.

Iquiteño newspaper *El Oriente* also participated of this logic of indigenous worth being the result of the degree to which Peruvian “civilization” had assimilated them. When indigenous peoples were introduced into the discussion of the rights to the territory it was decidedly not in terms of Peru’s rights coming from certain indigenous peoples’ claims to ancestral lands being absorbed by the Republic of Peru—such as the Philippines’ claim on Sabah through the Sultanate of Sulu. Instead, indigenous people were portrayed as passive entities, almost natural resources, whose conquest by Peruvians is another activity, alongside others such as Peruvian rubber

⁴³¹ Manuel R. Lozano, Juan Villacorta Díaz, Carlos P. Sáenz, “Acta protesta de los ciudadanos y vecinos residentes en el Pueblo de Caballo Cocha contra el Protocolo Salomón-Lozano.” December 25, 1926. In Arana, *El Protocolo Salomón-Lozano o El Pacto de Límites Con Colombia al Congreso Nacional*, 41–44.

tapping facilities, that “proved” Peru’s effective control over the territory. “As inhabitants of those jungles we have also had several tribes, who were savages in the past and *who are now subjected* to Peruvian civilization (...) the savage or semi-savage tribes that live *in that Peruvian region were subjected* to our material, moral, and political power.” Thus, it is a narrative of subjection, of conquest. The land was always Peruvian (or at least so since 1802), but its inhabitants were not until they were forcibly subjected to Peruvian control. In this narrative of conquest and *mission civilizatrice*, we can see what the trajectory is: indigenous peoples begin as savages and non-Peruvians, it was only when they were conquered and acculturated that they *became* Peruvians. Peru’s claims to the Caquetá and Putumayo regions were portrayed as true because its indigenous peoples eventually migrated to Peruvian cities, and “the same may be said about the Napo river region, whose previously savage tribes have converted to civilization, today *all being Peruvian citizens*.”⁴³² Despite their transformation into Peruvian citizens—so, legally co-equal with any other citizen—the concern was not about the fate that awaited them under Colombian occupation, something that was ubiquitous when discussing the fate of Tacna and Arica, but about the loss of their productivity for Peru.

The aforementioned regional Deputies for Loreto and San Martín also referenced Peru’s *mission civilizatrice* in the region as part of the rationale for Peru’s rights in the territory:

The colonization of those regions was carried out by the sons and citizens of the Departments of San Martín and Amazonas, who with the sacrifice of their lives and risking their capitals in the midst of the infinite perils of life in the rainforest, have made effective

⁴³² “El Perú y Colombia.” *El Oriente*, May 3, 1927. In Arana, 49–55. My emphasis.

Peru's rights (...). One of the Peruvian companies, the Peruvian Amazon Company carried out, and continues to carry out, a valuable work of civilization in the region of the Putumayo river and affluents, *reintegrating* into the nation more than ten thousand *indios* who today are civilized and contribute a significant contingent of arms and energy to the progress of the *montaña*.⁴³³

Fascinatingly, as it stands, this text would suggest that the indigenous peoples of the Putumayo had always been Peruvian—much like the land—but had somehow lost their “Peruvianness,” and thus necessitated being “reintegrated” into the nation. And it was precisely Arana’s Peruvian Amazon Company that had carried out this effort of Peruvianization of the indigenous people, making them legible to—and above all, useful for—international capitalism. In this envisioning, reaping the products of indigenous labor was one more return on investment that Peruvian settlers deserved for their efforts in the region, and which the treaty was depriving them of.

An open letter signed by a number of prominent Loretanos residing in Lima brought up the topic of self-determination in terms that at first glance could seem to include indigenous peoples. They addressed President Leguía, telling him

You, sir, who have told Mr. Kellog (sic) that one cannot transfer the aboriginals (*aborígenes*), the autochthonous (*autóctonos*), the natives of a territory, to another sovereignty without their *prior consent*, *without asking what their will is*, how could it be

⁴³³ Juan Vergara, Oswaldo Corpancho, Antonio Acosta, Pablo del Águila, “Pedido de los diputados regionales por Loreto y San Martín en sesión secreta del 23 de junio de 1927, en el congreso de Tumbes.” June 23, 1927. In Arana, 29–32. My emphasis.

possible that now more than 15,000 Peruvians are turned over to Colombian sovereignty, without *their prior consent, without asking them what their will is?*⁴³⁴

The use of terms like *aborígenes* and *autóctonos*, often used as bywords for indigenous peoples in Peru, in the passage might indeed suggest a concern for their wishes. However, the words attributed to Leguía in his address to Frank B. Kellogg referred to the Peruvian citizens living in the Chilean-occupied provinces of Tacna and Arica. Thus, they were referring to (mostly) Catholic, Spanish-speaking Peruvians who were well incorporated into the national project, not to any group resembling the conditions of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon rainforest. Nothing else in the manifesto suggests that they were giving specific voice to the indigenous peoples of the region; the most charitable reading thereof would suggest they were just lumped as “Peruvians” without asking them for their opinion *as indigenous peoples*, as a distinct constituency. Even that would have been an improvement compared to Clemente Palma’s deplorable stance on a hypothetical plebiscite inspired by the concept of self-determination. He described the indigenous peoples of the Leticia corridor as “nomadic savages”, and consulting them would make as much sense as polling parrots and monkeys.⁴³⁵

The leadership of the university student movement probably put it clearest when addressing the issue of the indigenous peoples of the disputed territories. They distinguished between fifteen thousand “civilized” inhabitants and “two million indigenes (probably *indígenas* in the original Spanish) who have already been incorporated into civilization and who have

⁴³⁴ Miguel Alvarado, Julio S. del Águila, R. Velásquez Iglesias, et al. “Carta-Ruego abierta.” September 10, 1927. In Arana, 33–40. Emphasis in the original.

⁴³⁵ Clemente Palma, *Había una vez un hombre: artículos políticos* (Lima: Partido Democrático Reformista, 1935), 22.

proven to have singular gifts for work, and a profound patriotic sentiment.”⁴³⁶ This shows a continued racialized understanding of citizenship; even though the indigenous peoples had already been “incorporated into civilization,” they continued to be understood to be in a separate category from the truly “civilized” settlers. There is no sign in the text that they envisioned a multicultural citizenship in which people could be indigenous, “civilized,” and citizens all at the same time; indigenous people from the Amazon were not yet able to achieve complete Peruvian-ness, they would remain stuck in Chakrabarty’s *not yet* of colonialism.⁴³⁷ Furthermore, their description of them remained connected to their usefulness to capitalism and to the nation, traits which were not usually pointed out when talking about the population of Lima.

Perhaps the clearest sign of the degree to which the indigenous peoples of the region were seen more as natural or economic resources than as people was the population transfer initiated by senator and rubber baron Julio C. Arana between 1924 and 1927. In all odds aware, due to his political connections, of the imminent recognition of the left bank of the Putumayo River as Colombian, he ordered the transfer of “his” *indígenas* (Boras, Witotos, Andokes, Muinanes, and Ocainas) to the right bank to preserve their labor for his business interests. This transfer involved much suffering for the transferred population, who had to abandon ancestral villages and lands. This population transfer happened in the opposite key of those of the Peruvian Tarapaqueños a few years before. While neither transfer was entirely voluntary, the Tarapaqueños were arguably forced *out* by a Chilean state that found the presence of Peruvian

⁴³⁶ M. Gonzáles Jara, Fernando León de Viviero, Fernán Moncloa, et al., “La jeunesse universitaire de Lima demande au Congrès national de rejeter le protocole de frontières avec la Colombie qui constitue un attentat contre l’intégrité nationale.” December 1927. In Las Casas, *Un scandale diplomatique*, 25–29.

⁴³⁷ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe : Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

citizens residing in the conquered territory undesirable. The indigenous peoples of the Putumayo were forced *in* by Peruvian settlers who wanted to continue making use of their labor and to prevent their use by a Colombian Creole state that also routinely placed them under forced labor or even enslavement.⁴³⁸

Conclusions

This chapter has showcased two major differences in the way territorial reorganization was experienced in the shadow of American empire. Paradoxically, it was in the colony, not the neocolony, where resistance to territorial loss was fiercest and most effective. While the chief executive in the colony was unable to impede social mobilization against the projected partition of the country, and was powerless to punish those who opposed what was broadly understood as his will, the chief executive in the neocolony ran roughshod over the press and citizenry, controlling the former and exiling the latter. This shows the limits to authoritarian power within the structures of empire, even if it was an empire operating within the framework of “benevolent assimilation” or “uplift” of the colonized. Free from such overarching narratives of empire, authoritarian power outside the official frameworks of empire could enact harsher measures.

Thus, in Peru, two silencings took place. First, that of opposition to the reorganization of the imagined shape of the geobody. Despite historical consensus by numerous scholars about the unpopularity of the treaty, the Leguía government was able to keep discussion of it to a

⁴³⁸ Jesús Víctor San Román, *Perfiles históricos de la amazonía peruana* (Arequipa; Iquitos: Fundación M.J. Bustamante De la Fuente, 2015), 168–70. Stanfield, *Red Rubber, Bleeding Trees*, 202–3. Rosa Troncoso, “Una Historia de Amor Patrio : El Caso de Los Tarapaqueños Peruanos,” in *Sobre El Perú : Homenaje a José Agustín de La Puente Candamo* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2002), 1313–23.

minimum, or at least keep it out of a large part of the written historical record. This was accomplished by keeping the treaty negotiations and ratification process secret, thus keeping large swathes of public opinion mostly in the dark. Such secrecy was not an option for Governor-General Wood, who could not keep the contents of the Bacon Bill secret once it was submitted to the US Congress, nor force secret sessions for its discussion. The other way Leguía silenced opposition to this treaty was through his control of the press. Newspapers that ran unflattering stories of the régime could be expropriated—as happened to *La Prensa*—and those who publicly criticized the régime could be threatened with violence or exile from the country. There was perhaps some self-silencing as well. If the Salomón-Lozano treaty was understood as the will of Washington DC, that is, their way to compensate Colombia for the loss of Panama, and the price to pay by Peru for US support in the recovery of Tacna and Arica from Chile, then there were also reasons for those who would otherwise have been more critical of the treaty to consider it a *fait accompli* and to simply throw themselves at the mercy of the neometropole. To do otherwise would have meant risking Tacna and Arica and almost certainly losing the Putumayo as well. In a way, what is remarkable is not the comparatively much thinner corpus of texts protesting the treaty, but rather that there was any at all.

The other silencing was that of the indigenous population of the territory being “ceded” to Colombia. Given the historical context, neither side ever considered the possibility that they were carving up the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples. The only conceivable sovereignty was that of Creole republics. Unlike the Philippines, where both sides considered the opinion of the “tribal” Muslim peoples of Mindanao a factor in the equation, and they lobbied for their support, in the Peru-Colombia dispute neither side took them into serious consideration. In most texts

against or in favor of the treaty, the indigenous peoples of the region were not mentioned. In those that did, they were framed as natural resources that would be lost alongside rubber forests and transport facilities. In a way, these human beings were understood not to *be Peruvians*, but rather to *belong to Peru*. There was no rhetorical clamoring over their fate at the hands of Colombia, or serious talk about their self-determination—when self-determination was brought up, it was mostly understood to be those of the settlers, not the indigenous peoples, either as individuals or constituencies.

The threat of territorial dismemberment certainly produced earnest indignation in both the Philippines and Peru, as seen in chapters 3 and 4. Humor poking fun at the agent of dismemberment, however, only emerged in the Philippines. A reasonable supposition is that, unlike Peru, its élites did not carry the weight of—real or imagined—territorial losses in their history. The supposed call for the recovery of Guam was but a joke meant to undermine the dismemberment of Mindanao, not a case of actual, painful irredentism. There do not appear to have been Congress-level jokes in Peru about getting Tacna or Arica (or even Tarapacá) back in compensation for the Putumayo; those were painful losses that had taken place in the lifetimes of many of the actors involved in the 1927 ratification of the Salomón-Lozano Treaty. Daniel Parodi has noted how even in the present day, Peruvians live with an “excess of past” that continuously retraumatizes them over the loss of territory to Chile during the War of the Pacific.⁴³⁹ With the Tacna-Arica issue still unresolved in 1927, such a feeling of dread continued to be hyper-present. Any humor that did reference it had Germán Leguía as the butt of the joke,

439 Daniel Parodi, “Entre El ‘Dolor de La Amputación’ y El ‘Complejo de Adán’: Imaginarios Peruanos y Chilenos En La Guerra Del Pacífico,” in *El Odio y El Perdón En El Perú: Siglos XVI y XXI*, ed. Claudia Rosas (Lima: Fondo Editorial, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2009), 169–80.

not a light-hearted (or gallows humor) allusion to further territorial loss. And while the “loss” of Guam had been even more recent for Filipinos, eclipsed as it was by the upheavals and trauma of the Spanish-American and Filipino-American Wars, it did not register remotely as territorial dismemberment in the same level of forlorn melancholy that Peruvians would speak about Tarapacá, Tacna, and Arica. Talk about a “paradise that once belonged to the Philippines” was more a historical curiosity than a palpitating matter in Filipino society. For Peruvians, *yet another* territorial mutilation was a matter to be dead serious about.

Chapter 5

Of feminized geobodies and female bodies: Two beauty queens and a rebel princess

Between 1927 and 1930, three modern girls captured the imagination of literate communities in Manila and Lima, each with very different takes on social mores and relationships with the nation and society. In 1927, two cousins from the Sulu royal family were featured prominently in the Philippine press, albeit for very different reasons. While the elder, Tarhata Kiram was portrayed as the ambitious brains behind an unsuccessful revolt in Joló, the younger, Nora Maulana, was depicted as a charming, demure young lady who had won the accolade of “Miss Mindanao” in the Miss Philippines pageant that year. In 1930, a young woman named Emma McBride won Peru’s first national beauty pageant, and though she manifested a small degree of gender- and race-bending, these continued to reinforce the social status quo. How did the trajectories of these young women intersect with those of the geobody? How did their observed performance for male audiences reflect, reinforce or subvert expectations regarding indigenous populations? As suggested by the Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (MGAWRG), I try to make use of these modern girls as heuristic devices⁴⁴⁰ to discover their linkages to these issues. I propose that the way these three modern girls negotiated their condition regarding modernity and tradition and how these were taken by patriarchally-inflected readers can give us additional insight into the manners that female bodies could serve as a metonym for the geobody and the strength of the nation.

⁴⁴⁰ Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, *The Modern Girl around the World*, 2–7.

As seen in one of the cartoons featured in Chapter 3, the geobody of the nation could be represented by a literal female body being violently dismembered.⁴⁴¹ In that particular cartoon, a prostrate woman representing the Philippines lay helpless in the face of male violence being exerted by an American male, who sought to mutilate her by chopping off her legs, representing Mindanao. The only potential counterbalances to the violence being inflicted upon the female body are male bodies, both the physical one of the Filipino stock character Juan de la Cruz and the incorporeal one of national hero José Rizal. Depictions of the *madre patria* (“mother fatherland”) as a beautiful woman also abound in both countries. The nation can often be understood as female, and the defense of its territory can be understood as the defense of its integrity, its feminine virtue that would be soiled by foreign interlopers. However, as we have seen in the past chapters, the defense of the nation’s right to territory does not only extend to the land itself, but also to a complicated defense of the bodies therein. In the disputed territories in the Amazon and Mindanao, those bodies were Othered and racialized, and either ignored or upheld as the objects of a civilizing mission. Among those bodies, of course, numbered those of women. Each one of these women’s bodies could be read by mostly male observers as microcosms of the body of the nation and the nation’s endeavor to keep itself whole and ‘civilized’. They could be used as symbols for the unity and virtue of the nation when they toed the line, and as scandalous, yet still intriguing, when they did not. In their own indirect way, they too were involved in the battle for the geobody.

⁴⁴¹ “Bacon’s dream.” *The Independent*, June 19, 1926, 3.

My case studies have very different trajectories from each other, due in part to the very dissimilar historical circumstances in which they found themselves in terms of social hierarchies, history, and sovereignty. They range from modern girls who still firmly stayed within the bounds of mainstream domesticity and social expectations to those who became involved in armed rebellion against the government. They may have also conformed to mainstream, patriarchal beliefs surrounding modernity, bypassed them, or even outpaced them. One may even go from a very traditional provincial background to scandalous flapper and back in a single lifetime. They came from mainstream social élites or from subaltern indigenous groups—but still from their élites. What they had in common, however, is that each of the involved modern girls mixed and matched elements of modernity with their own local contexts, thus negotiating their relationship with patriarchy, mainstream nationalism, and modernity. In the Philippines, Tarhata Kiram—the rebel princess—and Nora Maulana—the beauty queen—exemplified the complex, negotiated nature of the relationship between Manila and the Muslim territories and peoples in the south, as refracted through the categories of exoticism and modernity. Although what brought about their celebrity was very different for each of them, they both defied the expectations of their Christian, Hispanized Filipino counterparts by appropriating an American brand of modernity and leveraging it to position themselves as just as modern, if not more so, than they were. In Peru, Emma McBride seemed to challenge these expectations in the opposite direction, and though she partook in the external aesthetic of the modern girl—short hair and dresses—as far as social mores were concerned, she continued to endorse notions of traditional domesticity to such a degree that her gender-bending games were still domesticated and seen as harmless. In this

sense, even though the particular configurations each one of them reaches may have been unique, they were all manifestations of the modern girl idea.

“Creole modernity” in Peru and the Philippines

To understand this process in Peru in the 1910s, Juan Miguel Espinoza uses the term “criollo modernity,” to describe the ways the mostly coastal, white élite creole class sought to achieve northern European- or North American-style material modernity without sacrificing the Hispanic, Mediterranean customs and social mores that they considered crucial to their identity as a group. I argue that this may be understood as a path towards integration with and appropriation of the material tools and prosperity of the Global North, but without sacrificing the privileges and cultural prestige that they had vis-à-vis the indigenous population of the country. This cultural advantage would be lost or severely curtailed were they to embrace the social mores (and perhaps even language) of the United States, rendering them as equally neophyte as the indigenous. In the realm of women, they carved out certain spaces and roles for women to achieve criollo modernity, namely, sports, charity work, and careers such as nursing or teaching.⁴⁴² The cultivation of a healthy bodies and societies harmonized well with the quest for material modernity, all without sacrificing the traditional feminine role of “angel of the home.” This kind of creole modernity, of course, lived in constant tension with the longer-term structures

⁴⁴² Juan Miguel Espinoza, “Las Mujeres Salen de Casa: Representaciones Femeninas En El Espacio Público a Partir de La Revista Variedades (Lima, 1908-1920),” in *Género En El Perú: Nuevos Enfoques, Miradas Interdisciplinarias*, ed. Wilson Hernández (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de Lima, 2019), 325–53. Juan Miguel Espinoza, “Entre Criollos y Modernos: Género, Raza y Modernidad Criolla En El Proyecto Editorial de La Revista Variedades (Lima, 1908-1919),” *Histórica* 39, no. 1 (2015): 97–136.

of patriarchy and ecclesiastic intrusion into matters of female behavior, particularly sexual mores, that are explored by María Emma Mannarelli.⁴⁴³

Espinoza's idea of criollo modernity could also be applied to the Philippine élite who, under clear American colonial rule, sought to appropriate the material aspects of modernity, while still trying to uphold the legitimacy of their own, Hispanic-influenced culture. This is suggested by the continuing resilience of the Spanish language several decades into the American colonial period, the popularity of the Basque sport of jai alai, and even by how invested the élite was in the Spanish Civil War a decade later.⁴⁴⁴ The continued popularity of the Catholic Church among the Philippine élite, despite continued portrayals by Americans of it as a "backward" influence, is also a key indicator of the weight of tradition and the reluctance to readily embrace all aspects of American culture. Furthermore, much like Peruvians and their indigenous peoples, mainstream Filipinos also took it upon themselves to "civilize" or "uplift" their own Others, namely the Muslim Moros and Lumad indigenous peoples of the south, as well as the peoples of the northern highlands, such as the Ifugao. In neither case, the Peruvian nor the Philippine, could the élites easily give up the traditional Hispanic culture which they had for centuries upheld as the key to superiority over their subaltern peoples. To be sure, there were some "americanistas" in the Philippines who sought to adopt American culture wholesale, but that much may be said about Peru as well. Criollo modernity appears to have been the dominant mode of appropriation of modernity in both élites.

⁴⁴³ María Emma Mannarelli, *La domesticación de las mujeres: patriarcado y género en la historia peruana*, Segunda edición. (Lima, Perú: La Siniestra Ensayos, 2018), 73–101.

⁴⁴⁴ Florentino Rodao, *Franquistas sin Franco: una historia alternativa de la Guerra Civil Española desde Filipinas* (Granada: Editorial Comares, 2012), 275–302.

These localized forms of appropriation of modernity, whereby certain material aspects were appropriated while trying to retain local cultural values and tradition, aligned with the roles they tried to assign to women. Denise Cruz, studying the 1930s, argues that the Filipina incarnation of the modern girl was the feminine “coed.” As liberated young women, the Filipina coeds flaunted their sexuality, chose their own mates, danced publicly, and wore fashionable and revealing clothes. But as their name indicates, access to modern education was what characterized them, or was at least the prime requirement to qualify for the category. This is particularly key in a context wherein higher education had been restricted to the male *élite* during the Spanish colonial period and had been opened up to women under the American push for modernization. The very existence of the coed is a marker of modernity *à la Americana*.⁴⁴⁵ Although they were technically not restricted in their choice of career, our case studies show a preference for the same ones that the modern criollos of Peru had earmarked for their own women: teaching and nursing. These careers conformed neatly with the needs of both modernity and tradition. Both careers involve care—a trait traditionally associated with femininity in both Peru and the Philippines, especially when it is directed at the weaker elements of society, such as children or the ill. But they were also markers of 20th century modernity: modern, secular education prepared the nation for the challenges of being an equal member of the international arena, and modern sanitation provided it with healthy bodies for capitalist production.

There were, however, calls to rein in modern girls in both Peru and the Philippines. Espinoza describes how *élite* Peruvian men were willing to allow those limited spaces for modern

⁴⁴⁵ Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 2012), 73, 89–90.

girls within their framework of “criollo modernity,” but constantly cautioned them from engaging in the extremisms of the mainstream feminist movements of the “more modern” parts of the world. Suffragettes were described as ugly, hyper-masculinized troublemakers, and Peruvian élite modern girls were advised to stick to their more traditional values and only take from modernity that which was truly useful and valuable.⁴⁴⁶ Paulo Drinot has identified how critics of the modern girl (also referred to by the more gallic “*garçonne*” or the localized “*mujer muchacho*”, that is, “boyish woman”) were in constant peril of blurring the lines between transgression and outright prostitution.⁴⁴⁷ This aligns with the anxieties around the behavior of the coed, as described by Cruz. In the context of the debate on female suffrage in the Philippines in the 1920s and 1930s, and on the basis of a misreading of the character of María Clara in the immensely popular novel *Noli me tângere*, Filipino politicians and columnists made a case for Filipina femininity that would be completely dominated by domesticity. María Clara was the love interest in the novel written by Philippine national hero José Rizal, wherein she was portrayed as submissive, obedient, and modest. While scholars such as Raquel Reyes and Roland Macawili have highlighted how even though Rizal is depicted as a pioneer of women’s rights due to his famous *Letter to the women of Malolos*, his exhortation for women’s education was still framed within familial domesticity, as he viewed them as future mothers who would raise good citizens, Cruz convincingly argues that María Clara’s lack of interest for the harmful social conditions and backward colonial and ecclesiastical administrations is a deliberate contrast to the protagonist’s (Crisóstomo Ibarra) desire for modernization, education, and eventually revolution. Thus, she

⁴⁴⁶ Espinoza, “Las Mujeres Salen de Casa,” 341–42.

⁴⁴⁷ Paulo Drinot, *The Sexual Question: A History of Prostitution in Peru, 1850s-1950s*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 119 (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 106–52.

was never meant to be taken as a role model, but those Filipinos who opposed female suffrage upheld her as such, as a true paragon of Filipina virtues, while chastising the coeds for going against them. Cruz notes that even those who defended the coed encouraged them to behave in a more demure manner, and to not be so brazen with their clothes and dating habits, while Jean-Noël Sanchez draws attention on the number of plays that featured María Clara and moralizing fiction published in the magazine *Dalaga* (Young woman).⁴⁴⁸ One interesting contrast between these two scenarios, however, is that of coquettishness or flirtatiousness. While flirting (but not sexual promiscuity) was a matter of some debate in Peruvian criollo modernism—some identified it as one of the pillars of the modern girl, others recognized that it was fine for English girls, but that the “Latin temperament” of Peruvian women made it a pathway to immorality—it is clear that the Philippine variant rejected it.

Eunike Setiadarma has pointed out the difficulties inherent in the historical study of women, especially those whose lives were not as strongly reflected in the archive as those of their male contemporaries. Thus, she suggests the use of historically sound speculation and interrogation of the available sources in order to get closer to the female experience, rather than a more clinical approach that abdicates where the archive ends.⁴⁴⁹ I take this approach into mind when dialoguing with these female characters, especially in the cases of Nora Maulana and Emma McBride, whose thoughts we can only access through mediation by male interviewers. By doing

⁴⁴⁸ Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities*, 74–88, 95–97. Raquel A. G. Reyes, *Love, Passion and Patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, 1882-1892*, Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore : Seattle: NUS Press ; in association with University of Washington Press, 2008), 117–53.

Roland Macawili, “Katawang Babae at Ang Imahenaryo Ng Nasyon,” *TALA* 3, no. 1 (2020): 88. Jean-Noël Sanchez, “Philippines : María Clara ou l’invention de la Femme nationale,” *Raison presente* N° 193, no. 1 (2015): 53–66.

⁴⁴⁹ Eunike G. Setiadarma, “Hoedjin: Eksplorasi Metode Penulisan Sejarah Perempuan,” *Jurnal Sejarah* 4, no. 1 (July 30, 2021): 1–13.

so, I can interrogate how each one of the modern girls in this chapter engaged with the tensions between modernity and tradition, as well as their role within the geobody, in the ways that they found most convenient. Nora Maulana used the beauty pageant milieu to highlight her own Moro modernity which would often be called into question by her Christian Filipino counterparts, and even subtly showcased her handling of certain tropes of the more modern “Anglo” modernity rather than the “Hispanic” modernity of many of the Christians. Tarhata Kiram went even beyond the fearsome image of the coed to become a flapper while attending college in the United States, and leveraged the prestige of her education and experience to criticize colonial rule in her homeland in the Philippine south. Emma McBride, on the other hand, comfortably located in the Peruvian bourgeoisie actually bucked the trend by appearing to be even more conservative than some of the other modern girl aspirants to her crown. When she transgressed certain concepts of race or gender, she appeared to do so more as a passive agent, and these transgressions certainly had no intention of overturning any aspect of the social order in force.

Nora Maulana: modern, yet demure beauty queen

Hailing from the southern archipelago of Sulu off the coast of the island of Mindanao, Muslim Filipina Nora Maulana made her mark in the Philippine public sphere when she participated in the 1927 national pageant and won the title of “Miss Mindanao,” which was handed out along with “Miss Luzon” and “Miss Visayas” in addition to the overall winner, who was titled “Miss Philippines.” By participating in a beauty pageant in the capital city of Manila, Maulana entered the contested arena of modernity, adapting it to her own needs vis-à-vis two different groups that exercised hegemony towards her people: Americans and Christian Filipinos.

In this respect, she was careful to deal with the expectations of her mainstream Filipino interlocutors, who would expect to find a semi-savage, exotic woman of dubious or contested Filipina-ness. In a context in which the more traditional, Hispanic modernity was not the sole, nor most prestigious, mode of modernity, Maulana was able to select some aspects of American-style modernity to possibly “leapfrog” her Spanish-speaking, Christian counterparts from Manila. She took in the educational element of the coed, while also taking care of not falling into her “excesses.” In this respect, she represented the most “successful”—or least controversial—adaptation of different currents of modernity and tradition. And in doing so, she also showcased a degree of agency unavailable to a number of her Muslim counterparts in the south. With her adoption of the language and certain values of the modern girl, she showcased what Cruz describes as “transpacific femininity,” even despite never having crossed the Pacific at this time. It was the ideas that crossed the ocean, and she made productive use of them. In turn, male, Christian concern over the impressions modern Manila had on her, her desires for the future (principally her marriage) highlight the trajectory that was earmarked for the Muslim (modern or not) girls sojourning in the colonial metropole. They were expected to surrender their ‘backward ways’ upon the sight of the modern ways of their Christian co-colonials and integrate themselves to mainstream Filipino-ness—especially through intermarriage with Christian men. Christian Filipino colonization was not to happen solely through colonization and acculturation of (feminized) indigenous land, but also of female indigenous bodies.

Beauty pageants in the Philippines were—and continue to be—major events in Philippine life. Genevieve Clutario has pointed out how beauty pageants in the early 20th century were connected to the broader histories race, gender, class, colonialism, and nationalism in the

Philippines, and showcased—through femininity and beauty—the degree of modernity achieved by the Philippine people. In this sense, they acted as an arena for contestation of American colonial claims of ‘backwardness.’ An articulate, sophisticated, and well-educated beauty queen who could speak “de tú a tú”⁴⁵⁰ with their female American counterparts could thus be understood as another front whereby the Philippine cause could be advanced. Thus, it is little wonder that the candidates were chosen exclusively from the upper classes of the country, both as a way to secure this objective and to limit the spoils of victory to a closed circle. As Clutario reminds us, beauty pageants continue to fascinate Filipinos to this day, with boot camps doing brisk business, and the results of the competitions keenly followed by an avid public.⁴⁵¹

The importance attached to the 1927 beauty contest is borne out by a speech by Manuel Quezon, then president of the senate. In addition to praising the services that the Carnival Association was rendering to the nation insomuch as it promoted the country’s industry and natural resources, he pointed out the positive effects it—and the beauty pageant—had for national unity and identity:

...gives persons of different sectors of the country an opportunity to meet with each other and to know each other better, thus helping the *formation of national unity and mutual understanding. The non-Christian Filipinos mix with their Christian Filipino brethren during this season, while beauties from all parts of the country come to Manila and meet with each other.* The beauty pageant also helps to strengthen the bonds of friendship between

⁴⁵⁰ As in, using the informal second person pronoun in Spanish, that is, speaking horizontally.

⁴⁵¹ Genevieve Clutario, “Pageant Politics: Tensions of Power, Empire, and Nationalism in Manila Carnival Queen Contests,” in *Gendering the Trans-Pacific World*, ed. Catherine Ceniza Choy and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu (Leiden, 2017), 257–83.

people of different sectors, and to make better Filipinos out of our men. *A Filipino who sees the beauties of his land every year feels like a better Filipino.*⁴⁵²

For Quezon, the benefits of the pageant clearly lay *beyond* the contestants themselves. The same article remarks how Quezon and the male judges asked the contestants to stay in a room where they could observe them, and asked them to sit, stand, walk around, and sit again “while each of their slightest movements was followed by nine pairs of scrutinizing eyes in search of the ‘beauty among the most beautiful’.” The completely male composition of beauty contest juries at the time ranged far and wide, being noted by Varner in the case of Mexico as well.⁴⁵³ The gathering of males to gaze at female beauty reflects well on themselves, strengthening their bonds with non-Christian Filipinos and boosting their national pride, which in turn could presumably lead to more civic behavior, i.e., being a better Filipino (*mejor filipino*). These bonds with Muslim Filipinos, in turn, would bind the land that they live on to a better, whole Philippines as well.

With the bodies of beauty queens having been elevated to the status of an arena in the struggle against open-ended US occupation, slights against them could also lead to livid ripostes. For instance, there was an uproar in the press when the winners of the 1926 edition of the competition were depicted in an unflattering way in a moving picture. A woman from high society demanded to buy the film so that she could burn it, and an editorialist stated that this was either a case of gross incompetence or of collaboration with “the imperialist globetrotters in their dreadful work of presenting us to the world pantsless and with the shirt to the middle of our

⁴⁵² “Esta noche será proclamada la srta. Filipinas.” *El Comercio y la Opinión combinados*, February 16, 1927, 4. My emphasis.

⁴⁵³ Natasha Varner, *La Raza Cosmética Beauty, Identity, and Settler Colonialism in Postrevolutionary Mexico*, Book Collections on Project MUSE (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2020), 33.

chests.” This connection between negative portrayals of Filipinos and American imperialism is referenced when the writer suggests that the filmmaker was in cahoots with well-known racist author Katherine Mayo, who had recently published her book *The Isles of fear: the truth about the Philippines*.⁴⁵⁴

Angry protest is also reproduced at the level of the subaltern of the subaltern, i.e., the Moros of the south. When rumors circulated in 1927 that the winner of the title of “Miss Mindanao” would be Nora Maulana, a native of the Sulu archipelago off the coast of Mindanao, the Moro representatives to the Carnival Association secured an audience with Governor General Wood’s adjutants in order to lodge their complaint. They stated that such an outcome would be an insult to the beauty of the women of the larger island of Mindanao proper. One of the Datus stated that it would be akin to being shot in the head, while another made a veiled threat of violent uprising should their dignity be thus offended.⁴⁵⁵

Clutario points out that the pageants were an opportunity for the élites to showcase their sophistication and grace (contestants were always chosen from the upper classes), which would then lead to a celebrity status that they could then leverage into a successful career or, more often, a good marriage. Especially in the earliest iterations of this competition, it was also a way for Christian Filipina women to establish themselves as the peers of their American or Spanish counterparts.⁴⁵⁶ As a display of modernity and education, this dynamic is reproduced by the subaltern, in this case embodied by Moro contestants such as Nora Maulana. With a long history

⁴⁵⁴ “Unas bellezas que resultan muy ridículas.” *La Opinión*, February 24, 1926, 1. “Película de adefesios.” February 25, 1926, 4.

⁴⁵⁵ “Que no proclamen a Miss Sulú como Miss ‘Mindanaw’.” *La Opinión*, February 18, 1927, 1, 8.

⁴⁵⁶ Clutario, “Pageant Politics.”

of being considered a primitive, violent Other in Philippine history, Moro contestants found themselves in a position somewhat reminiscent of the Christian Filipinas of the early 20th century. They had to prove themselves as articulate, demure, modern, and educated peers of their Christian counterparts.

Maulana met all these expectations successfully. First of all, she was a member of the royal family of the sultanate of Sulu—niece to the sultan, much like her cousin Tarhata—thus making her a worthy counterpart to the aristocratic contestants from Luzon and Visayas, “despite” her status as a Moro. Interviewed by the bilingual (English-Spanish) weekly *The Independent*, she patiently subjected herself to the verbal and visual scrutiny of her male interviewer, Vicente Alindada. While describing the conversation, Alindada played with the readers’ expectations; he made a point of contrasting the sophistication, elegance, and poise of this young woman with the supposedly rustic and backward milieu in which she grew up, going on to praise her for how successfully she overcame that background. We will never know for sure what her thoughts on that were, but we can also detect a countervailing break with expectations seeping through Alindada’s account of the interview. These appear to indicate adoption and adaptation of certain elements of American modernity that allow her to subtly contest who of the two truly is more “modern.”

To begin with, she showed herself impatient with his slight tardiness, which might have fallen well within the margins of the acceptable within the Hispanic kind of modernity—and which continues to be a phenomenon described as “Manila time”—but much less so under the newly hegemonic American brand thereof. She greeted him with a handshake “in a very American style,” presumably in contraposition to a more traditional greeting (perhaps kisses on

the cheek?). Not only did she engage in American understandings of time and use an American greeting, she also conversed in English. What is more, at one point in the conversation when they speak of her reading habits, she made a point to say that she read exclusively in English (Alindada pointed out she “only” spoke English and her “local dialect”). When talking about sports, she made a point of specifying that she practiced horse-riding “a la americana,” and played indoor baseball and tennis, neither of which were particularly Hispanic practices.⁴⁵⁷ These in turn remind us of how under criollo modernity, sports were an approved milieu for the modern girl. With her presence in Manila being to attend a beauty pageant that was a showcasing of modernity, by adhering to more “American” customs, Nora Maulana showed herself to be in some ways “leapfrogging” her Manileño interlocutor; she was appropriating the cultural artifacts of the newer, “more modern” colonizer, while bypassing those of the older, “more backward” one. In this respect, we witness a manifestation of the impulse detected by Michael Hawkins whereby some American military administrators thought of the Moro Muslims of the South as more likely candidates for modernization.⁴⁵⁸ However, considering that they based that assessment on Moro masculine fierceness and combativeness, they might not have foreseen it being embodied in a demure, English-speaking Mora.

Whatever she may have thought of Alindada’s views on Joló and his penetrating male gaze—a large portion of the article consists of him describing in great detail her body, perfume, hairstyle, poise, etc.; his gaze is a stand-in for that of his presumably male readers—she continued to play within the bounds set by the expectations of Manila society and the pursuit of

⁴⁵⁷ Vicente Alindada, “De silla a silla.” *The Independent*, March 12, 1927, 23-25.

⁴⁵⁸ Hawkins, *Making Moros*, 26–53.

modernity. She praised the importance of education, mentioning how she studied at the public school and at the Joló Dormitory, and was going on to becoming a teacher herself. She also mentioned how she hoped to continue her studies and become a “nurse” (in English in the original Spanish-language printing). In both of these career trajectories, she is seen to endorse the more acceptable—and desirable—aspect of being a coed. In matters of love, however, she demurely stated that one should only have one in their lifetime, distancing herself from the “dangerous” coed and her multiple love affairs. When asked if she would marry a Christian—a sexual embodiment of the Christian Filipino civilizing mission vis-à-vis ‘their’ Muslim population—she replied that she sees no issue with that possibility. This then dovetailed into the discussion of Filipino patriotism. She stated that all Filipinos are one race and people, and that hence, segregation—marital or otherwise—was unthinkable, and that she dreamt of a future in which all Filipinos had taken this idea to heart. All of these speak to Nora Maulana’s conformity with Filipino cultural and political norms. Her kinship with the rebel Princess Tarhata was mentioned only briefly (perhaps to establish her aristocratic *bona fides*), but the subject was then discreetly dropped by both interlocutors. She confirmed her yearning for modernity by answering a question about her dreams for the future by saying that she would love to go to Europe or the United States.⁴⁵⁹

Nora Maulana’s trajectory as a Moro woman followed the ideal Manileño roadmap for the “uplifting” of the “backwards peoples” of the Philippines. Manila was the Mecca of modernity within the Philippines, and journalists took it for granted that those who should see it would be

⁴⁵⁹ Vicente Alindada, “De silla a silla”. *The Independent*, March 12, 1927, p. 23-25.

inevitably drawn back to its modernity and progress. Journalists commented freely about how, after seeing the lights of Manila, provincial contestants who return to their hometowns would never feel right again until they came back to the capital. This was all the more critical in the case of the Moros; upon sight of the modern, civilized capital, they *must* feel attracted to it, and become more loyal to the future nation-state and presumably to the integrity of its geobody. There was something beyond ecumenism in Alindada's question regarding interfaith marriage. In a way, he was asking Nora Maulana if she was willing to *civilize* and leave the backward ways of Joló behind. The *Servicio Informativo Nacional*, for instance, reported in a positive manner that polygamy was falling out of favor in Joló "especially among the educated class," attributing it to their frequent contact with Christian Filipinos (and, presumably, the modernity that they embodied), and predicting that "the day will come when they shall abandon their old lifestyle and abide by the *modern ways of life*."⁴⁶⁰ Marrying a Christian Filipino would thus be understood as the most direct path to modernity for a Moro woman such as Maulana, and would almost appear unavoidable due to modernity's inexorable attraction. A Christian Filipino official named Emilio Vélez, who had been posted for four brief months in Joló also approvingly remarked that Moro women increasingly preferred to marry Christians, because they thought that this "would be the only way by which a better understanding between the two peoples can be brought about."⁴⁶¹ It is unclear, however, what previous experience Emilio Vélez had of Joló in order to be able to establish a clear distinction between the past and the present. Even if his impressions were more the result of wishful thinking than of ethnographic or demographic knowledge, it still

⁴⁶⁰ "La poligamia está cayendo en desuso." *La Opinión*, September 23, 1926, 1.

⁴⁶¹ "Marriage with Christian Filipinos becoming popular with Moro girls." *Tribune*, August 11, 1925, 2.

pointed to the desires of the mainstream, Tagalog élite: integration of the Moro populations of the south through “civilizing” marriage, understood to be usually of a Christian male and a Muslim female.

Once again, Nora Maulana conformed to these expectations, at least to a point. Clutario has pointed out how the élite women who participated and won these national beauty pageants sought to “marry well,” and at one point it appeared that Maulana too was going down this path. Alindada associated her to a charming and well-placed politician of the capital, who would indeed have met the expected standards, but she ended up marrying a schoolteacher from Dumaguete named Hermenegildo Mercado. However, this still fit into several narratives. First, that of the beauty queen “marrying well” inasmuch as her new husband was a Christian. Second, that of the Muslim maiden who wished to flee her possible fate as a concubine or a secondary wife of a powerful Muslim Datu and finds salvation in the arms of a good, Christian man. Newspaper coverage indicates that she married in haste because “her elders had expressed a desire that she should marry one of the Datus of Joló.”⁴⁶² Finally, this also matched the expectation of the Muslim girl who could not bear to go back to the backwardness of her Islamic community after having experienced the modernity of Manila, and thus opted to stay in the modern world. True, Dumaguete might not have had the attractions of the capital city, but it was still a far cry from “backward” Joló.

Emma McBride and beauty queen geopolitics of reconciliation

⁴⁶² “Miss Mindanao (Nora Maulana) casada.” *La Opinión*, May 2, 1927, 2.

Seventeen-year-old Emma McBride, the first winner of the accolade “Miss Peru” mirrored some of the social conformity shown by Nora Maulana. In 1930, the newspaper *La Crónica* along with the magazine *Variedades* organized a competition to send a national representative to a Latin American beauty pageant in Miami, which, much like the ones organized in the Philippines, was geared towards choosing queens coming from the upper classes, as may be verified by the snapshots and brief interviews published of some of the contenders. Not only were contestants required to have “photogenic” beauty—a euphemism for the kind of beauty that commonly appeared in photographs, i.e., “white” and not “ethnic” beauty—, but they must also have irreproachable moral character [*prendas morales*]. This would, of course, exclude vast numbers of working-class women, whose occupations outside the home would cast a shadow over their honor. Much like in Mexico, where beauty contests for indigenous women were segregated from the white “norm”, indigenous women in Peru must have understood this was not a contest for them.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, in order to compete in the capital of Lima, contestants would need to get votes from coupons clipped from *Variedades* and *Crónica*, further reducing the pool of candidates and voters to those with enough disposable income to buy these publications. The appeal to the modern girl demographic is also revealed by the illustration in the voting coupon, which featured “Asianized eyes.”⁴⁶⁴ The MGAWRG has detected the “Asianization” of eyes in Modern Girl iconography as one of its main symbols, and they argue that it represents a certain cachet of temporary exoticism that is permissible as it came from a position of relative privilege.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Varner, *La Raza Cosmética*, 24–48.

⁴⁶⁴ “El gran concurso de Variedades y La Crónica para designar a la ‘Señorita Perú’.” *Variedades*, January 1, 1930.

⁴⁶⁵ Weinbaum and Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, *The Modern Girl around the World*, 32–33.

Within these parameters, it is no surprise that these contests did not include anyone directly comparable to Nora Maulana. There were no indigenous elite women participating in the contest, be they from the highlands or the disputed Amazonian region. The niece of a powerful Shipibo chieftain would have not even been considered as “Peruvian” enough to send to represent the nation in an international contest to in the United States. With respect to territory, McBride’s imbrication with the controversies over the Peruvian geobody did not stem from its borders in the Amazonian region, but rather with that of the long-simmering dispute over the permanent status of Tacna and Arica. With the contest coming after the final resolution of that matter—an issue near and dear to President Leguía and something that he would consider one of his great achievements (but which also contributed to his downfall)—she, alongside beauty queens from Chile and Bolivia, was used as a prop to represent the newfound harmony between the old wartime enemies. Miss Peru and the feminized Peruvian geobody were presented together as whole, healthy, and beautiful.

As we will see, however, Emma McBride toed the line of domestic femininity perhaps even more so than her Muslim counterpart. This can be counterposed with the independence and ‘modern girl sassiness’ showcased by some of the other contestants in a number of interviews published by the magazine sponsoring the competition. Contestant—and future journalist and feminist icon—Doris Gibson, for instance, flatly refused to answer some of the more frivolous questions, such as “What is your favorite jewel, color, perfume, or dance?”, and when asked “What is your greatest aspiration?” she intentionally took the other meaning of the word (that is, “to aspirate”) and replied “sea breezes” (*brisas marinas*). Another contestant, Rosa Elvira Sologuren gave a very assertive reply to the same question, stating her greatest aspiration

was “[t]o react against this vexing passive role of women have in our current living, whose destiny is unknown and up to *chance*. I want to be my own woman. To be a conqueror, not conquered.”⁴⁶⁶ These women sought their own independence and chose what to engage with and what not. As described by the magazine, however, they all clearly belonged to the social élite of the city of Lima. We will never know if such responses ruined their chances of winning the crown or, especially in Gibson’s case, if they actually wanted to win it or simply get a rise out of their interviewers. McBride, whether by design or happy accident, would end up perfectly incarnating the ideal of the modern, yet domesticated young élite woman who could be sent to the United States and not raise any eyebrows.

Emma McBride was not an exception in regards to her social extraction. When commenting on her “Nordic” lineage—though it is unclear if they are referring to the Nordic countries in the strictest sense or as an umbrella term for all of northern Europe—*Variedades* used the term *abolengo* (“ancestry”), which often denotes a certain degree of nobility or aristocracy, thus cementing her social position among the white élite. She was the daughter of a lieutenant commander in the Peruvian Navy (also known for a long tradition of choosing its officers among the social élite of the country) and was characterized as a “society lady” (*dama de sociedad*).⁴⁶⁷ Her lifestyle appears to have been comfortable, despite her father’s relatively early death. Much like middle- and upper-class Peruvians who adopted the hippy aesthetic in the 1960s and 1970s but continued to conform to the mores expected of the *clases decentes* (“decent classes”), in the numerous photographs that circulated of McBride after her coronation as Miss

⁴⁶⁶ “Instantáneas.” *Variedades*, January 15, 1930. Her emphasis.

⁴⁶⁷ “Dos horas con Miss Perú.” *Variedades*, February 19, 1930, 28.

Peru, she showcased the bobbed hair and short dresses of the flapper girl—and even some risqué bathing suits⁴⁶⁸—but remained even more firmly entrenched within the expected patterns of society than Nora Maulana and some of her fellow contestants.

In this sense, she conformed in her own way to the criollo modernity that Espinoza has pinpointed among the editors of *Variedades* in earlier decades. This particular brand of modernity intersected with gender by highlighting traditional roles for women, especially their coquettishness and grace, largely circumscribing their role as being that of the “angel of the home.” Women who partook in the public sphere could still be praised by *Variedades* so long as they stayed within the bounds of the flirty archetype and limited themselves to certain “proper” activities, namely sports (but not in an excessive amount, as it might bring about their “masculinization”), politics (but only in the sense of charitable work), and access to education and work (preferably in careers earmarked for women, such as nursing or teaching, although Espinoza finds evidence for physicians as well). Even in this sense, the principal value of their participation in spaces outside the domestic sphere was understood to be their beauty, as their presence made the male experience more pleasant. Within criollo modernity, women must not exceed these roles, as doing so would bring them the criticisms the editors and writers of *Variedades* leveled against a much more “extreme” (and undesirable) modernity espoused by feminists in the global north who were demanding equality and voting rights, whom they described as “ugly” and “unfeminine.”⁴⁶⁹ However, as shown by Drinot, by the 1920s several commentators had already noticed the lack of consistency between the modern girl ethos

⁴⁶⁸ “Incomparable trilogía de bellezas.” *Variedades*, February 26, 1930.

⁴⁶⁹ Espinoza, “Las Mujeres Salen de Casa.”

espoused by Peruvian modern girls and their actual social values. José Carlos Mariátegui, the socialist intellectual said that “from modernism they take only what is external, banal, of no importance: the bobbed haircut, the dress over the knees, the stomach massage in the Charleston, and the cigarette.” Another commenter stated that Peruvian flappers may affect transgressiveness, but did not actually follow through to actual sexual initiation: “the flapper smokes, drinks, and curses, but never goes beyond that. She may appear to care little about her virtue, but when the critical moment arrives, you will always be able to confirm at least technically, that her virtue is intact.”⁴⁷⁰

A long interview that ran in the February 26, 1930, issue of *Variedades* allows us to locate where McBride fit within the broad expectations of the time period. As may be expected, the male interviewer/reporter remarked on the coquettish smile, the shapeliness of her curves, and the beauty of her face and lips multiple times over the course of the text. Unlike Nora Maulana, Emma McBride did not appear to show much contestation with her interviewer—or at least that is the image the interviewer revealed to us. McBride came off as conforming to the “angel of the home” archetype that predominated in the period. She described herself as “deeply religious,” and going on to mention how she loved the nuns who were her teachers in school to the point that she even considered taking up the habit herself. She revealed that her first communion was one of her most treasured memories, and among the numerous pictures of her featured in the spread—both of her at the time and during her childhood—was one of her wearing her first communion garb. Even when she appeared to clash slightly with her interviewer on the issue of

⁴⁷⁰ Drinot, *The Sexual Question*, 142–44.

love and marriage, she appears to even reject the coquettishness that the male observer expected of the Peruvian modern girl, landing on a more conservative viewpoint than what the interviewer was expecting:

—Love—she tells us—is very pleasant, beautiful, and sweet, but let it be known that I cannot speak about it with much experience. I do believe, however, that without love, life would be sad, monotone, and pointless. As to marriage, I see it as a faraway prospect; but I hope to attain it, like any woman who is aware of her mission and desires happiness.

—...?

—Allow me to silence this answer. Intimate matters must not transcend. Queens also have their hearts, and these belong to only themselves, right? But what I can tell you is that my desire is to marry a good, intelligent, enterprising lad, even if he were poor, who, above all else, loves only me. Do you understand?⁴⁷¹

We will never know with certainty what exactly did that made McBride reconsider her original answer. Did he raise his eyebrows at the demureness of the reply? If it were the same reporter who interviewed the other contestants, this was certainly a major contrast with the feisty Doris Gibson. At any rate, this passage allows us to examine what the beauty queen appears to have wished to retract. At first she spoke (somewhat) freely about love while making a point of clarifying that she had no experience of the matter, thus highlighting her demureness. She might resemble a modern girl on the outside, but there was a clear distancing with the flirtatiousness and love affairs associated with them in other parts of the world—and even with non-

⁴⁷¹ “Dos horas con ‘Miss Perú’.” *Variedades*, February 19, 1930, 31.

promiscuous coquettishness. An instant later, even that confession and her praises of the virtues of love seem to have gone too far, and she asked the reporter to “silence” her answer, which she replaced with a call for domestic privacy and a by-numbers description of her ideal husband, retrenching herself even further. The fact that the reporter disrespected her wishes and printed her original reply suggests that he did not consider it a dishonor to her or her family, which indicates that he did not consider it risqué at all—and that he considered his reading of the situation sufficient to overrule her openly stated desires.

Her interviewer discreetly changed the subject after this exchange. She had previously described her interests as “domestic chores, sewing, cooking, all that relates to the calm and serene life of the home,” leaving us with a profoundly domestic picture of McBride’s outlook on life and her future. Even though *Variedades* “allowed” for certain educational or even professional prospects—so long as they kept their feminine charms, which McBride clearly did—these did not come up in the interview. She pointed out that she was never a star pupil—which the interviewer described as having been said with “a delicious pout of her disquieting lips”—and apart from a couple of mentions of her interest in geography, her educational future was not broached by either her or her interviewer.⁴⁷² Far from a modern girl or Filipina coed—and even from the demure Nora Maulana—McBride did not appear to show much interest in an independent career in the modern fields of nursing and teaching. And factory girl would definitely not have been an option for someone of her extraction. According to family members, later in life she settled into the domestic life of a decent, scandal-free, married bourgeois woman.

⁴⁷² “Dos horas con Miss Perú.” *Variedades*, February 19, 1930, 30, 28.

This is not to say that there is not any trace of transgression in the figure of Emma McBride. Despite the élite anxieties Espinoza and Drinot have detected regarding female masculinization,⁴⁷³ McBride confesses to a certain playful gender transgression, both in her youth and at the time of the interview. These were always framed by the interviewer within the margins of acceptable femininity:

[T]his was the scenario for her first innocent games as well as her first pranks, for, with complete frankness and *the fresh joy of Spring that races throughout her body*, “Miss Peru” confesses to us that as a child she was slightly tomboyish (*marimacho*), that her brothers let her join in their games, and that her fondness for marbles, ‘*a la pega*’ (tag?) always took precedence over dolls, diabolos, and other games proper to her sex.⁴⁷⁴

The interviewer creates a contraposition between his references to innocent games and the feminine graces of McBride’s body, and the possibly shocking use of “marimacho” (highlighted in the original). Marimacho today is a vulgar, derogatory term to refer to lesbians, and is possibly the semantic equivalent of “d*ke,” but in this context probably meant “tomboyish.” For a feminine beauty such as McBride, such—not altogether uncommon—childhood “masculine” entertainments were merely the stuff of anecdote, not scandal. She closed the interview by answering the question of “what is your greatest desire?” by stating that rather than riding *in* the fancy Buick they have been using to drive from one place to another, she would prefer to “surf” [*gorrear*] the tram on the outside. She confessed that once, while dressed as a man during the topsy-turvy context of the carnival, and at the prodding of her brothers who told her to do “manly

⁴⁷³ Espinoza, “Las Mujeres Salen de Casa.” Drinot, *The Sexual Question*, 106–52.

⁴⁷⁴ “Dos horas con la ‘Miss Peru’.” *Variedades*, February 19, 1930, 27. My emphasis, except for *marimacho*.

stuff,” she gave it a try and took a nasty tumble. But once again, given the carnivalesque atmosphere plus her unquestionable feminine grace (she was, “Miss Peru” after all) these did not register as anything more than juvenile mischief.

Perhaps a more intentional transgression—and yet one that did not shake the status quo—took place in the realm of race. Although it was never stated explicitly, it was clear to anyone reading *Variedades* that the Miss Peru beauty competition was essentially restricted to white women. In this respect, Ilse de Ycaza has highlighted the white eugenic impulse of these early contests and especially the presence of Clemente Palma among the jury, an avowed social Darwinist whose racist views were well known.⁴⁷⁵ A cartoon in the same issue wherein McBride’s interview was published made her whiteness explicit—although probably without the cartoonist being aware of it himself. McBride appeared in swimsuit and heels facing the Venus de Milo, striking a playful pose that resembled that of the sculpture. The statue tells her “I congratulate you, friend / because you triumphed in Lima / and I do not embrace you... for / lack of the raw material”, referencing her lack of arms.⁴⁷⁶ As a general paragon of feminine beauty, the cartoonist probably did not consciously think of her as “white,” but would certainly have balked at making such a comparison with a black or indigenous woman. This is consistent with the way that beauty queens were described in Mexico, who too were praised for resembling Greek and Roman standards of beauty.⁴⁷⁷ But as the first “Miss Peru”—and one who was to travel abroad to represent the country—McBride’s body was to be used as a canvas for a representation of the

⁴⁷⁵ Ilse de Ycaza, “Evas de Exportación: La Construcción de La Imagen Del Perú a Través de Certámenes de Belleza (1952-1982)” (Tesis de licenciatura, Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2020), 23–24.

⁴⁷⁶ “Chirigota, con la divina manca.” *Variedades*, February 19, 1930.

⁴⁷⁷ Varner, *La Raza Cosmética*, 30.

nation. In this respect, *Variedades* put forth an early example of the “national costume” trope in beauty contests, presenting a spread with pictures of McBride wearing highland, indigenous garb, complete with fake braids, in order to present the simulacrum of feminine indigenous culture. In their description of the pictures, the editors of *Variedades* manifested echoes of the “Incas sí, indios no” logic studied by Cecilia Méndez for the 1830s and which she finds present in modern-day Peru, at least to the 1990s. Under this logic, creole élites may glorify the Inca past, along with its great achievements in architecture, arts, and “civilization” while simultaneously spurning and invisibilizing the indigenous present.⁴⁷⁸ In what might today be referred to as cultural appropriation in the United States, the élites were willing to incorporate certain aspects of indigenous material culture in order to construct an idea of a “Peruvian nation” while the indigenous fellow citizens who had crafted it are kept strictly outside the picture frame—in this case, literally.

In her picture series showcasing her “national costume,” the editors of *Variedades* devoted great attention to describing all the details of the dress and its diverse accoutrements. The name of the photographer (Goyzueta) and even the manager of the magazine who provided the dress (Engineer Enrique Rivero Tremouille) appear prominently in the description of the photographs, while McBride herself is referred to simply as “Miss Peru,” her individuality being reduced to the function she serves to the nation and the male gaze.⁴⁷⁹ As may be expected, the names of the weavers involved were completely absent, referenced solely as “the weaver who,

⁴⁷⁸ Cecilia Méndez, “Incas Sí, Indios No: Notes on Peruvian Creole Nationalism and Its Contemporary Crisis,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 197–225.

⁴⁷⁹ This highlighting of male agency and voices in what was supposed to be a contest about female beauty happened in Mexico as well, see Varner, *La Raza Cosmética*, 29.

up in the highlands, like *her sisters of the past*, devotes her heart and spirit to creating beauty” (my emphasis). In this criollo modernity, that which was indigenous belonged to the past, while the present and future belong to the creole élite of McBride and engineers such as Enrique Rivero. The notions of beauty and aesthetics also revealed how this modern élite understood the role of race. Indigenous people *of the past* were recognized as having a great sensibility for beauty and art, and excelled at creating it, and *even continued to do so in the present*, but such sensibility and craft were understood to be mere echoes of past genius that cannot uplift them from their debased present. Thus, McBride’s “physical perfection, subtle spirit, and evocative wrappings” made her a true heir of a “millenarian race that was beautiful *because it carried beauty in the depths within themselves*, and knew how to irradiate it in their songs, pottery, music, dance, and their ferocity in times of tribulation.”⁴⁸⁰ Hence, the indigenous people of the highlands can have *interior beauty* and can *create* beauty, but only whites can *embody beauty*. When the writer stated that McBride was a worthy new *ñusta* (Inca princess), indigenous women were swept aside in this understanding of racial beauty and modernity.

The possibility of misrecognition—to follow James Siegel⁴⁸¹—is infinitesimal, since no one in Peru in 1930 would confuse the European-descended McBride with a “true” indigenous woman, no matter what clothing she should wear. The whiteness of her skin is evident in the pictures, what we witness is very much a case of donning a costume. As though to emphasize this contrast between McBride’s “true,” neutral form and that of her in indigenous drag—so to speak—the competing magazine *Mundial* ran a spread with two pictures of her in the same

⁴⁸⁰ “La ‘señorita Perú’ en traje típico nacional.” *Variedades*, February 26, 1930. My emphasis.

⁴⁸¹ James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

swimsuit in which she was portrayed in the cartoon with the Venus de Milo—photographs that are almost ethnographic in their simplicity of pose and ambitions of “objectivity”—flanking one of her in national costume.⁴⁸² In a way, it constitutes an unusual inversion of the tropes of the ethnographic gaze, wherein the Western-costumed body is presented and posed in almost purely “physical” form—expression neutral, body straight, arms to the sides, legs perfectly aligned with each other. It took on a sort of “type” commonly seen in anthropological photography of the period, while the “indigenous” one reveals personality and individuality. McBride showed a hint of a smile, tilted her body away from the camera, held the headwear in front of her, and her legs adopted a comfortable, asymmetric position. In her swimsuit pictures the writer used over-the-top, yet still very much physical, terms such as “eurythmic beauty,” “charm of her admirable back,” “fine and sculptural body;” her “indigenous” alter ego, on the other hand, elicited comments on her “youthful grace.” With McBride’s body as a stand-in for the nation, this sequence of three pictures appears to uphold criollo modernity by suggesting that modern Peru’s “true” interior is White (and hence modern), but can don indigeneity at will whenever it should suit them, without it affecting their “true” selves, to which they can revert without difficulty. Of course, it must also be noted that the only indigenous “national costume” that they photographed the beauty queen in was that of the highlands and not that of the Amazon region, something that would be commonplace by the 1980s.⁴⁸³ McBride’s body and garb also reflected the degree to which the highlands *was* Peru, while the Amazon was *possessed* by Peru—and thus not entirely “national.”

⁴⁸² “La admirable belleza plástica de la ‘señorita Perú’.” *Mundial*, February 22, 1930.

⁴⁸³ Cover image. *Amazonía*, June 1983.



Figure 12: The admirable plastic beauty of Miss Peru

As shown by Natasha Varner, women's bodies could be used for the staging of acts of "reconciliation." In Mexico, in 1921, Bibiana Uribe, the winner of the "*India Bonita*" ("pretty Indian woman") beauty competition, was presented in the Teatro Colón of Mexico City, where she shared the stage with María Conesa, a Spanish-born singer who, like McBride, dressed in "indigenous drag." This was part of an elaborate simulation of racial reconciliation, whereby after the costumed Spaniard sang a number of pieces praising Uribe, they shared an embrace that united "the representatives of two races that were enemies for four hundred years." As Varner notes, this was a "reconciliation fantasy that superficially absolved the nation of its sins of Indigenous colonization and oppression (...) without having to maneuver through the thorny

complications of actual restitution for Indigenous peoples.”⁴⁸⁴ While McBride’s dressing up in indigenous garb was evidently not part of a performative reconciliation with indigenous Peru, Leguía did make use of her Western-clothed body to perform reconciliation with Peru’s neighbors: Chile and Bolivia, as shown by Lucía Valle. She suggests that Peruvian President Augusto Leguía took advantage of the layover that both Miss Chile (Violeta Gómez Briceño) and Miss Bolivia (Rosita Pizarro Aráoz) were to undertake in Lima to highlight the success of his final resolution of the Tacna-Arica border dispute with Chile in 1929.⁴⁸⁵ This settlement split the disputed region essentially in half, with Peru recovering the inland city of Tacna, while Chile retained the port city of Arica. This treaty went against Leguía’s avowed intention of recovering Arica and its mull (the site of a defeat that became a key component of Peruvian nationalism and irredentism), and was somewhat unpopular, which in turn played a part in his overthrow later in 1930.

The arrival of both beauty queens was, however, an opportunity to showcase Peru’s modernity and of having left the acrimonious troubles of the past behind. Both “misses” arrived by the new, exciting technology of the airplane to an airfield south of Lima, where they were greeted and feted by Miss Peru. After this layover, they flew to Lima to a momentous reception by the people of Lima and to strolls and banquets with the president himself. The enormous interest this event attracted must not be underestimated. The February 26 issue of *Variedades* reprinted, without any changes, entire articles on the arrival of the foreign beauty queens that had originally appeared in the February 19 issue. Demand for images of their activities in Lima must have been perceived by the editors as so high, that it seems that almost no picture was

⁴⁸⁴ Varner, *La Raza Cosmética*, 38–40.

⁴⁸⁵ Lucía Valle, “El Enemigo En La Sombra: La Población Chilena En Lima y El Antichilenismo Popular (1884-1929)” (Master’s Thesis, Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2017).

deemed superfluous for inclusion in the magazine—there are several that have very noticeable blurs that would have otherwise rendered them unpublishable. As a semi-official mouthpiece for the Leguía administration, the numerous pictures of the three beauty queens featured by *Variedades* served as something more than playthings for the male gaze. Framing the three smiling young women together was a way to paint a picture of a path forward wherein the old disputes of the past were left behind—even relations with wartime ally Bolivia had been frayed due to Bolivian claims to Arica. A cartoon in *Mundial* highlights the change in rhetoric vis-à-vis Chile through the (literal) figures of the beauty queens. Depicting the three as virtually identical in facial features and body, and wearing the same swimsuit, the limerick that accompanies it stated “The similar beauty / of such pretty sovereigns / three Latin Americans / must not come as a surprise / for the three of them are sisters...”⁴⁸⁶

It is important to note that the presence of Miss Chile and Miss Bolivia was limited to that of beautiful, but essentially unspeaking, props. Although they printed dozens of pictures of them, there were no interviews in either *Variedades* or *Mundial*, both of which followed their activities in Lima with great thoroughness. Like a print capitalist reflection of the sexist Spanish-language saying “you look prettier when you’re quiet” [*calladita te ves más bonita*], the foreign beauty queens are looked at, but not listened to. Even the one instance in which we can access a few of their words is mediated through a different kind of physicality. When *Variedades* ran the beauty queens’ regards to the Peruvian people, these were not printed in the magazine’s regular font as

⁴⁸⁶ “Concurso internacional de fraternidad.” *Mundial*, February 22, 1930.

would the comments of a politician, but rather as facsimiles, so that readers could experience their handwriting themselves.

In the end, all three beauty queens boarded a steamer in the port of Callao, where a huge (mostly male) crowd bade them farewell. Much like how Miss Peru, Miss Chile, and Miss Bolivia could sail together to the Leguía's preferred model of modernity—the United States—the countries that they represented were meant to sail together in the world of international relations. Inasmuch as they too traveled to the metropole and presumably tried to showcase their own modernity and adopt what they find useful, they can also be transposed as a case of “transoceanic femininities,” to play on Cruz's term.

Tarhata Kiram: outspoken rebel princess

While Nora Maulana negotiated her relationship with mainstream Christian Filipino culture by mostly staying within the bounds established for her—albeit by privileging the English language and American customs to a degree that some Manileños would find unexpected—her cousin Tarhata Kiram appeared to break the mold in all directions. Another niece of the Sultan of Sulu, she studied at the Manila Normal School and the University of the Philippines before attending the University of Illinois as a *pensionada*, where she embraced American culture and modernity, even adopting the flapper lifestyle. She then returned to Joló, once again taking on the customs of her people and marrying a Datu (who divorced another wife to marry her) who ended up arrested and tried for sedition by the government. Oliver Charbonneau has shown how people in the United States were also fascinated and horrified by Tarhata Kiram, the former because of how much she took to American flapper culture and mores, and the latter because of

her later “backsliding” into “primitive” behavior,⁴⁸⁷ and her trajectory captivated the Christian Filipino readership for much the same reasons, standing in stark contrast to her cousin Nora Maulana. In a single female body, Tarhata Kiram summarized the perils that Sulu and Mindanao represented for the integrity of the geobody of the Philippines: torn between infatuation with the imperial metropole and violence against the authorities, she showed little sign of binding herself to the “civilized” (Christian) Philippines. And yet, her allure could still be maintained inasmuch as she framed her actions as part of the progress of the Philippines as a whole.

Suspected of sedition along with her husband, Datu Tahil, her colorful background and unusually assertive personality—she was frequently described as the true brains and motivation behind her husband’s aborted rebellion—led to her having more press coverage than her more staid beauty queen cousin. Numerous testimonies appeared in newspapers, written by people who claimed to have known her. She appears to have had an unremarkable stay in Manila as a student, where a former classmate described her as “the meekest girl in school” and a “brilliant student,” who behaved in a very horizontal manner with her classmates, rarely bringing up her royal background.⁴⁸⁸ Things appear to have changed significantly during her sojourn in Illinois, however. Under the pseudonym “Incognita”, an American woman who claimed to have lived in Joló and to have travelled in the United States with the Princess published two long testimonies of her years with Tarhata Kiram at the University of Illinois, and her stories cannot but have scandalized the more conservative sectors of Manila society, and titillated those less inclined to judgment.

⁴⁸⁷ Oliver Charbonneau, “Visiting the Metropole: Muslim Colonial Subjects in the United States, 1904-1927,” *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 2 (2018): 221–25.

⁴⁸⁸ “Princess Tarhata meek schoolgirl.” *Tribune*, April 3, 1927, 4.

Incognita described Tarhata's years in Illinois being about "love, music, romance." She describes her academic performance as having been poor, usually failing four or five of the six classes she would take each semester, despite having had tutors assigned to her for each of them by the university. Although that is something of an exaggeration, Kiram's transcript does show that she was not a strong student, with numerous failed classes and rarely scoring higher than a C.⁴⁸⁹ She instead focused her energies on sports, outdoors activities, and dances. What was perhaps most striking to her readers—even those in cosmopolitan Manila—was how Tarhata embraced the more "modern" social mores, such as staying out unchaperoned until 2 am, engaging in a series of romantic trysts with Americans and Filipinos, and wearing fancy clothes, short skirts, and sheer stockings. And yet, for all her modernity, formerly unassuming Tarhata began to demand the royal treatment, insisting on being addressed as "Princess Tarhata" instead of "Miss Kiram."⁴⁹⁰ None of this is written in a censorious tone, however. At least at the surface level, Incognita was merely portraying her as a typical, modern college girl in the United States, a country that the Princess professed to adore due to its "fast lifestyle." She also highlighted how Tarhata was a great friend who simply enjoyed the more pleasant aspects of life while knowing that she would be deprived of them upon her return to Joló.

In this sense, we can see Tarhata Kiram upending Manileño expectations of modernity to an even greater degree than her cousin Nora. While Nora spoke English and had adopted a smattering of American customs, Tarhata returned to the Philippines transformed into a flapper. She dressed in a more daring American fashion than the most Americanized Manileños, spoke

⁴⁸⁹ Office of the Registrar, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, "Transcript of Tarhata Kiram." June 17, 2019.

⁴⁹⁰ Incognita, "Tarhata – the ambitious." *Tribune*, February 6, 1927, 21-22.

English better than they did, and used American slang perfectly⁴⁹¹—which, as shown by Vicente Rafael, was a much more difficult task than mastering regular English and could even be used as an insurmountable barrier to block Filipinos from truly accessing the communications of the Americans, and thus their prestige.⁴⁹² In this sense, Kiram transited borders that many of her Christian Filipino counterparts simply could not. Such a degree of Americanization in a context in which some Filipino nationalists—and modernists—were still trying to stave off some of that culture and trying to preserve the Spanish language and Filipino dress must have appeared shocking and completely excessive, and perhaps even scandalous. Moreover, if college grades indeed reflect proficiency, Tarhata's proficiency in Spanish was rather poor, consistently scoring Ds in her classes—yet scoring a C in French, another language associated with modernity and Bohemian lifestyles.⁴⁹³ Incognita sums up her trajectory thusly: “She came to Manila a Moro child. She left for the States, a Filipino girl. She returned from college an American flapper.”⁴⁹⁴

Upon her return to Joló, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. If some of her contemporaries would consider her to have been indulging in too much modernity by the time she returned from the United States, they would probably believe she went too far in the direction of tradition. Rather than becoming a modern Muslim woman, she “reverted” to Moro customs, doing away with the flapper bob, replacing her short skirts with proper Joloan garb, and chewing betel nut—which, according to Incognita, was a habit she detested during her years in

⁴⁹¹ Incognita, “Princess Tarhata, the Moro Cleopatra.” *Tribune*, January 30, 1928, 15.

⁴⁹² Vicente L. Rafael, “The War of Translation: Colonial Education, American English, and Tagalog Slang in the Philippines,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 2 (2015): 283–302.

⁴⁹³ Office of the Registrar, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, “Transcript of Tarhata Kiram.” June 17, 2019.

⁴⁹⁴ Incognita, “Princess Tarhata, the Moro Cleopatra.” *Tribune*, January 30, 1928, 15.

Manila.⁴⁹⁵ And in another marked divergence from her cousin Nora, Tarhata even wed a Moro Datu, which was seen as a downward move due to his lesser status among Joloan nobility. But even in these acts Tarhata showed some willingness to go against the grain: she no longer allowed people to kiss her feet in greeting, offering only her hands, and marrying a man who left his previous wife for her, even against the wishes of her uncle the Sultan. This supposedly proved her ambitions, as Incognita suggests that this was all a part of her plan to get a hold of the Sulu throne and to reign as Sultana.⁴⁹⁶ It was this marriage that would bring her into the eye of the storm shortly thereafter.

Tarhata is unusual among Moro princesses inasmuch as we can access her own writings in the press. While her cousin Nora's utterances are filtered by the pen and notes of her interviewer, Tarhata wrote numerous letters to the press in Manila explaining her side of the story. These letters reflect that she was aware of what was being said about her regarding her education, her marriage with Datu Tahil, and her role in the rebellion. Tarhata did not mince words and refused to acquiesce to what was being said about the entire incident, stating instead that the entire narrative presented by American authorities was false. There was no intention to refuse to pay the land tax, and instead laid the blame on the outbreak of violence on Governor Moore, whom she accused of monopolizing several branches of power in Jolo, which led to a venal, inefficient administration of the region. He even ordered a military attack on her husband's place of residence (she rejected the term 'cota' [fortress] for it, arguing that it was little more than a house surrounded by fences and a small stone wall) when the entire crisis was already

⁴⁹⁵ Incognita, "Princess Tarhata, the Moro Cleopatra." *Tribune*, January 30, 1927, 15. "Tarhata Kiram ha vuelto a la costumbre mora." *El Comercio y La Opinión combinados*, May 15, 1926, 4.

⁴⁹⁶ Incognita, "Princess Tarhata, the Moro Cleopatra". *Tribune*, January 30, 1927, 15.

resolving itself, and actively ignored a large number of well-known cattle-thieves in the region. According to Kiram, Governor Moore's true motivation was to drum up sales of the book he planned to publish after retirement.⁴⁹⁷

What is of most interest, however, is how she actively disputed the narrative that had been built around her in the Manila press. She downplayed her role in the entire affair (which she labels a "protest" rather than a "revolt"), claiming that she never had any ambition of making her husband Governor of Sulu. While not addressing directly Incognita's claims that she failed most of her classes in the University of Illinois, she acknowledged that the attention on her was probably the result of her education in the United States. She then flipped the script, and leveraged her educational background into a critique of Moore's administration and potentially of colonialism as a whole: "Although it is a fact, as is the experience of all colonial governments, that the most troublesome elements in a subjugated country belong to the educated class, particularly those educated abroad, it is axiomatic that you cannot make a slave of a man after educating him."⁴⁹⁸ She further used her experience in the metropole to argue that the different branches of government should not be concentrated in a single individual, which she accused Moore of doing. Instead of being a vapid flapper turned anti-government radical Muslim conservative, she positioned herself instead as someone who knew the American system from the inside and criticized her colonizers precisely because they were not following their own principles of good government.

⁴⁹⁷ "Princess Tarhata is charged with sedition." *Tribune*, February 16, 1927, 1. "Tarhata, heavily guarded, cries for investigation of grave abuses in Joló." *Tribune*, February 18, 1927, 1.

⁴⁹⁸ "Princess Tarhata is charged with sedition." *Tribune*, February 16, 1927, 1.

This particular letter appears to have had significant impact in Manila, as it was also translated and reproduced in its entirety by the weekly *The Independent*, which even extracted essentially the same passage quoted above in a previous issue.⁴⁹⁹ Her assertive and eloquent prose—which seems to have been originally written in English—appears to have challenged received notions of how articulate a woman of her condition could be (perhaps it was the use of the word “axiomatic”?): in a long article sent to *Tribune*, she mentioned her hope of not being accused of not being the true author of the text.

This extensive letter appears to have been printed as a special edition or supplement of the daily *Tribune*. In it, she stated that she was writing in response to all that that has been said about her and her husband Datu Tahil, seeking to set the record straight. In what appears to be a response to the tales of her life in the United States, she described her sojourn there as some of the best years of her life, during which she made a great many good friends; she discreetly failed to address the stories about her supposedly poor academic performance while there. To all those who said she married him out of ambition to become Sultana she responded that the true answer was much more straightforward: she was in love. But it is in the general theme of ambition that she also defied the image that has been made of her. Yes, she had been ambitious, but “to be a leading factor in educating my people to the point where our province could take its place side by side with its sister provinces and form a homogenous Philippines...”,⁵⁰⁰ thus pulling back the majority Christian population on her side. She then went on to describe how the current American administration in Sulu sabotaged her mission of education, progress, and integration.

⁴⁹⁹ “De varios colores”. *The Independent*, February 26, 1927, 34. “Documentos históricos de Filipinas-Queja de una princesa.” March 12, 1927, 12.

⁵⁰⁰ Tarhata Kiram, “My story, by Princess Tarhata.” *Tribune*, March 27, 1927.

Unlike Governor Moore, she was actually pursuing the very same goals that both the American colonial government *and* the Christian Filipinos in the Assembly purported to desire to accomplish. In this, she was in line with her primmer cousin Nora Maulana, and framed herself as an agent of modernity that was frustrated by a venal colonial administrator.

Another way in which she positioned herself as someone with values as modern as that of Americans was in her disquisition on the role of firearms and the Bud Bagsak massacre of 1913. She attributed the incident to the misguided United States policy of taking the guns of the Moros of Joló, which the latter wanted not to fight the government, “but for the purpose of protecting their property and lives from enemies and bandits. Besides, the guns were their personal property and they thought they legally owned them.”⁵⁰¹ Once again—and in curious parallel to her cousin Nora—by reproducing in part the long-lived rhetoric of gun ownership in the United States, she might have been leapfrogging some of her Christian, Hispanized Filipino readers and placing herself on par with a more “advanced” American form of modernity, and challenging her American interlocutors to have to clarify what she probably knew well: a man has a right to bear arms, so long as he is White.

Tarhata Kiram would continue to remain in the public eye for many years, reemerging in the 1930s lobbying for the reincorporation of parts of British North Borneo to the Sultanate of Sulu.⁵⁰² The land would in turn have presumably been annexed into the Philippines proper as well, bringing her once again into the conversation of the transformation of the geobody. At any rate, her wild path in life clearly fascinated Christian Filipino readers in Manila who must have

⁵⁰¹ “My story, by Princess Tarhata.” *Tribune*, March 27, 1927.

⁵⁰² Charbonneau, “Visiting the Metropole,” 225–26.

puzzled what to make of her. On the one hand, she embodied the modern, and her successful—perhaps even excessive—adoption of the language, customs, and ideas of the imperial metropole must have sparked complicated sensations. On the one hand, she embodied the same modernity that Christian Filipinos hoped to achieve for themselves; on the other, one of their anxieties over their geobody was the possibility of some kind of collusion between élite Muslim leaders and American authorities to cut off Sulu and Mindanao from the Philippines. In that respect, the prospect of an English-speaking and US-admiring Tarhata as Sultana could be a threat, and thus her cultural “backslide”, marriage to a Muslim Dato, and revolt against the American authorities could actually have been read positively. It could have been much worse if, being a potential claimant to the Sultanate, she had married an ambitious American with connections to the halls of power in Washington DC. As a matter of fact, unlike other Moro revolts in Lanao, coverage of the Datu Tahil and Princess Tarhata revolt (or protest) was characterized more by curiosity than revulsion, and Tarhata quickly became a sympathetic figure in the press. Her talk of seeking to contribute to the formation of a “homogenous” Philippines could not have hurt.

Conclusions

Each one of these modern girls negotiated their positions vis-à-vis the dominant, hegemonic mores of their societies and times. In the Philippines, Nora Maulana and Tarhata Kiram appeared to their contemporaries to be potentially closer to the “backwards” end of a continuum of “progress.” However, despite also appearing to be on opposite ends of the spectrum of conformity-rebellion, they both maneuvered themselves deftly within the interstices and possibilities that the colonial condition afforded them by appropriating modernity in their

own ways and to meet their own ends. When Maulana's interviewer remarked on how rustic her upbringing was, she responded with fluent English, an American-style handshake, and comments on reading only English-language materials, diplomatically demonstrating her handling of a more prestigious kind of modernity while remaining a demure Moro woman and Filipino patriot. Portrayed in the press as a hard-partying flapper turned betel nut-chewing Moro, Kiram responded with articulate letters in English referencing the value of education in forming politically aware citizens and other pillars of American political thought, as well as emphasizing her commitment to the colonial project of education and integration of Christians and Muslims. They both used modernity to prove the vitality and adaptability of the Moro peoples to the times. It is symbolic of this commitment that they were both trained as schoolteachers; Nora even married another teacher and also expressed interest in becoming a nurse, an agent of the other great project of modernity—sanitation. Despite one being a demure beauty queen and the other a rebel princess, they both defied the metropolitan expectations (both Manileño and American) of intransigent, unassimilable Moros, and instead shored up the integrity of the geobody.

In Peru, comfortably located in the dominant sector of society, Emma McBride had little need to prove her modernity to a skeptic other, and few reasons to try to upend social norms. If anything, she bucked expectations by being more traditional than what one would expect a modern girl to be. Even when she told stories of engaging in activities usually associated with men, these were framed as merely innocent games that did not actually subvert traditional gender norms. Her race-bending when wearing indigenous garb was firmly within the national project of modernization, and in no way truly challenged the subaltern position of indigenous highland peoples, but rather contributed to their continued invisibilization and placement in the

past. When engaging in “beauty diplomacy” alongside Miss Chile and Miss Bolivia, she (along with her counterparts) appeared as little more than beautiful props to delight the male gaze and usher in a new era of peace in which the contour of the geobody of the nation became ever more defined.

Conclusions

This dissertation has used the transpacific comparison between the ways élites in Peru and the Philippines dealt with the threat of territorial dispossession to make interventions in the issues how the nation's geobody was conceptualized, the way in which American empire loomed over these processes, and the degree to which the inhabitants of the at-risk territories were incorporated into the national body politic. By looking at them side-by-side, the differences in certain traits—that may have otherwise appeared 'natural' or 'expected'—appear in higher relief and allow us a deeper understanding not just of them in comparison, but of them individually as well.

In both cases, despite the supposed unity and homogeneity of the geobodies of Peru and the Philippines, it is clear that there were “dotted lines” within that could be taken advantage of in case an external or internal agent desired to dismember them. In the case of Peru, its hold over the entire Department of Loreto (and all of its Amazonian territory, for that matter) was tenuous. This was a holdover from the Spanish colonial period, during which the empire claimed it, but never effectively conquered it. Peruvian citizens in the 1920s could envision scenarios in which large swathes of territory could be easily “given away” to neighboring states in a way that was unimaginable for the “core” territories of the country. The contrast is especially noticeable with the case of Tacna and Arica, towns that had been under Chilean occupation since 1880, and whose final status continued to be a matter of acrimonious discussion between Peru and Chile (and the United States, as mediator) throughout the 1920s. While the government and population at large agreed that any effort was worthwhile to recover those southern territories

that had been effectively lost close to half a century before, attachment to every single square kilometer in the Amazon was much looser. Threats to the geobody could be internal as well, with any political disturbance in the region often being understood as having separatist intentions. Thus, despite the language of cartography that portrayed all parts of the country as homogenously “Peruvian”, Peruvian citizens continued to have a tacit understanding that the coastal strip and the highlands *were* Peru, while the Amazonian rainforest *was possessed* by Peru. The rainforest and its inhabitants remained “Others” to effectively colonize and conquer. This tacit understanding notwithstanding, the loss of any slice of those possessions would also be paradoxically understood as a loss of fully *national* territory in a way that would not be the case for traditional empires and the negotiation of overseas territories.

The Philippines had a “dotted line” of its own. In a trajectory parallel to that of Peru during its own colonial period, the southern islands of Mindanao and Sulu had not been effectively and permanently conquered by the Spanish. Their comparatively more effective subjugation had come during the American period, barely twenty years before the decade studied in this dissertation, and which had only been ruled from Manila for a handful of years prior to 1920. With its history of autonomy, the Muslim religion of its inhabitants, and extremely recent active integration into a polity ruled from Manila, Christian Filipino colonial subjects were also aware of the “Otherness” of the land and peoples, which made them constantly call for its colonization through mass migration of people from Luzon and Visayas. Unlike the Peruvian Amazon, however, it was much “closer” to the core regions of the Philippines; the archipelagic nature of the country making communications much easier than in continental Peru. Nevertheless, when disturbances arose in the region, it was easy for Christian Filipinos in Manila to imagine it being part of a sinister

conspiracy to dismember the Philippine geobody along geo-religious lines. It also shows how the imagination of the geobody is conditioned by a certain “compactness” of its shape. While Peruvians continued to pine after Tacna and Arica—lost fifty years before—Filipino attempts to reannex faraway Guam, which had been more effectively administered from Manila than Mindanao, and had been separated from Manila only twenty years before, remained more of a prank or joke than anything else.

Both sets of rumors of mutilation, nevertheless, turned out to be true. Indeed, few years after the Iquitos rebellion of 1921-22 and even fewer years after the Moro unrest of 1923-1925, both countries came under the threat of territorial dismemberment through international treaty or domestic law. In the case of Peru, Leguía went ahead with the Salomón-Lozano Treaty that settled the border with Colombia, “ceding” the Putumayo region to Colombia, as well as the Leticia corridor granting them access to the Amazon River. For the Philippines, Representative Robert Bacon submitted a bill that would separate Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan from the Philippines. As has been seen in Chapter 3 and 4, dismemberment lost traction in the Philippines, but it went ahead in Peru.

This brings us to the other contrast that this dissertation shows us. While both countries were under the shadow of American empire—the Philippines was an outright colony, while Peru could be described as a neocolony—their responses to dismemberments believed to have their origin in American interests varied widely. The supposed reason behind the partition of the Philippines was discussed openly: rubber. American commentators openly talk about how due to being mostly free from destructive typhoons, were they allowed to cover Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan with rubber plantations, these would supply all of the needs of the United States.

Christian Filipino commentators openly pointed out that herein lay the motivation for dismembering those islands from the nation: Philippine Land Law restricted the size of foreign-owned land below that which rubber barons believed to be necessary to profit. Thus, removing those prime rubber-planting territories from the Philippines would allow them to circumvent the law. Christian Filipinos then used the very “boons” that American Empire prided themselves with giving them—free speech, free press, rule of law, democratic institutions in general—to fight back against partition in Manila and Washington DC. Christian Filipinos were able to hold mass protests, and publicly excoriate Governor-General Wood, whom many widely believed to have been behind the bill partitioning the country.

Peru, instead, was under indirect American Empire. Even though it was a sovereign nation, the Leguía regime’s extreme Americanophilia had seemingly put the country almost entirely under American rule. After all, the Fourth of July was declared a national holiday, Thanksgiving was observed, and Leguía himself had wished out loud for Americans to run all branches of his government and even intimated that he would like Peru to become a protectorate of the United States. In the Tacna-Arica dispute with Chile, he put Peru’s fate almost entirely in the hands of American mediation. In such a context, rumors emerged that the transfer of the Putumayo region and the granting of access to the Amazon River to Colombia had been instructed by Washington DC in order to compensate Colombia for the loss of Panama a little over twenty years before. However, in stark contrast to their counterparts in the Philippines, Peruvian citizens could not discuss these rumors freely, nor castigate American Empire. A territorial reorganization that was believed to be the will of the United States was not opposed in those terms. Furthermore, citizens who opposed the “mutilation” of the national geobody could do little to resist, as the Leguía

régime stifled dissidence and persecuted those who protested. It would only be after the fall of Leguía—and, perhaps importantly, the settlement of the Tacna-Arica question—that Peruvian citizens were finally free to protest against the Salomón-Lozano Treaty and American imperialism, to the point of starting a war with Colombia over the former.

These territorial crises also let us gain insight into the degree to which the inhabitants of the contested regions were included in the body politic of the nation. In this respect, there is a very marked contrast between both cases. In the Philippines, the Muslim inhabitants of the territories earmarked for mutilation were brought into the discussion on the side of retention by eager Christian Filipinos who wanted to prove that the population of Mindanao and Sulu wished to remain a part of the Philippines. While it is true that the Muslim politicians must have realized that the sincerity of these overtures was, at the very least, debatable, the context showed that their voices were considered of relevance to the issue. Interestingly enough, those of Christian settlers in the contested territories were not—perhaps under the understanding that their views were the same as those of Christian Filipinos in Luzon and Visayas. Élite Muslim women could also appear in the Manileño press as embodying the traits of exoticism and modernity, and different ethnic groups within the Muslim community were referred to by name, such as the Maranaos of Lanao or the Tausug of Sulu. In the Peruvian case, the condition is completely the reverse. The indigenous peoples of the Amazon were never included in the equation on the matter of dismemberment. Nobody suggested that they too had a right to self-determination—except Clemente Palma, who only brought up the idea to mock it—and when they did come up in discussion, they were portrayed as one more natural resource that would be lost along the territory. Fittingly with this kind of vision, they only appeared lumped as shadowy “chunchos,”

“savages” or “semi-savages” with no consideration given to their different ethnic groups. The only voices “from the rainforest” who are taken into some consideration—censorship notwithstanding—were those of the Peruvian settlers in the region, such as Senator Julio César Arana. Thus, Christian Filipinos in the 1920s appeared to be much closer to the idea of multicultural citizenship in their calls for unity with their Muslim counterparts, whom they described as ‘sharing the same blood’ or as ‘members of the same race’; Peruvian citizens continued to Other the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, considering themselves as the semantic equivalents of “Whites.” However, one thing to note in this respect is the almost complete absence of the Lumad in these discussions, whose perceived “backwardness” and “paganism” might make them the semantic equivalent of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon.

Thus, this dissertation illustrates what the comparative perspective can accomplish, by showcasing differences that shed light onto the nature of relations between subordinate élites sandwiched between “their” indigenous peoples and American Empire. Christian Filipino mass public mobilization against territorial rearrangement to be decided in Washington DC thus becomes not only an example of colonial agency in the face of empire, but in contrast with Peru, shows the degree to which indirect empire could be more insidious than direct empire. With a local, sovereign president in Peru extremely willing to defer to American imperial desires, American empire could accomplish more territorial rearrangement with far less blowback. In a seeming paradox, overt empire faced more constraints than covert empire. And in regards to the inclusion/exclusion of ethnic minorities, pragmatic Christian Filipino inclusion of Muslim voices can be understood as not only another step in the “construction of a nation” that is inclusive of the many different streams of “Filipinoness,” but also as an example of how foreign direct empire

can construct such nations. Peru did not have to deal with a direct foreign empire that might seek to partition Peru into two parts (one composed of its coastal and highland “core” and the other a separate Amazonian colony) which would necessitate a rhetoric of historical unity between both sectors—perhaps in the shape of Inca forays into the rainforest, or the distinct “Peruvianness” of 18th century anticolonial, rainforest-based rebel Juan Santos Atahualpa? Free from such pressures, Peruvians continued to Other indigenous Amazonians who could be “made” Peruvian through conquest and subjection to work and “civilization”, but who were not “intrinsically” Peruvian. Taken by themselves, each one of these cases might have appeared to show ‘natural’ responses to territorial dismemberment, but taken in comparison, deeper understandings of Empire, internal colonialism, and control over indigenous peoples come to light.

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